

to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

NIGHTSIDE CHAT ON TOPICS OF CONCERN TO AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, once again we are here this evening for a little nightside chat. There are a number of different subjects I would like to cover this evening.

I would like to start out by talking about the loss of a good friend that I had last week, just a short comment in that regard. We are going to move on and talk about the Congressional Medal of Honor. We lost one of our heroes. If you want a true definition of hero, take a look at the people that serve in our military forces. We lost one in Colorado. I will talk a little about him. Then I want to move on and talk about the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms people.

We had a very interesting item in Colorado over the weekend about the enforcement, or lack of enforcement, by the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms department in their inspections regarding firearms sales. As you know, across the country guns have become somewhat of a sensitive issue.

Now, last week when I addressed you, we talked a little on Operation Exile. I know that my colleague, the gentleman from the State of Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM), is going to introduce a bill tomorrow to assist our local States and our local communities on their Project Exile, so we will highlight a little of what he is attempting to do. We will talk about our public awareness campaign and talk about some of the responsibilities of gun ownership.

Then, if we have some time this evening, I would like to touch again on the death tax. As many of you know, that is a very punitive tax in our system. It is a tax that has devastating impacts on small businesses, has devastating impacts on farms and ranches across the country; and, frankly, this is not a justified tax.

It is a tax supported by the administration. In fact, the administration has proposed a \$9.5 billion increase in the death tax this year. I am confident that we can stop that. But just so you no, there is a big difference of opinion on the policy of the Democratic administration to raise death taxes and our position on the Republican side that says death taxes are fundamentally unfair, they are unjustified, and they should be eliminated in this country.

But we will get to all that in due time. Let us start first of all with just a comment about a friend of mine, a classmate of mine, a fellow named Richard. I will not go into his last name, but I want to tell Members, my friend committed suicide last week.

I hope that in your walks of life, sometimes we get so busy that we forget that some people have some demons within them that they cannot control, that they are having a difficult time with life.

What I try and do, and it just came back home this last week when I was at the service of this gentleman, and he really was, I think he had some demons he could not control; but it brought back the thought that, gosh, any time we see somebody in some despair, we should always urge them, before they take that step, that ultimate and in some regards very selfish step of suicide, urge them to call a suicide watch or get some assistance.

I am confident that my friend, had my friend just had a few more minutes of being able to calm down and think out the situation, we would have avoided a tragedy; not so much just a tragedy to my friend, but a tragedy to his friends, to his family, to his wife, and to his children. His wife, Anna, is a splendid person. She now faces a tremendous challenge ahead with these children.

The circumstances of this suicide were tragic. I think the circumstances of any suicide are tragic. And if there is a justification for mental health assistance in this country, it is that suicide tragedy that takes place across the entire spectrum, across the entire spectrum of age, every day in this country.

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So I just urge my colleagues again, we run at a fast pace around here, but if one has an opportunity to put one's hand on the shoulder of a friend, and I am sure all of my colleagues would do it, and I wish I would have had the opportunity to do it, it might just work; it might just prevent somebody from being in such despair that they ruin the most ultimate gift that God could give us.

PUEBLO, COLORADO: HOME OF A HERO, WILLIAM J. CRAWFORD

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about another sad event last week, although the gentleman lived a full life, and that is about a gentleman named William Crawford, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. My district is the Third Congressional District of Colorado, and just for those of my colleagues that need reminding, that includes most of the mountains of Colorado, all the resorts: Aspen, Colorado; Vail, Steamboat, Telluride; it has the industrial community of Pueblo, it has the San Luis Valley, it has Durango, down there in the Four Corners, the Anasazi ruins, the Colorado National Monuments, part of the Rocky Mountain National Monument, part of the Black Canyon National Monument. As my colleagues can see, any time I talk about my district, I get in kind of a promotional mood because it is such a wonderful district.

But there is another reason that stands out besides the natural beauty of this district and the people of this district, and that is that Pueblo, Colorado is what we call the Home of Heroes. Mr. Speaker, this last week we had four living members from the community who received the Congressional Medal of Honor. This was not awarded, they deserved this, they worked for it. I do not have to go into what the Congressional Medal of Honor means, although in my opinion, any recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor is at the very highest of the echelon as far as a definition of what being an American is all about.

Well, last week we lost one of our four; it was William Crawford. He passed away last Tuesday and actually they were holding a memorial service today at the United States Air Force Academy. I thought I would talk just a little about what Mr. Crawford did and how he earned the Congressional Medal of Honor. I guess the best way to do that is just take directly from the script which described his actions.

But before I do that, let me say that one of the things that causes me some, I guess one would say discouragement, is when I read throughout the sports pages of our newspapers in this country, we read about heroes in sports. My opinion is there are celebrities in sports and there are a lot of talented celebrities in sports, but we really ought to be very cautious and very selfish about the use of the word "heroes." The word "heroes" really should be placed not on sports figures, but figures like William Crawford, figures like the firemen or the policemen that lose their lives. I think we lose a police officer every 28 hours in this country. This year has been a bad year for our firemen as well. We have lost several firemen in the line of duty.

But let us go back to Mr. Crawford. I am not over-using the word when I use the word "hero." He was given this medal and this recognition for conspicuous gallantry at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy in Italy on September 13, 1943. When Company I attacked an enemy-held position on hill 424, the 3rd Platoon, in which Private Crawford was a squad scout, attacked as base platoon for the company.

After reaching the crest of the hill, the platoon was pinned down by intense enemy machine gun and small arms fire. Locating one of these guns, which was dug in on a terrace on his immediate front, Private Crawford, without orders and on his own initiative, moved over the hill directly into the line of fire and crawled to a point within a few yards of the gun emplacement and single-handedly stood up and destroyed the machine gun emplacement, killed three of the crew with a hand grenade and thus, enabled his platoon to continue its advance.

So he climbs over the first hill, he is in the direct line of fire of a machine gun, he is able to crawl under the machine gun fire, he gets right up to the

machine gun emplacement, he stands up, he eliminates three of the enemy and throws a hand grenade in and destroys the machine gun emplacement. But it does not stop there.

They go to the next hill and after reaching the crest of that hill, once again they are pinned down by enemy fire, and once again Private Crawford decides unilaterally to do what he can do to save the platoon. He moves forward once again in the face of intense fire and here, instead of one machine gun emplacement we have two machine gun emplacements, but they are side-by-side. As Private Crawford crawls up, he goes first to the left and is able to engage in a hand grenade throw, throwing a hand grenade into the first emplacement, destroys that one and then stands, throws a second hand grenade and using machine gun fire of his own is able to kill the members or eliminate the second machine gun emplacement. But the machine gun was still able to be used, so he jumps into the emplacement, takes over the German machine gun and then turns it on the German troops who were then retreating and was able to provide cover for his platoon while they move into a safer location.

That takes a lot of guts, and for that he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. His passing is something that we all see with sadness, but I can tell my colleagues that during his 81 years, he lived a good life. He was properly recognized by his country for being what an American is all about, and that is putting duty and honor ahead of self, and that is exactly what Private Crawford did.

GASOLINE PRICES OUT OF CONTROL

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, if I could move to another subject. I want to visit with my colleagues a little more, and I have read with some interest about the administration's policy on these high gasoline prices. I am not sure and, in fact, I would guess that the President and the administration and probably all of the cabinet officials, I would be surprised if they pump their own gas.

Mr. Speaker, I have news for my colleagues out there. Somebody better take a look at that price at the gas pump. Now, I know our economy is in the best shape it has been in the history of the country, and we could go into that in some detail. So it gives cause to some people to say oh, well, it is just something we have to live with. But there are a lot of people out there who have jobs, who are just getting by, and that high gasoline price has a huge impact on them. The cost of oil does not just affect gasoline in one's vehicle, by the way, it affects everything we use, everything we use in this country: medicine, production, plastics, rubber, generation of heat, generation of energy, you name it, the list could go on and on and on. This high price of

gasoline is something that the administration's policy, in my opinion, needs to be more focused upon.

Now, it is not like they are ignoring it, but they are not standing up to the cartel. What do you mean the cartel? What is the cartel? Let us talk about what a cartel is first.

I pulled it out of the dictionary. A cartel: a combination of independent, commercial or industrial enterprises, a combination of industrial or commercial enterprises designed to limit competition and fix prices.

Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, talked about a cartel, and the cartel, of course, as my colleagues know, is OPEC. So first of all, let us define what we are dealing with out there and then we will move on, because that helps us have a clear focus on the problem and then we can move on to what I think some of the solutions are.

Let me point out that I think the administration understands, somewhat, the problem. I think they have discounted it because we have such a good economy, and I do not think the administration, the Democrat administration has moved to come up with any kind of solution. I will point out that the policy of the Secretary of Energy is to go over to OPEC and negotiate with them, and the Department expects the price to fall sometime in the future. It actually fell a little today. Well, that does not take a rocket scientist. I think OPEC is realizing, and they are right about at the point where the ball will bounce to bring it down just a little. These negotiations are not going to result in something coming down. The price of oil is probably going to go down anyway in the next couple of months, but not to the extent that it should. That cartel still operates.

How do we deal with a cartel? That is what the administration ought to be looking at. That is the key here. How do we deal with a cartel like OPEC? Let us go back just for a moment, because I know it is somewhat boring, perhaps, but let us look at the books. Probably, in my opinion, one of the greatest philosophers and writers about capitalism in this country, or in the history of the world was Adam Smith. Adam Smith says a cartel, he did not use the word cartel, he called it a monopoly, "A monopoly granted either to an individual or to a trading company has the same effect as a secret in trade or manufactures. The monopolists, by keeping the market constantly understocked, by never fully supplying the effectual demand, sell their commodities much above the natural price, and raise their compensation, whether they consist in wages or profit, greatly above the natural rate."

So we have a system in balance out there. The natural rate is what Adam Smith refers to. But the monopoly allows one to exceed the natural rate.

"The price of a monopoly is upon every occasion the highest which can be gotten. The natural price, or the price that is the result of the market,

on the contrary, is the lowest which can be taken, not upon every occasion, but for any considerable time together. That is the one that is struck by competition. The one that is upon every occasion the highest which can be squeezed out of the buyers, or which, it is supposed, they will consent to give. The other is the lowest which the sellers can commonly afford to take, and at the same time that the sellers can afford to take, but at the same time continue their business." That is an important last few words, continue their business.

My colleagues may be able to pay this price of oil for some period of time, but can we continue our course of business?

"Such enhancements of the market price may last as long as the regulations of police which give occasion to them.

"Monopoly, besides, is a great enemy to good management." Let me repeat that. "Monopoly is a great enemy to good management, which can never be universally established but in consequence of that free and universal competition which forces everybody to have recourse to it for the sake of self defense."

What does all that say? What it says is we have a system in balance out there and if we allow the cartel to proceed on the basis of which this cartel called OPEC is proceeding, these gas prices which are not their natural price, they are the highest price you can pull out, when you allow that cartel to exist without some type of repercussion, it upsets the apple cart, it upsets the market cart, and that is where it comes down. The interpretation is maybe not for those of you who are wealthy, but for those people in this society who are not wealthy, they are the ones that are stung first and they are the ones that are stung the hardest.

I can tell my colleagues that many times in the chamber we deal perhaps with the wealthier class of society, but there is huge part out there that we cannot ignore. There are a lot of people out there that this gas price is hurting and it is stinging, and the administration has an obligation to stand up to this cartel. The administration's policy should be very clear on its action.

The United States has allowed itself to become more and more dependent on foreign oil over the years. There are a number of different reasons. One, the United States has become much less friendly in exploration on its own continent. In fact, many other countries are saying, why should we allow the United States to come into our country to do exploration for oil and take our oil while they are reluctant to do exploration in their own country. That is one factor that has caused our dependence, more dependence on foreign oil.

The other, in my opinion, is that the administration's policy is asleep at the gas pump, let us put it that way. They have been awakened recently, not suddenly; it is kind of like a bear that is