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Progressive Policy Institute

Max S. Baucus

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Remarks by Senator Max Baucus
November 27, 2007
Before the Progressive Policy Institute

Thank you very much Will, for that kind introduction. Thank you to the Progressive Policy Institute for all of your work and for hosting this event today. It’s a pleasure to be here today among friends old and new.

Like many of you, I recently returned from celebrating Thanksgiving with my family. For me, Thanksgiving is a celebration of the gifts our family and forefathers have given us. It’s a celebration of who we are as individuals and as Americans. It is also a celebration of who we are as a nation.

America has been many things for which we are grateful. Key among them, America is a nation of ideas.

We are a nation of ideas that are grounded in history and buttressed by our principles. We are a nation of ideas that drive us to right the wrongs of history, to improve our current state, and to build a better tomorrow. We are a nation of ideas that sees a future limited only by our ambition, our energy, and our innovation.

We can credit this nation of ideas for creating a world that is more peaceful, more prosperous, and more just than in centuries past. It is a world that is anchored in rules, institutions, and agreements that seek to ensure this peace, prosperity, and justice endure. We as Democrats can take great pride that many of these ideas sprang from the minds and hearts of our Democratic predecessors.

We can take pride in Woodrow Wilson’s vision of global competitiveness and American economic supremacy. We can take pride in Franklin Roosevelt’s vision of peace, stability, and democracy through prosperity and trade, and John Kennedy’s vision to address trade’s effect on American workers. We can take pride in Bill Clinton’s vision to embrace through trade the values that define us as Americans. Even today, we can take pride in the persistence and cooperation that led to the bipartisan May 10, 2007, agreement, allowing us to move forward with our current trade agenda.

While we can take pride in our history, we must also recognize that history has no patience for pauses. The world waits for no nation. New ideas must embrace new challenges to advance our future. If we fail to pursue new directions, we risk stagnation and even failure.

Look at today’s global economy. It hungers for new ideas. The speed and unpredictability of a global economy triggers anxiety in workers, farmers, and ranchers across the country. The WTO Doha round is at a standstill. Global imbalances have begun to unwind and have triggered rapid exchange rate fluctuations, inflation, and a growing credit crisis. The issue of import safety arrives on store shelves and dinner plates daily. Energy and environmental concerns are inseparable from our prosperity and economic growth.
We no longer live in a world of a few prosperous economies that set the rules for everyone else. Large developing economies are accumulating wealth and developing their industries. Many economies are up and coming. Some have already arrived. It's a new world, ready for new ideas, our ideas, Democratic ideas.

That is precisely why we are here today. I have known Ed Gresser for the better part of a decade. I first knew Ed as a legislative aide in my Senate office. I later knew him as a trusted advisor to U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky. Today he is the bold, insightful, and often witty voice of international trade policy at the Progressive Policy Institute. Throughout, I have known Ed Gresser as a man of ideas.

It is no surprise that Ed has written a great book of ideas to inform and inspire our economic policy. In *Freedom From Want: American Liberalism and the Global Economy*, Ed reminds us of our proud legacy of progressive internationalism. He takes a sober look at today's global economy, tracing back to the ideas and leaders that got us here. More importantly, he reminds us that our work is unfinished, as workers, businesses, the environment, and our collective prosperity await our renewed engagement.

Let me turn things over to Ed to kick off the discussion about *Freedom From Want*. I have a feeling that it's a discussion that many of us will continue for some time to come.