

exports, that we are doing the right thing by passing this agreement. If we pass an amendment to it, it will kill it, and so I hope very much that we will move ahead and do the right thing here.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

JUST DO IT

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon and evening we have discussed a budget resolution in our goals to eventually achieve a balanced budget. It makes me think, after listening to much of the discussion of what we should do, of the Nike running shoe ad that says, "Just do it".

We hear a lot of rhetoric about the fact that we should cut down on some of the wasteful spending. I say just do it. We hear a lot of discussion about let us lower some of those overwhelming taxes that we have imposed on the American working people. I say let us just do it. We have heard a lot of talk about how we change welfare, how we admit that welfare programs have been unsuccessful for the last 40 years and they need changing because we have taken the spirit away from people by giving them something for nothing. In changing the welfare program, I say just do it.

It is like the Nike ad on just doing it. It is not easy, it is going to be tough, but we have to just clench up our fists, we have to tighten up our stomachs and tighten up our dedication and just do it.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHABOT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. VOLKMER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. VOLKMER addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE TAX TRAP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, when I am back in Michigan in our 7th Congressional District, around Battle Creek and Jackson and Hillsdale and Adrian, not a day goes by but a young mother or a young father comes up to me and says, you know, we are working very hard and we can hardly get by. We are both working now. Or sometimes it is a young mother, all by herself trying to support her kids, and they say why is it so difficult now when my mom and dad, when I was growing up, only one of them worked and we still ended up with enough money to go on vacations, to have good food, and to have good housing?

You know what I have concluded, Mr. Speaker, a large part of today's problem is? The tax trap. Back in the 1950's and the 1960's the taxes only took a small part of our earnings, but today taxes take almost 50 percent of what we earn. Taxes at the local, State and national level take 41 percent of what we earn. And then, if we earn more money and work harder, and we get into those higher tax brackets, in addition to the 15 percent that goes into FICA, we can go as high as 39 percent on our income tax.

I call it the tax trap because people may remember that old song that says the more you study, the more you learn; the more you learn, the more you forget; the more you forget, the less you know; so why study? It is sort of true on taxes. The harder you work and the more you earn, the higher your taxes are and the more you have to pay the Federal Government to spend the money that you worked so hard to earn.

I wonder if people know that today we spend more on food and clothing and shelter. The taxes that we pay to the government is more than we spend on food and clothing and shelter. I wonder if people know that there is about 70 percent of the hard-working American people that pay more in the FICA taxes, that 15 percent that is tacked on to our wages, than they do in the Federal income tax.

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Let us look at the FICA taxes a minute. Most of that, 12.4 percent, goes to pay Social Security taxes. How many of the people under 40 today think that Social Security is going to be around when they are ready to retire?

We have got some real problems with Social Security. Back in the early 1980's and 1982, they appointed the Greenspan Commission because at that time they published reports that the unfunded liability of Social Security was 1.82 percent of payroll. In other words, taxes would have to be raised that much more to cover the unfunded liability of Social Security.

Guess what it is today. Today the unfunded liability of Social Security is 2.17 percent. So when we hear people say, "Don't worry about Social Security because it is going to have enough money until the year 2029," what happened is the actuaries just recently came and said it is not going to be 2030, but it is going to be 2029, but the fact is that is only if somehow Government pays back all the money that it has been taking out of the Social Security surpluses.

Since we changed the Social Security taxes in 1983, and at that time the estimate was that they would be solvent for 65 years, well, guess what one of the former commissioners, Dorcas Hardy, said a couple of weeks ago? She estimated that sometime during the year 2005 there would be less money coming in for Social Security than was required for the payout.

There is no trust fund. There is no reserve. The Federal Government has taken every cent of the surplus every year, written out an IOU, and spent that money for general fund spending, expanding Government spending, expanding programs, taking more of Americans' individual decisionmaking away from them and putting it in this Chamber and over in the Senate Chamber and having Government make the decisions that they used to decide.

So when that young mother and young father come to me and say, "What are your suggestions, what are we going to do," my suggestion is to slow down on the borrowing and eventually balance this budget. Slow down on those taxes. Let people keep some of that hard-earned money in their own pockets and decide how to spend that money, rather than sending it to this kind of Chamber to let Government decide how to spend your hard-earned dollar.

Somehow, Mr. Speaker, we have got to have a tax system where the people that work hard and try and save, end up better off than those that do not. That is the goal of our budget resolution, and our budget projection for the future of saying cut spending, do it now, do not put it off and let us get to a balanced budget. Let us quit borrowing and taking the future away from our kids.

IN OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR
WASTE STORAGE ON PALMYRA
ATOLL, A POSSESSION OF THE
UNITED STATES IN THE PACIFIC
OCEAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHABOT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I come before my colleagues and our great Nation today to state my strongest opposition to a proposal that some people view as nuclear lunacy. Some of my colleagues may have heard of this reckless initiative circulating around Capitol Hill, that would give birth to the world's largest nuclear waste cesspool—right smack in the middle amongst Pacific island nations and in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Mr. Speaker, after approximately 50 years of nuclear testing in the Pacific, where hundreds of the world's most lethal nuclear weapons have been detonated, would you not think Mr. Speaker, that the peoples and the environment of the Pacific have suffered enough from nuclear poisoning and contamination? Apparently not—as a group of investors from New York and Russia—yes, Russian—are pushing the idea of commercially developing Palmyra Atoll, a United States possession in the Pacific, as an international storage site for spent nuclear fuel and plutonium. These investors are prepared to sacrifice the health and welfare of millions of men, women, and children who reside in the Pacific, for the billions of dollars these investors intend to make in annual revenues.

According to these investors, their commercial enterprise would bring together the Governments of the United States, Russia and others to jointly store over 200,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel and excess weapons plutonium on Palmyra Atoll. Although making money is the primary motive, they also proclaim altruistic objectives, such as: First, securing Russia's fissile materials from the nuclear black market, while restraining Moscow's spread of nuclear technology to suspect regimes; Second, discouraging the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel by nations for plutonium; and Third, materially aiding global efforts to stop nuclear proliferation.

Although I find these nonproliferation objectives to be admirable, I take great exception to the investors' decision to locate their international nuclear storage site on Palmyra Island—a volcanic island. Hawaii's distinguished Senator, DANIEL AKAKA, has recently opposed the plan, calling it nuclear nonsense, and I cannot more wholeheartedly agree with the gentleman from Hawaii.

Mr. Speaker, it is the height of folly and sheer nonsense to build the planet's largest nuclear wastedump on a geologically-suspect, dormant volcano—a volcanic formation that is surrounded by swirling Pacific currents,

storms, cyclones, and hurricanes. Or how about these freak waves that travel in the Pacific at 60 mph and at 60 feet in height?

As many of us know, the Pacific Basin is afflicted by shifting tectonic plates, and volcanoes erupt regularly. With the State of Hawaii less than 1000 miles away and my district, American Samoa, also close by—who can guarantee that Americans will not suffer from the environmental firestorm to erupt if Palmyra Atoll is, again, subjected to geologic movement? Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the storage here of 200,000 tons of nuclear materials that shall remain radioactive, toxic and hazardous for over 100,000 years—in essence, for all time, as far as I am concerned. Mr. Speaker, the menace to surrounding Pacific island nations, such as Kiribati less than 200 miles away, is obviously the greatest. I would not want my family to live on islands anywhere close to Palmyra. What guarantees are there for the lives of some 1.2 million American citizens who live in the State of Hawaii, which is located less than 1,000 miles north of Palmyra Island?

Mr. Speaker, the Palmyra proposal subjects Pacific residents to additional dangers, as ships carrying spent nuclear fuel and plutonium from all corners of the world shall traverse the Pacific to reach the island. The threat of accidental vessel sinkings and terrorist hijackings of the deadly nuclear cargoes are only the beginning of problems to anticipate and are surely to come if this body ever approves this proposal.

After review of proposed legislation that would facilitate Palmyra Atoll's development as a private nuclear storage site, I believe that, in addition to the concerns I have already raised, the proposal is grossly unsound on its face. I have attached a copy of the draft legislation for the RECORD.

The bill directs the Nuclear Regulatory Commission [NRC] to expeditiously review the issuance of a license to the owners of Palmyra to operate a spent nuclear fuel storage facility, thereby applying undue pressure upon the NRC to circumvent normal environmental, engineering and safety requirements for such storage facilities.

The bill further provides that key sections of the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA] and the Clean Water Act shall not apply to the Palmyra facility, thereby sidestepping legal requirements for an environmental impact statement to be prepared. What are they trying to hide?

The bill also makes no provision whatsoever for the ultimate disposition of the 200,000-plus tons of nuclear material to be stored on Palmyra. From my understanding, Palmyra is not to be a permanent repository like Yucca Mountain, which has entailed years of study and analyses which are still ongoing.

Nor is there any provision that addresses who will be liable in the event

that a nuclear accident occurs at Palmyra or while nuclear materials are in-transit through the Pacific region. Can these investors cover this enormous liability, or are the United States and Russia expected to do so?

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the bill makes no mention of who will provide the necessary security and protection of these deadly fissile materials. The Palmyra storage facility will constitute a plutonium mine for centuries that will attract every rogue government and terrorist group with nuclear weapons ambitions. Who is to provide for the long-term security of Palmyra?

Mr. Speaker, as I said in the beginning, this Palmyra Atoll initiative is nuclear lunacy. Rather than governments putting the responsibility of storing dangerous nuclear materials in the hands of a private company, perhaps we should consider having the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] perform this crucial function for the world community.

Mr. Speaker, the Palmyra Atoll proposal is the work of individuals who see only profits and outright greed, at the expense of the lives of the millions of people who live throughout the Asia-Pacific regions. These profiteers now see that by throwing to the Pacific Islands a few bones to chew on—that this will satisfy their needs. Is \$250 million enough? What happened to the initial offer for \$750 million?

Mr. Speaker, I cannot more strongly urge our colleagues to stand with me in opposing this reckless legislation when and if it is introduced to be considered by this body.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the following for the RECORD:

DRAFT BILL

To facilitate the ability of private owners to site, design, license, construct, operate and decommission a private facility for the interim or permanent storage of commercial high-level spent nuclear fuel on the Pacific Atoll of Palmyra subject to licensing by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Private Storage Facility Authorization Act of 1996."

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings and purposes.
- Sec. 3. Definitions.
- Sec. 4. Authorization and siting of private storage facility.
- Sec. 5. Funding of private storage facility.
- Sec. 6. Design of private storage facility.
- Sec. 7. Transfer of ownership of spent nuclear fuel.
- Sec. 8. Transportation.
- Sec. 9. Activities of the Commission.
- Sec. 10. Participation in the project by Minatom.
- Sec. 11. Plutonium processing facility.
- Sec. 12. Trust fund to cover cost of final disposal.
- Sec. 13. Trust fund for benefit of Pacific island nations.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that:

(1) The age of nuclear energy has brought with it three worldwide problems that may be summarized as follows:

(A) Safely disposing of high-level spent nuclear fuel which is necessarily generated in the process of producing electrical energy by nuclear technology and which is dangerous to life and ecology.

(B) Safeguarding of high-level spent nuclear fuel so that its by-products cannot be used to produce and proliferate weapons grade nuclear material.

(C) Safe storage and/or processing of plutonium that is surplus to legitimate national security requirements to insure that it does not fall into the hands of rogue governments and terrorists.

(2) Because of siting problems it has so far not been possible to begin construction of a repository for storage of high-level spent nuclear fuel in the United States even though the U.S. Department of Energy is contractually obligated to have such a facility available by January 31, 1998.

(3) Facilities for the temporary storage of spent nuclear fuel—primarily at the power plants that used the fuel—are virtually exhausted, a problem that affects the nuclear power industry all over the world.

(4) Reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel is a method of separating the components of that fuel so that the uranium it contains can be reused to generate electric power, but this method is not approved in the United States because it yields by-products that can be used to produce weapons grade nuclear materials.

(5) Prompt implementation of the plan for building a private storage facility will make it possible to include Minatom, the nuclear energy facility of the Russian Federation, as an equity partner in the project, a move that will greatly reduce the threat of weapons-grade nuclear materials falling into the hands of irresponsible nations while at the same time benefiting the ecology by providing the Russian Federation a safe repository for its high-level nuclear spent fuel. Participation by Minatom as an equity partner will enable Minatom to share substantially in the profits realized by the project.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to facilitate the ability of private owners to site, design, license, construct, operate and decommission a facility for the safe storage of high-level commercial spent nuclear fuel and to establish procedures that will make such a facility available in the shortest possible time. The existence of this facility will provide adequate and safe storage space for all commercial high-level spent nuclear fuel and will render unnecessary and uneconomical the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel; and

(2) to authorize private owners to designate and develop a site for a private storage facility on Palmyra Atoll for high-level spent nuclear fuel and facilities for storage and processing of surplus plutonium.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) PALMYRA ATOLL.—Palmyra Atoll is a small group of coral islets of volcanic origin that surround a shallow lagoon and is located in the Pacific Ocean at 5 degrees, 52 minutes, north latitude and 162 degrees, 30 minutes, west longitude. The atoll is classified as an incorporated possession of the United States and is privately owned.

(2) COMMERCIAL HIGH-LEVEL SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL.—The term “commercial high-level spent nuclear fuel” means fuel that has been withdrawn from a nuclear reactor primarily dedicated to the production of electric power following irradiation, the constituent elements of which have not been separated by reprocessing.

(3) PLUTONIUM.—The term “plutonium” refers to one of the by-products of nuclear fission that in its refined form is essential to the production of nuclear weapons.

(4) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission” means the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

(5) PRIVATE OWNERS.—The term “private owners” means a group of investors organized into three corporations formed for the purpose of developing and operating a private storage facility for commercial high-level spent nuclear fuel and surplus plutonium in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

(6) PRIVATE STORAGE FACILITY.—The term “private storage facility” means a facility designed, constructed and operated by private owners for the receipt, handling, possession, safeguarding and storage of commercial high-level spent nuclear fuel in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

(7) STORAGE.—The term “storage” means retention of commercial high-level spent nuclear fuel with the intention of recovering the components of that fuel for subsequent use, processing or disposal. This term is not to be confused with the term “final disposal,” which refers to high-level spent nuclear fuel whose toxicity has been reduced to an as yet theoretical level that poses no possible danger to life, health or environment.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION FOR SITING, CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A PRIVATE STORAGE FACILITY.

(A) AUTHORIZATION.—

(1) The private owners may site, design, license, construct, operate and decommission a private storage facility on Palmyra Atoll for the storage of commercial high-level spent nuclear fuel in accordance with the regulations of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

(2) In order to facilitate this authorization, title VI, section 605(a) of Public Law 96-205 (48 U.S.C. 1491(a)) is amended by adding the words “or to the Atoll known as Palmyra” to the end of the last line of section 605(a).

(3) LICENSE.—On application by the private owners, the private storage facility shall be licensed by the Commission in accordance with its regulations governing the licensing of independent spent fuel installations as modified in accordance with section 9 infra.

(b) DESIGNATION OF PRIVATE STORAGE FACILITY SITE.—The site designated by the private owners for a private storage facility is Palmyra Atoll, which is owned in fee by them and is not under the jurisdiction of any State.

(c) ACTIVITIES.—The private owners shall be authorized to conduct specified activities at the private storage facility site, including the design, licensing, construction, operation and decommissioning of the private storage facility, with the scope of activities to be determined by the private owners.

SEC. 5. FUNDING OF THE PRIVATE STORAGE FACILITY.

SOURCE OF FUNDING.—The private owners will obtain funding for the design, licensing, construction and operation of the private storage facility from private sources. Income will be derived from user fees.

SEC. 6. DESIGN OF PRIVATE STORAGE FACILITY.

(A) STORAGE CAPACITY.—The private storage facility shall have a storage capacity of not less than 200,000 metric tons of commercial high-level spent nuclear fuel and plutonium. This capacity shall be expandable as necessary to meet storage requirements.

(b) CANISTER SYSTEM.—the design of the private storage facility shall provide for the use of such containment and transportation technologies as are licensed and certified by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for use in handling transportation and storage of high-level spent nuclear fuel.

SEC. 7. TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL.

At the time that spent nuclear fuel is transferred to the canisters belonging to the private owners, ownership of that fuel shall vest in the private owners.

SEC. 8. TRANSPORTATION.

Upon acceptance by the private owners of spent nuclear fuel, the spent nuclear fuel shall be transported to the private storage facility in the safest, most cost-efficient manner in accordance with the regulations for such transit of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Transportation.

SEC. 9. ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act the Commission shall amend its regulations governing the licensing of independent spent nuclear fuel storage installations, as necessary, to provide for the licensing of the private storage facility upon application by the private owners.

(b) CONTENTS.—The regulations issued under subsection (a) shall incorporate the following provisions:

(1) LOCATION OF FACILITY.—The private storage facility shall be located at the site specified in section 4 supra.

(2) TERM OF LICENSE.—The private storage facility shall be licensed for the maximum period consistent with applicable law.

(c) LICENSING.—On application by the private owners for a license for construction and operation of the private storage facility at the designated site, the Commission shall review the license application and issue a final decision on it at the earliest practicable date, to the extent permitted by law and regulation, but not later than 18 months after receipt of the license application.

(d) COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1969.—Preparation of an environmental impact statement by the Commission under section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)) in conjunction with the licensing of the private storage facility authorized by this Act shall not be required.

(e) DREDGING PERMIT.—The issuance of a permit under section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) for dredging of the lagoon in the Palmyra Atoll in conjunction with this project shall not be required.

SEC. 10. PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT BY MINATOM.

It shall be a condition binding on the private owners that Minatom, the nuclear energy facility of the Russian Federation, be offered a substantial equity position in the real estate and global services of this project in exchange for its agreement to deny nuclear weapons technology and materials to any nation whose interests and policies are inimical to the security interests of either the United States or the Russian Federation as determined by their respective heads of state. In exchange for equity participation in the project, Minatom also will not make any commitment for reprocessing high level spent nuclear fuel from sources outside of the Russian Federation after the time that this Act becomes law.

SEC. 11. PLUTONIUM STORAGE AND PROCESSING FACILITY.

For the purpose of implementing a global policy of nuclear non-proliferation, the private owners will design and build at their own cost, using revenues derived from storage fees, a facility for storage, conditioning, stabilizing and conversion of plutonium that is surplus to the security requirements of the United States and Russia. The private owners will not operate this facility, but it will be available for joint operation by the United States Department of Energy and Minatom.

SEC. 12. TRUST FUND FOR FINAL DISPOSITION.

From revenues received from storage fees, the owners will contribute to a trust fund to be administered by the United States Department of Energy the sum of \$100,000 for each metric ton of high level spent nuclear fuel deposited in the private storage facility, which fund shall be used to defray the cost of making final disposition of the high-level spent nuclear fuel existing in the private storage facility at the time the disposition decision is made.

SEC. 13. TRUST FUND FOR BENEFIT OF PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS.

In recognition of the interest in and support of this project on the part of the Pacific Island nations, the private owners will establish a trust fund, to be administered by the Office of Insular Affairs of the United States Department of the Interior and based in Hawaii, that will receive a share of the profits from each metric ton of spent nuclear fuel placed in the private storage facility. This trust will be funded by an initial contribution of \$100,000,000 plus an increment of \$25,000 for each metric ton deposited in the private storage facility up to a maximum payout of \$250,000,000 per annum. This fund will be used to assist the Pacific Island Nations in economic development, education and environmental protection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BUYER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois [Mrs. COLLINS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. MICA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. DELAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. CHAMBLISS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. CHAMBLISS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. WAMP] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. WAMP addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. WELLER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. WELLER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Washington [Ms. DUNN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. DUNN of Washington addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. HILLEARY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HILLEARY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE BURNING OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCHES IN THE SOUTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, from Johnson Grove Baptist Church in Tennessee in January 1995, to the Church of the Living God in Greenville, TX, just this week, America's black churches are under siege. The recent outbreak of arson crimes throughout the United States recalls a dark era in the history of our great Nation. In all, 33 black churches have been torched in the past 18 months in a rash of disturbing acts of violence, racism, and hatred. This cannot be tolerated.

The pain and anguish of these fires can be felt here in Washington and throughout the Nation by people of all races and creeds who value tolerance and diversity. While there is no clear

evidence of a national conspiracy, it is clear that racial hostility is the driving force behind these reprehensible incidents. This must and will stop.

It is hard to imagine a more depraved and senseless act of violence than the destruction of a place of worship. In this Nation, black churches were burned in the 1950's and 1960's to intimidate civil rights workers. The sight of a Southern black church burning is part of a hateful mosaic which includes beatings, murders, and lynchings. It is easy to try and relegate these memories to the past. Yet, the recent crimes show that there is much work to be done when it comes to the end of discrimination and the promotion of civil rights for all.

As many oppressed races and religions know, the specter of hatred can rise at any time and in any place. We must always remain vigilant if all Americans are to have an equal opportunity to taste the sweet fruit of freedom.

These fires struck at the very heart and soul of the black community. Every family, without regard to race, has a right to expect that when they walk into a church, synagogue, mosque, or other place of worship, they will find a place of prayer and quiet contemplation and not the charred remnants of a hateful act perpetrated by cowards in the night.

We must work together as a nation to safeguard the right of every American to pray in safety in their own house of worship. That is what America stands for. That is why thousands of Americans have laid down their lives over the centuries, Mr. Speaker: to protect the lives of all Americans to worship as they choose, if they choose, to worship in safety, peace, and free of violence.

Ultimately, it is up to us to end this senseless violence. We must say to those who would feed upon what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., called the "stale bread and spoiled meat of racism" that they have lost sight of what America stands for. That is not the American way. Together, we can smother the fires of racial hatred which fuel this violence.

Religious freedom is one of the founding principles of our democracy and the black church has historically been the center of worship, self-help, and community life for millions of Americans. In my own home of Montgomery County, PA, some of my fondest memories are of the fellowship and friendship I have shared with my friends in many of the black congregations of my district.

We must all do our part to end this rash of violence. In Congress, Mr. Speaker, we have introduced legislation to deter these arson crimes and to increase the penalties for those who would perpetrate them. Americans must rise up and show the forces of hatred they cannot win and are not welcome here.