

We have an acknowledgment from Europe of the rights of ethnic minorities. There is no longer question that ethnic minorities are entitled to protection in their individual states. It is the right of every other participating state to raise those issues, and we do.

So, sure, there are challenges that are still remaining. We all understand that in Europe. But the Helsinki process is an unquestioned success. Today, by passing this resolution, we acknowledge that.

I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe we have any additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 100.

The question was taken.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

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PERIODIC REPORT ON NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO NATIONAL UNION FOR THE TOTAL INDEPENDENCE OF ANGOLA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 106-297)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) that was declared in Executive Order 12865 of September 26, 1993.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, September 25, 2000

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PERIODIC REPORT ON NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO IRAN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 106-)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message

from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on developments concerning the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995, and matters relating to the measures in that order and in Executive Order 12959 of May 6, 1995, and in Executive Order 13059 of August 19, 1997.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.
THE WHITE HOUSE, September 25, 2000.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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GOP'S FALSE "CHOICE"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, a confidential document prepared for House Republicans somehow found its way into the public realm. It was not big news at the time, just some talking points. They were prepared by a Republican polling firm in response to the Democrats' Medicare prescription drug proposal.

According to their analysis, an effective way to create opposition to the type of proposal offered by the President and House Democrats is to call it a "one-size-fits-all" plan, a "big government" plan, or worst of all, a "one-size-fits-all big government" plan.

One cannot blame the public for reacting to these phrases. I do not know anyone who likes big government simply for big government's sake. However, one can blame politicians for exploiting these terms instead of confronting the fundamental differences between the Democrat and Republican prescription drug proposals.

The Democrats' plan would add an optional drug benefit to Medicare. The Republican plan would bypass Medicare and subsidize private stand-alone insurance plans instead.

It is difficult to conceive of a program offering more choice than Medicare. The Medicare program covers medically necessary care and services. Beneficiaries can see their own health care professional and go to the facility that they choose.

Under the prescription drug plan, similarly, enrollees could go to the pharmacy of their choice. FDA-approved medications prescribed by a physician would be covered without regard to formulary restrictions.

Given this level of flexibility, how would a legion of new private plans enhance a beneficiary's choice in any way that matters? It is more likely these plans, like any other managed care product, would find ways of restricting choice which would, indeed, enhance something, their bottom line.

Medicare is a single plan that treats all beneficiaries equally and provides maximum choice and access for patients and doctors. The Democrats' prescription drug proposal embraces the same choice principles.

Under the Republican prescription drug proposal, Medicare beneficiaries would choose between private stand-alone insurance company prescription drug plans. Ostensibly, this would enable seniors to tailor their prescription drug coverage to their particular needs.

But what exactly would distinguish one private insurance plan from another private insurance plan? Realistically, the key differences would have to relate to the generosity and restrictiveness of the benefits, how many pharmacies would be covered, how stringent is the formulary, how much cost sharing would be required by the patient.

None of these plans could responsibly in any way, theoretically or practically, provide more choice than the Democrats' proposal in terms of which medications are covered, since the Democrats plan covers all doctor-prescribed medications.

None of these plans could provide a broader choice of pharmacy, since the Democrats' plan does not restrict access to pharmacies.

It appears that "choice" is actually code for "wealth." Higher-income seniors could afford a decent prescription drug plan under the Republican plan, one with the same level of coverage that would be available to all beneficiaries under the Democrats' plan. In other words, if one is wealthy, one can get as good a plan as the Democrats' plan. But under the Republican plan, lower-income enrollees would be relegated to restrictive alternatives. Some choice that is.

When opponents of the Democrats' prescription drug coverage plan berate it for being "one-size-fits-all" and "big government," they are actually berating Medicare itself. In fact, the Republicans' prescription drug proposal, which ignores Medicare to establish new private insurance HMO policies, is an insult to the program.

Their plan pays homage to those Members of Congress who favor privatizing Medicare, turning Medicare over to this Nation's insurance companies. I might add, Mr. Speaker, I have yet to meet anyone outside the Beltway who favors such a plan to privatize Medicare.

It is no coincidence that the only way a Medicare beneficiary could avoid carrying multiple health insurance policies under the Republican proposal is to join a private Medicare managed care plan.

As Congress and the presidential candidates debate the merits of competing prescription drug coverage proposals, watch for allegations like "one-size-fits-all" and "big government," and the like.

When applied to insurance coverage offering maximum choice in the areas that matter, choice of provider and access to medically necessary care, choice of prescription drug, pharmacies, and formularies, these terms simply fall flat.

Bear in mind also that more than the structure of a prescription drug benefit is at stake during these debates. The future of Medicare may, in fact, also hang in the balance.

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ENERGY POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to talk about energy policy, a subject that has been much in the news in recent days. Crude oil supplies are tight, and we expect prices of all the various petroleum products to rise in the coming weeks.

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Some may ask why should the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary speak on this subject? In short, OPEC presents a classic antitrust problem that does not lend itself to antitrust solutions. What then should we do?

First, I want to suggest that the policy measures that have been advanced in recent days will not help for long. We must realize that our problem is not a temporary one, it is deep, it is structural and it is getting worse. Currently, we import more than 50 percent of the crude oil we use, and that number has been steadily increasing. So long as we allow that situation to persist, it will gravely threaten our national security and our way of life. So far we have been relatively lucky, but there is no reason to believe we will always have the same luck.

Last Friday, the Clinton-Gore administration decided to release 30 million barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in an effort to lower prices. The idea is that the government will set oil prices. This from an administration that admitted it had been caught napping on oil prices last February. We established the Strategic Petroleum Reserve for national security reasons, to tide us over when there was a serious disruption in supply. At this point, there is no disruption at all. Prices are simply high because supply is tight. I do not like that, I wish they were lower, but tight supply is one thing and a disrupted supply is an-

other. So the reserve was not meant to be a government price management tool.

Apart from that consideration, will this move succeed in lowering prices? I am not an economist, and I do not know what effect releasing a day and a half's supply of oil into the market over a month will have, but common sense would suggest that, holding all other things equal, it probably will reduce prices for a short time. But in a dynamic world, who knows whether all other things will remain equal. For example, why would OPEC simply not cut its production by a corresponding amount? Meanwhile, our buffer against a true disruption is lessened by a day and a half's supply during that time. How will we feel about that if Iraq decides to invade Kuwait again?

However, as the administration has stressed, this is a swap deal. Oil companies that take the oil will have to replace it with more at some future date. If that comes to pass, I will certainly be glad that we have more oil in the reserve. But what effect will removing that replacement oil have on market prices? If releasing 30 million barrels into the market will drop prices now, does it not stand to reason that removing more than 30 million barrels in the future will raise prices then? To put it in medical terms, this release is, at best, a temporary pain reliever that does nothing to cure the underlying disease. Indeed, it may well worsen our pain in a very short time.

What then do I propose? We must have a national energy policy that includes increased domestic energy production consistent with reasonable environmental guidelines, increased domestic refining and transportation capacity consistent with reasonable environmental guidelines, increased diplomatic pressure on foreign nations that produce oil, increased energy efficiency of engines and generation facilities, increased use of renewal energy sources throughout our economy, and a reformed excise tax structure. We can do all of this, and we can overcome this problem.

But these things that I have mentioned cut across the jurisdictions of lots of congressional committees and government agencies. They affect a lot of people and a lot of businesses. Because of that, we need sustained committed Presidential leadership. Only a comprehensive national energy policy can solve our problem, and only the President can lead us to that national energy policy. So I am introducing legislation, and have done so today, to call on the President to do that immediately.

So what can we do to ease the short-term pain? I think we must repeal the 4.3 cents a gallon deficit reduction tax that the Democrat Congress and administration passed in 1993. Fortunately, we have since ended the deficit. Unfortunately, in 1997, instead of ending this tax, we converted it to the Highway Trust Fund. I understand ev-

eryone wants their road projects, but consumers deserve some relief too. It is not a lot, but it will help until we get our long-awaited Presidential leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I call on all of my colleagues to support my Energy Independence Through Presidential Leadership Act. It calls on the President to provide immediate action to lead us to a national energy policy, and it gives short-term relief by repealing the deficit reduction tax. Let us forget the bandages and let us cure the disease.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight to talk about energy policy—a subject that has been much in the news in recent days. The subject has been in the news because crude oil supplies are tight, and we expect prices of all the various petroleum products to rise in the coming weeks.

Some may ask why should the chairman of the Judiciary Committee speak on this subject? My answer to that is to ask why are world oil supplies tight. World oil supplies are tight because the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, or OPEC, have agreed among themselves to restrict the supply. They form a classic price fixing conspiracy that violates our antitrust laws. If they were American companies, they would go to jail. Unfortunately, they are sovereign nations, and we cannot reach them under our current law. In short, we have a classic antitrust problem that does not lend itself to antitrust solutions.

What then should we do? I know that we are in the middle of a campaign season, and I do not want to make this political. But I do want to suggest why some of the policy measures that have been advanced in recent days will not help. I also want to tell you what I think must be done. The Judiciary Committee has held three days of hearings on this subject this year, and we have learned quite a bit.

We must realize that our problem is not a temporary one. It is deep—it is structural—and it is getting worse. Currently, we import more than 50 percent of the crude oil we use and that number has been steadily increasing. So long as we allow that situation to persist, it will gravely threaten our national security and our way of life. So far, we have been relatively lucky, but there is no reason to believe that we will always have that same luck.

So, let's talk about some of the policy initiatives that are under discussion. Last Friday, the Clinton-Gore Administration decided to release 30 million barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in an effort to lower prices. The idea is that the government will set oil prices—this from an administration that admitted that it had been "caught napping" on oil prices last February. I was not there when any of these comments were made, but according to press reports, Vice President GORE opposed this strategy last February, Treasury Secretary Summers thought it was a "dangerous precedent," and Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan also opposed it.

That is such a distinguished group that I hesitate to add my own thoughts, but let me do so briefly. We established the Strategic Petroleum Reserve for national security reasons—to tide us over when there was a serious disruption in supply. At this point, there is no disruption at all—prices are simply high because supply is tight. I do not like that, I wish