

with a healthy economy and the resources they need to move this nation ahead.

This year, as a member of the Committee on the Budget, I will be looking forward to working on these issues. We know that the part of our national debt "held by public" will be 42 percent of our Gross Domestic Product this year. This is the term we use to describe the money the Federal Government has borrowed from banks and pension funds. With a Federal debt in the area of \$5 trillion, we need to focus on paying that down and end the process of borrowing.

The budget proposal sent to Congress by the President does just that. It makes sure that we save and makes sure that Medicare and Social Security are there for the future, as well as it pays down the debt. This is a home run for all of our citizens.

If my colleagues look at this chart, we look at the interest again, 14 percent. If we have the discipline, the fiscal discipline, to make sure we have Social Security there for the future, that we have Medicare there for the future and pay down that debt, we will get that down to about 2 cents per dollar. With that kind of a reduction, I want to tell my colleagues, there will then be real money for tax cuts and real money for investing in a lot of programs that people want.

I am looking forward to working on this agenda that will be healthy for the future economy of the United States.

NEVADA IS TARGET FOR NUCLEAR PAYLOAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) is recognized for 10 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I come before my colleagues to give voice to the well-founded fears and concerns of the citizens of the Las Vegas Valley, which is my home district, and the citizens of the entire State of Nevada.

Over one and a half million Nevadans live within an hour or so drive from the so-called temporary high level nuclear dump proposed in H.R. 45. This bill would dump over 70,000 tons of an incredibly lethal substance at one location in southern Nevada. Those Nevadans, mothers like myself, fathers, sons, daughters and grandparents, deserve the same health and safety protections as every American.

H.R. 45 would deny equal protection under the law to the citizens of Nevada and to future Nevada generations. But I will also discuss how this bill places Americans in all parts of this country at risk.

When one lives in a State that has been singled out as the target for a nuclear payload, he gives close attention to the issue. Nevadans know just how toxic, how dangerous, how menacing high-level nuclear waste really is. To

give my colleagues some idea, a person standing next to an unshielded spent nuclear fuel assembly would get a fatal dose of radiation within three minutes.

Under H.R. 45, the concentrated level of deadly radiation in one place in my home State staggers the imagination. H.R. 45 would force all of the Nation's high-level waste on the people of one State, a State where there is not even one nuclear reactor.

For nearly two decades the nuclear industry and the Department of Energy have tried to convince Nevadans that high-level nuclear waste transportation and storage is safe. Their argument basically is, we will just stuff this stuff right into metal cans, screw the lids on tight, and there is nothing to worry about.

Well, what is wrong with this picture? Well, if those cans of nuclear waste are so safe, why do they have to be shipped from all parts of the United States into the State of Nevada? That question has haunted Nevadans for years, and our concerns have intensified with H.R. 45.

This bill would unleash high-level nuclear waste onto the Nation's highways and rail lines. It is this issue, the transportation of high-level nuclear waste, that binds Nevadans with all Americans as potential victims of H.R. 45.

Americans from all parts of the country would be exposed to unacceptable and unnecessary risk because they live near highways and railroads where nuke trucks and trains would roll. Moving nuclear waste to Nevada would require well over 100,000 long-haul shipments. Nuclear waste will be speeding around the clock every day for nearly 30 years on our roads and rails. This should sound a national alarm.

The deadly cargo will intrude on 43 States and hundreds of cities and towns across our nation. Fifty million Americans live within just a mile and a half of shipping routes. The waste will rumble through Birmingham, Alabama; Laramie, Wyoming; Portland, Maine; and the suburbs of Los Angeles; Miami, Florida; Kansas City; and St. Louis, Missouri. In short, nuclear waste will be on the move all over the country all the time for 30 years.

The Department of Transportation counted more than 99,000 incidents in which hazardous materials were released from trucks and trains from 1987 to 1996, causing 356 major injuries and 114 deaths. The Department of Energy has described a plausible crash scenario involving high impact and fire that would contaminate an area of 42 square miles with radioactive debris. It is truly horrifying to picture this happening in a populated area.

We have been repeatedly told that shipping nuclear waste across the country and stashing it at a dump site is safe. But let us take a brief look at the history of how the Federal Government has handled nuclear projects. The lands around nuclear installations at Hanford, Washington, Rocky Flats,

Colorado, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Fernald, Ohio, are contaminated. The GAO concluded that 124 of our 127 nuclear sites have been mismanaged by the DOE.

Nevadans do not buy this "don't worry, be happy" attitude towards radiation, and for good reason. I grew up in Nevada. Nevadans were proud to volunteer for the patriotic chore of playing host to above- and below-ground nuclear weapons testing, but the Federal Government never leveled with us about the risks.

In the 1950s the Government produced films advising that if people just stayed indoors as clouds of fallout drifted through communities, everyone would be safe. As a safety measure, the Government suggested that a quick car wash would eliminate any pesky radioactive contamination.

It seems harmless enough if it were not for the evidence of a disturbing increase in cancer that later traumatized these same communities. Harmless? Perhaps, if above-ground testing did not spread radioactive elements across the country.

Supposedly safe above-ground nuclear tests were stopped when it was proved that radiation was winding up in the bodies of American children through the milk they were drinking. Underground testing was supposed to be the safe answer, or so the Government said. The radioactivity would be trapped underground, never to get out, except that some of the underground shafts burst open, spewing radiation into the air. Now scientists are finding that plutonium thought to be trapped in these test shafts is moving through the groundwater at alarming speed.

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So I have a healthy skepticism about Federal nuclear programs. My healthy skepticism persuades me that H.R. 45 is, in fact, a Trojan horse for permanently dumping high level nuclear waste in Nevada.

Make no mistake, there is nothing temporary about H.R. 45. This bill is a political vehicle to get the waste to Nevada, to be conveniently parked next door to Yucca Mountain, the site of a failing effort to justify a permanent dump.

The past year has been marked by a quickening pace of scientific evidence that clearly eliminates Yucca Mountain as a safe place for nuclear waste. Water will saturate the dump. Those who thought Yucca Mountain would be dry for 10,000 years are stunned to discover that water is filtering through at an alarming rate. Yucca Mountain has been, is and always will be jolted by earthquakes. In recent days seismologists described swarms of earthquakes that rocked the area. To visit Yucca Mountain is to feel the earth move.

A growing number of scientists fear that a Yucca Mountain dump intended to isolate deadly radioactivity forever may well explode into an environmental apocalypse of volcanic eruptions. It is not nice to fool Mother Nature. Where earthquakes, water and

volcanic activity are permanent dangers, we must not build a high level nuclear dump.

The nuclear power industry should immediately cancel the Yucca Mountain project. The billions of dollars coming from ratepayers would be better spent finding a sensible and safe solution to nuclear disposal. Instead we have H.R. 45. This bill exists because the nuclear power industry sees that the only way to keep the Yucca Mountain project alive is to build a temporary dump next door. With the waste site up at the temporary dump near Yucca Mountain, there would be a powerful motivation to make Yucca Mountain work out somehow.

Under those circumstances I fear that the health and safety of current and future generations would be jeopardized for the sake of expediency. As the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board has clearly stated, a temporary facility at the Nevada test site could prejudice later decisions about the suitability of Yucca Mountain.

H.R. 45 has its roots in expediency over public health and welfare. H.R. 45 throws out existing radiation safety standards and replaces them with dangerous levels of radiation exposure that would be, quote, acceptable. The temporary dump cannot meet the current standards, so H.R. 45 permits Nevadans to be exposed to four to six times the amount of radiation allowed at any other waste site. H.R. 45 allows exposure 25 times the level set by the Safe Drinking Water Act.

EPA administrator Carol Browner said H.R. 45 would authorize exposures to future generations of Nevadans which are much higher than those allowed for other Americans and citizens of other countries. Congress in 1982 called for nine potential nuclear storage sites to be assessed. By 1987, due to political considerations, not scientific findings, Yucca Mountain alone was targeted for site characterization.

As it became increasingly clear Yucca Mountain is not suitable under stringent and responsible law that Congress passed in 1982, the rules have been repeatedly relaxed in favor of Yucca Mountain and against health and safety. And now comes H.R. 45, a bill which achieves nothing but risks the health and safety of current and future generations of Nevadans.

The Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board advises that there are no compelling reasons to move the nuclear waste in short term. H.R. 45 would be a terrible and needless mistake. If passed, it would be fought in courts by Americans across this country. I would stand with them in court or on the roads and rails if necessary to stop this disastrous policy.

REMEMBER PAOLI

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr.

WELDON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this special order to discuss America's patriots. The patriots of America have been extremely important in the struggle for this great Nation over the past 220 years, to allow us to enjoy the freedoms and the independence that oftentimes we take for granted. My discussion today will focus on the patriots of America of the past and the patriots of America today, those who are defending our country around the world.

Let me start off by discussing a situation I think requires national attention.

Over 220 years ago, Mr. Speaker, this Nation was fighting for its existence. Young patriots, many of whom were undertrained, who were not properly fed, who were ill-equipped, were fighting against the forces of England to allow us to have a free independent Nation. There were some very serious battles in that process. We know those battles from our history books, the battles of Valley Forge, the battles that took place in Brandywine.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we have failed to understand is that one key battle that many historians would argue was the turning point in the morale of our troops to defeat the British was the battle that resulted in the outcry of our troops, "Remember Paoli." It occurred in the spring of 1777 when the British were conducting the Philadelphia campaign to then take over the capital of our Nation because at that time Philadelphia was the capital of the United States. There was a major effort on the part of the British to move to capture Philadelphia, and in the process a series of battles took place.

The first of two American attempts to stop the British invasion that fall was the battle of Brandywine, September 11, 1777, and the unsuccessful Battle of the Clouds, September 16, 1777. There was also a third attempt to contain the British General Sir William Howe's advance on Philadelphia, and each of them were unsuccessful.

But a very important history lesson shows us that in the Battle of Paoli the British troops sought and successfully committed a surprise attack on our troops that were encamped at Paoli at a cornfield, a cornfield that still exists today. The British went to do this in the early morning hours so as to avoid detection, and they did not want to use their guns because they wanted a surprise attack to wipe out the patriots for the fight for our independence.

The battle took place, and the British massacred the American patriots. Their bayonet attacks on the American young men who fought there, many of whom were 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 years of age, were by all accounts devastating. Fifty-three young Americans were slaughtered, slaughtered by the British. They were slaughtered in such a fierce way that the story of that battle

traveled throughout the Revolutionary War troops and the cry of "Remember Paoli" became a rallying cry for the American patriots in all future battles of the revolution which we all know we successfully won.

"Remember Paoli" was about a battle fought on a 40-acre site in Malvern and Chester County in Pennsylvania, not far from Valley Forge and not far from Brandywine. Today there are 53 young American patriots whose bodies lay in rest at that site.

The challenge we have, Mr. Speaker, is that that 40-acre battlefield adjacent to the burial site of these young American patriots is about to be sold. It is about to be developed; perhaps another shopping center, perhaps another housing project, perhaps being paved over by someone who wants to build some new type of development in the area that we call the Main Line coming out of Philadelphia, a very affluent area.

But the owner of the property, a private school right next to the site, has issued a challenge, that America, the State, the county and the local community should undertake an effort to preserve that 40-acre site so that those 53 young American patriots, so that their memory is never forgotten.

Two and a half years ago when the owner of that property came forward, the owner of the school, the board of directors said, "We challenge the community, we challenge the country to protect this site and allow us to move on to other things. But if you do not take up that challenge, we will sell the site to developers."

Mr. Speaker, that sale is imminent, and if in fact the Paoli site is sold, it will be one of the last remaining significant sites that was a part of our Revolutionary War history. It is a site that needs to be protected. It is a site that needs the Federal Government, the State, the county and the local government to come together with the private sector to show those American patriots and all of our war heroes, including those serving the country today, that we will always remember and honor their service, and in this case especially because of the symbolism associated with the battle at Paoli and the massacre that occurred there.

Two and a half years ago a local group led by citizens in Malvern Borough, where Paoli is located, joined together to begin to raise the private money to acquire this site. Now many would argue this site should be protected by the Federal Government. After all, it was a major battle, just as Valley Forge was a battle and Brandywine was a battle and other historical sites were battle grounds. But they decided they would set the tone, so they set out to raise money. To date they have raised over \$500,000 in actual money and commitments to help protect this site.

They came to me one year ago, and they said, "Congressman, can you assist us? Because there are patriots of the Revolutionary War who are buried