

UAW: A SEAT AT THE TABLE

There's always a lot of tut-tutting when the White House releases the list of people who attend a state dinner. While a lot of that, for the dinner honoring Hu Jintao tonight, has to do with which members of Congress have blown off invites (John Boehner, Harry Reid, and Mitch McConnell, though McConnell's wife Elaine Chao will attend with her father), I'm rather interested in who will attend from the auto industry.

Not Ford's CEO Alan Mullen, who has been working with manufacturers that export to China for years. Not Dan Akerson, who is CEO of that auto company that American taxpayers own that does a great deal of business in China (our investment in GM might be incredibly well-served to give GM this kind of access).

But Bob King, the head of the UAW.

Now, maybe I should be happy that UAW's head gets a seat at the table with the leader of the country his union has lost so many jobs to.

But I can't help but remember the transactional language King used to talk about his support for the Administration's KORUS deal.

King countered that the deal was not perfect; there were many things he objected to about the agreement. However, King added that, "It was important to endorse in order to reward the administration for its good behavior of including labor in negotiations."

[snip]

When I asked King why the UAW decided to endorse the treaty without consulting others unions he said, "We were on a tight deadline to endorse. If we wanted to be relevant, we needed to weigh in right away with an endorsement."

Back then, it sure sounded like King was happy to sell out workers in exchange for 800 jobs and a seat at the table. But now I'm wondering whether King got a **literal** seat at the table.