

Pledge of Allegiance - To India, Part II

by Rob Sanchez

In Part One of this essay (*The Social Contract, Vol. XIV, No. 4, p.275*) I discussed how the triumvirate of the India Caucus in the House of Representatives, Friends of India in the Senate, and the Indian political action committee (USINPAC) conspired to open our borders to India's growing population of educated workers and to liberalize free-trade agreements that benefit the economy of India at the expense of the citizens of the United States. Part II focuses on the treacherous behavior of the members of the House India Caucus, and what can be done to change their anti-American behavior.

The India Caucus has helped India become the high-tech sweatshop capital of the world at the expense of jobs in the United States. They grease the wheels so that corporations can outsource jobs to India in order to exploit its cheap labor and slave-like working conditions. Thanks in part to the India Caucus, India has also become the Number One exporter of high-tech workers who are insourced into our country to replace more expensive American workers.

Free-trade ideologues within the India Caucus justify their behavior by claiming that the job destruction occurring in the United States is an inevitable act of God that can't be reversed, but nothing could be further from the truth. Policies that encourage outsourcing and insourcing are legislated by Congress, and the Congressional India Caucus in the House of Representatives has been one of India's most powerful lawmaking advocates. Washington insiders within the India Caucus push trade and immigration policies that benefit India even when the legislation

runs contrary to the best interests of the American public. The India Caucus has grown to over 182 members who routinely betray the American public in the name of "free trade" and "open borders immigration."

Engorged with cash, rich corporations in India regularly invite caucus members to lavish junkets to India in an effort to influence U.S. legislation. As an example, in April of 2003 an entourage of Democratic caucus members traveled to Mumbai, India, to pig at the money trough. Junketeers such as Reps. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Chris Bell (D-TX), Kendrick Meek (D-FL), and Joseph Crowley (D-NY) were wine and dined in cities throughout India. These representatives assured Indian millionaires that the U.S. Congress will fight all attempts by labor activists in the United States to stem the job destruction caused by unfettered free trade and immigration. Sheila Jackson Lee even went so far as to say that it's a "win-win situation" when U.S. jobs are sent to Mumbai.² Jackson reassured her adoring audience of Indian aristocrats that she will do everything possible to raise the H-1B quota to allow more Indians to gain access to our labor markets.

Another notorious example of junketeering at its worst occurred in January, 2004, when nine members of the India Caucus took a trip to Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Agra. The Democratic politicians, considered by many to be "pro-labor," included Reps. Joe Crowley (D-NY), Steve Israel (D-NY), Linda Sanchez (D-CA), Jim Marshall (D-GA), and Barbara Lee (D-CA). They masqueraded as friends of American labor unions but their behavior in India proves otherwise. Unions were fleeced by the India Caucus who had no intention of creating jobs in the U.S. to help American citizens maintain their middle-class life styles.

Rep. Joseph Crowley is co-chairman of the caucus and one of its most infamous members. He milked the cash cow by accepting money from labor unions while at the same time working in the India Caucus to undermine unions who are seeing

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their members' jobs disappear overseas. Three of Crowley's top ten contributors were labor unions who donated over \$62,000 for his 2004 campaign.³ Hopefully next time around the unions will put their money to better use by campaigning to vote scofflaws like Crowley out of office. Until he is forced to relinquish his leadership role in the India Caucus he will continue to betray workers in his home state of New York that are in need of jobs.

Indian corporations struck gold when they invited Crowley to India. For the cost of a few nights at luxury hotels Crowley wrote a letter extolling the virtues of Tata Consultancy,⁴ an Indian-owned bodyshop which routinely discriminates against American citizens. Crowley's deliberate deception included a claim that Tata hires American workers. Most Indian bodyshops, including Tata, hire almost exclusively upper-caste young men from India who come to the United States on temporary visas such as H-1B and L-1.

Crowley claims that it's a good trade-off to sacrifice textile and call center jobs in order to stay in the good graces of Indian-owned companies that want to set up shop in New York. He wrote that,

For every \$6 an hour textile job or call center job lost in America, at least one much higher paying job is created here in America, and many of them in New York City.

Crowley's faith in a free-trade economics that claims outsourcing to India will create jobs in the U.S. is unfounded. Most Indian companies that set up shop in New York will hire just enough employees to market goods that were manufactured in India. These companies tend to hire Indian workers who come into the U.S. with H-1B or L-1 visas – they rarely hire American citizens.

Crowley just doesn't know when to stop kowtowing to India's rich corporate sweatshops. Recently he suggested that it would help New York by opening up the free trade of military goods to India! Crowley hawks his concept of outsourcing the manufacture of military supplies as a good deal for New York even though the manufacturing jobs for these contracts will go to Bombay not the Bronx.

In August of 2004 Crowley went on another junket tour of India to foster the Indo-US free trade agreement talks that are being negotiated by the WTO in Geneva.⁵ The proposed FTA agreement with India would allow unlimited numbers of Indian workers into

What is a Caucus?

A caucus is an organized but informal group of legislators established to promote or advocate a specific shared interest – in this case an interest in India. Caucuses are a very important but underestimated part of the legislative process that is funded by taxpayers' money. House ethics rules prohibit caucuses from receiving outside income but there are many perks such as junkets and free luncheons that are allowed.¹

In the year 2003 there were 166 House caucuses and 20 Senate caucuses. Their issues range from everything imaginable, from textiles to minor league baseball.

Congressional caucuses have been part of the American political scene since colonial times and they have often had an unsavory air about them. Consider this description of a caucus meeting in Boston from a diary entry in 1763 by founding father John Adams:

The Caucas Clubb meets at certain Times in the Garret of Tom Daws...There they smoke tobacco till you cannot see from one End of the Garrett to the other. There they drink Phlip [a potent mixture of beer, rum, and sugar] ...and Selectmen, Assessors, Collectors, Wardens, Fire Wards, and Representatives are regularly chosen before they are chosen in the Town.

the United States and in return India would lower tariffs on our agricultural products. Crowley's trip to India was paid for by the taxes of hard-working Americans and yet he was willing to barter our right for gainful employment in exchange for allowing large corporate farms to export a few bags of rice and beans to India. Crowley has used his leadership role in the India Caucus as a bully pulpit to covertly create trade agreements that destroy high-paying jobs in the United States.

Crowley and other junketeering caucus members will schmooze with anybody who has money, including India's enemies – such as Pakistan. Indian special interests are worried that their lap dogs in the American Congress may have a "conflict of interest" because some of them joined the newly formed Pakistani Caucus. Perhaps India will have to up the ante with more lobbying cash and lavish junkets if Pakistan continues to gain influence in our Congress. India Caucus members who have dual membership in

the Pakistani Caucus were revealed by *The Tribune of India*: Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Danny K. Davis (D-IL), Pete Sessions (R-TX), Fred Upton (R-MI), Dale E. Kildee (D-MI), Linda T. Sanchez (D-CA), Kay Granger (R-TX), Gregory W. Meeks (D- NY), Michael M. Honda (D-CA), Joe Pitts (R-PA) and Peter T. King (R- NY).⁶

Not to be outdone by Crowley, Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY) had the chutzpah to accept donations from labor unions such as the Communication Workers of America who are opposed to outsourcing and H-1B. Israel was elated that our corporations can profit by exploiting the low cost labor environment in India when he compared high-priced programmers in New York that get paid \$70k a year, to Indians who get paid a paltry \$15k a year for comparable work. He promoted India's cheap real estate as an ideal opportunity for U.S. companies to relocate to India because rent for high-tech industries in Hyderabad is

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a mere 80 cents a square foot compared with \$20 a square foot on Long Island. His backstabbing of American workers included a special trip to India in order to learn how to offshore U.S. military defense work from New York to India.⁷

On his website, Israel hyped India as a source of cheap military products without a thought to the economic and security implications for the United States:

Israel saw the challenges of outsourcing first-hand on a Congressional working trip to India in January. He also saw an opportunity for a new market: "There is absolutely no reason why the largest democracy in the world should be purchasing seventy percent of their security

*products from Russia," Israel said. "This is a great opportunity for Long Island defense manufacturers to tap into."*⁸

Congressman Jay Inslee (D-WA), serves on the Democratic Advisory Group on technology issues, and represented the India Caucus in New Delhi in May of 2003. Inslee spent most of his time hobnobbing with India's rich oligarchs and promising that the United States will never put barriers against long-term trade with India. Inslee made it very clear that he is willing to sacrifice jobs in the state of Washington when he told them,

*Ours is a trade-oriented state and we will not take any step that goes against the principle of market access. Our ability to access other markets will diminish if we ourselves block access to the US market. Trade is a two-way street.*⁹

Rep. Inslee licked so many boots in India it's a wonder that he didn't suffer dehydration of the tongue. In Mumbai, Inslee told his Indian audience that the United States is overly paranoid about security since 9/11 and he explained that this overemphasis on stopping terrorism has hindered the speed at which visas can be issued. Inslee affirmed that he was confident Americans would eventually ease their concerns about national security, and when that happens there will be a reduction in the time consuming security checks that are being imposed on foreigners who want to obtain H-1B and L-1 visas. Inslee seems to think that compromising national security is acceptable if it expedites the importation of India's vast labor pool of "intellectual capital" into the U.S. His kowtowing didn't stop there however; he forgave India for its refusal to do business with U.S. companies unless they outsource work to India. He made the ridiculous assertion that Americans have no hope of selling Microsoft products and Boeing airplanes in India unless the U.S. reciprocates by allowing India to have open-border access to our labor market. U.S. companies move to India in order to make products to export to the USA, not to sell in India. Inslee's belief that exporting American factories to India will somehow create American jobs is misguided and not supported by facts.

Examining the examples given in this paper, the obvious conclusion that must be drawn is that all India Caucus members have betrayed the public trust and

their Congressional oath to bear “true faith and allegiance” to the Constitution.¹⁰ The fourteenth amendment of the Constitution declares,

No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.

By permitting employers to displace and replace American workers, and hire nonimmigrants when qualified American workers are available, it can be argued that the caucus violates due process by making covert agreements with foreign nations.¹¹

When a list of caucus members was made available to the public,¹² for me, one name stood out among all others – Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO). Tancredo, a stalwart friend of the immigration control movement and an ardent opponent of H-1B, was listed as a member of the India Caucus. Like me, many activists were wondering why Tancredo was a member of the India Caucus, and I got the chance to ask him. In May of 2004, when Tancredo visited Arizona to support the Proposition 200 initiative,¹³ I had an opportunity to ask him why he was a member of the India Caucus. Mr. Tancredo explained that he joined the India Caucus in order to help the Dalits. In India, people with very dark skin, such as their African population, are called Dalits, or the “untouchables.” They are so low on the social ladder they don’t even have a caste. Dalits are considered sub-human and forced to live in squalid slums. They can’t escape extreme poverty because they aren’t allowed to get an education and are only allowed to take menial jobs. Tancredo involved himself in a humanitarian effort to help the Dalits and signed onto the India Caucus because he thought it might help to further that cause.

When asked what his level of involvement with the India Caucus was, Tancredo said that aside from signing a piece of paper to be a member, he has never been invited to participate in caucus meetings and was not aware of their activities.

It’s no surprise that Tancredo wasn’t invited to the party because the caucus cronies would consider him an outsider who is opposed to their agenda of open-border immigration to the U.S. and unfettered outsourcing of American jobs to India’s sweatshops.

During our conversation, I gave Mr. Tancredo several reasons why he should not be in the India Caucus. Two weeks after our conversation he revoked his membership.

Here are some of my arguing points to Tancredo as to why his membership in the India Caucus was not in his best interest:

1. The mission of the India Caucus is to allow more Indian workers to be imported into the United States and to continue the export of American jobs to India. Being a member of the India Caucus, however well intentioned, symbolizes support for the destruction of American jobs and uncontrolled immigration – all of which Tancredo opposes.
2. Members of the India Caucus have the stigma of being puppets of India. Whether true or not, this stigma could come back later to haunt those who don’t resign their membership.
3. Being in the India Caucus would not further Tancredo’s goal to help the Dalits.

I appreciated Rep. Tancredo’s gracious willingness to listen to my reservations about his membership in the India Caucus, and it was heartening to hear about his desire to help the Dalits. Tancredo’s resignation is mostly a symbolic gesture because he is already doing the right things in Congress. He understands that being associated with the India Caucus could send contradictory messages to his supporters, so he resigned.

I use the example of Congressman Tancredo in this paper to warn everyone not to pre-judge members of the India Caucus. Members should be challenged and held accountable for their actions, including their rationale for being in the caucus. All Congressmen in the India Caucus should be encouraged to resign, and if they refuse it’s fair-game to brand them as betrayers of the American trust. They should be told that membership in the India Caucus infers a lack of patriotism and brings into question whether their oath of office, and pledge of allegiance, was to the United States or India. •

NOTES

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