

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

GUAM'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

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

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express some concerns about environmental conditions on Guam as a result of problems with PCBs and as a result of some recently discovered mustard gas vials left over from the military. I am very concerned about the safety of my constituents in light of these recent discoveries of chemical weapons testing kits containing measurable amounts of mustard gas and other toxic chemicals on Guam. Given the public health dangers associated with exposure to these substances, I have requested the Department of Defense to perform a historical record survey to determine the final disposition of chemical weaponry that was brought to Guam. This survey should be comprehensive and include identifying former military dump sites as well as other potential disposal sites used by the military.

Guam has been a significant area for U.S. military activity for more than 50 years. First used as a major staging area during World War II, the military presence in Guam increased correspondingly with the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

□ 1945

Its full value as an area to forward deploy American military forces continues to be strong, even in today's post-Cold War era. At the time, Guam was home to a fully operational Naval Base, Naval Air Station, Naval Communications, Submarine Base, Air Force Strategic Air Command and Naval Weapons Depot, and today still has the largest weapons storage area in the entire Pacific.

But over these many years it has become clear that it was military activities during World War II that posed the greatest threat to the people of Guam. During World War II, Guam was used as a staging area for the invasion of the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and eventually, as contemplated, the invasion of the Japanese homeland.

Over time, several instances of mustard gas have been discovered; and a few months ago, officials from the University of Guam presented documents to military officials that a huge shipment of mustard gas was brought to Guam in 1945. But there has been no documentation of these weapons leaving the island.

In a September 5, 2000, Pacific Daily News article, a spokesman for the

Army Corps of Engineers surmised that the shipment had been likely dumped at sea. It is illogical, because the shipment was brought to Guam. How could it be taken off and dumped at sea? He went on to say that lacking evidence of a definitive area that should be searched, the Army Corps could not conduct a comprehensive search. "Otherwise, it is almost like a needle in a haystack."

However, just last week, additional chemical weapon cannisters were found with a pile of unexploded ordnance at Anderson Air Force Base, and these cannisters resemble the testing kits that had been earlier found in the central part of Guam, in Mongmong, an area that used to be a military base. With these two discoveries of toxic chemicals in less than 2 years, I believe that we have in fact found just the beginning of countless needles in the haystack.

I would have hoped that the first discovery of mustard gas would have spurred the Department of Defense to engage in this exhaustive survey, historical survey, of what chemical weapons and what general ordnance was stored on Guam left over from World War II.

In addition, this is combined with another issue concerning the environmental condition of Guam, and that is the inability to take PCBs out of Guam. Guam and other territories are outside the customs zone, and as laws regarding the disposal of PCBs, PCBs can be brought to Guam from the U.S. mainland, but they cannot be brought back into the U.S. mainland for proper disposal. I remain in strong conversation with EPA officials and have received a strong commitment to resolve this problem administratively in the upcoming months.

However, in a neighboring island to the north, Saipan, there were recently discovered PCB materials, but the EPA has already issued an administrative order releasing those PCB items to be moved back into the U.S. mainland. I think it is a situation that cries out for solution and fair and balanced treatment for all the territories.

It is important to understand that the Toxic Substances Control Act prohibits Guam from importing PCBs inside the U.S. customs zone, even though the PCBs originated inside the U.S. customs zone. The U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit's 1997 ruling of *Sierra Club v. EPA* overturned an attempt by EPA to solve this problem administratively, which would have dealt with PCBs in a more rational manner.

Parenthetically, PCBs that are on military bases are easily moved back into the U.S. This disparate treatment between military bases and the civilian community of Guam, composed of U.S. citizens, just like everywhere else, is simply intolerable and must be resolved by EPA.

In general, we have a very difficult situation with PCBs and their disposal in Guam. We have this issue with

chemical toxic weapons. I certainly call upon the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Defense to conduct an exhaustive search. We first called for this exhaustive search in July of 1999. We continue to press the issue, and certainly I hope that the Department of Defense will see fit to finally review all of the weapons which have been brought into Guam and through which two or three generations of people from Guam have been raised in the shadow of these weapons.

THE VETERANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, in April, as a matter of fact, this Congress declared the American GI the Person of the Century. I believe it was entirely proper and fitting that we did so. But I also believe it is appropriate that those men and women whose contributions were recognized as the single-most significant force affecting the course of the 20th century have an opportunity to share their unique experience so that future generations might better understand the sacrifices made for the cause of democracy. Now, we have the technology to do so, Mr. Speaker.

That is why I, along with my friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HOUGHTON), introduced a couple of weeks ago H.R. 5212, the Veterans Oral History Project. What the bill would do is direct the Library of Congress to establish a national archives for the collection and preservation of videotaped oral histories of our veterans, as well as the copying of letters that they wrote during their time in service, diaries that they may have kept, so there is a national repository of this very important part of our Nation's history.

We also believe that time is of the essence with this oral history project, given that we have roughly 19 million veterans still with us in this country today, 6 million of whom fought during the Second World War, roughly 3,500 still exist from the First World War, but we are losing approximately 1,500 of those veterans a day. With them go their memories. That is why we feel this project and this legislation has a sense of urgency attached to it.

Abraham Lincoln during his Gettysburg Address I think underestimated his oratorical skills when he stated, "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but we must never forget what they did here."

That is exactly the concept behind this oral history project. It will require the cooperation of people across the country, not only the veterans to come forward to offer their videotaped stories, but also their family members to do the videotaping, or friends or neighbors, with VFW and American Legion halls across the country participating in it.

I envision class projects centering on students going out and interviewing these veterans and preserving those videotapes for local history purposes, but to send a copy to the Library of Congress so that the library can digitize it, index it, and make it available, not only for today's historians and generation, but for future generations.

I envision students, young people in the 22nd, even the 23rd century, being able to pop up on the Internet the videotaped testimonies of their great-great-great-grandfather or grandmother and learn firsthand from their grandparents' own words what it was like to serve during the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam or the Gulf War. What an incredibly powerful learning opportunity that will be for future generations.

Every year I organize, on Veterans' Day, kind of a class field trip. I bring student groups into the VFW and American Legion halls, and I connect them to the veterans in our local communities and the veterans share their stories of the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, for instance, and the students are silent with attention, absorbing every last syllable that these veterans enunciate during that time.

It is an incredible event that goes on, not only the veterans sharing of the stories, many of them for the very first time since they served their country, but for the students to learn on this firsthand account what it was like with the sacrifice and the courage that our men and women in uniform provided our country at the time of need.

That is what is behind this Veterans Oral History Project. Last year we had some veterans that went into the American Legion Post 52 back in La Crosse that remind me of the purpose of this legislation. Ed Wojahn, a veteran of the Second World War; Jim Millin, also a veteran of the Second World War; Ralph Busler, who served three different tours of duty in Vietnam, all of whom came out and spoke to these student groups at the American Legion in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in my congressional district.

I can recall as if it happened yesterday, Ed Wojahn telling his story and breaking down as he recounted visiting last summer in Belgium the grave site of a World War II comrade in arms who fell during the opening days of the Battle of the Bulge.

Mr. Wojahn is 77 years old, and he told the students he was a 22-year-old Army combat engineer when he was captured by German forces in Belgium on his birthday, on December 18, 1944. His unit was without food, without ammunition, and was surrounded by German soldiers for 2 days before his captain finally surrendered. He stated, "There was no way to go. You went forward, you went backwards, sideways, there were Germans everywhere." It was an incredible story that he told along with the other veterans on that day.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I ask my colleagues, 250 of whom are original cosponsors, to move this legislation forward as quickly as possible since time is of the essence.

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

(Mr. SCOTT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK 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 gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE FUTURE OF RURAL AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I and a group here rise tonight to talk about rural America, the heartland of this country. The last few years we have had the most fantastic economic boom in this country in our history, but the question many ask is why has so much of rural America been left behind. Why has rural America struggled for its economic life when suburban America is flourishing and enjoying unparalleled prosperity?

We believe that a lack of leadership is very much a part of that. Rural America has not fared well under the Clinton-Gore policies. We are also very concerned that rural America will not fare well under a Gore administration.

Agriculture, at a time when this country has expanded its ability to grow products, wonderful products, better, better yields, better quality, our farmers are fighting for their economic life. World markets have not been opened because of inappropriate public policies.

Mr. Speaker, public land, America owns a third of our land; and when we have Federal public policy changes, it impacts rural America, not urban-suburban America. It impacts rural America, because that is the land we own. We are a country rich in natural resources, and many people claim that our strength and our great past was because we had those natural resources.

Have we had appropriate policies for energy, for mining that allowed us to

enjoy the fruit of what was here? Many think not.

Defense, the number one issue in the Federal Government, would it be strong under a Gore administration? Rural education, as we have the debate now going on education, how has rural America fared? Most rural districts receive 1 percent to 2 percent of their money from the Federal Government when the Federal Government's claiming that they are funding 7 percent.

The complicated urban-type formulas are stacked against rural America in many people's opinions. Rural health care fighting for its economic life, rural hospitals fighting to stay open. Rural America sometimes gets paid half as much under the current policies and formulas devised by HCFA that has been managed by the Gore-Clinton administration.

Timber, good forestry, a country rich in soft woods in the West and hard woods in the East, we are now importing. I am told, about half of our soft woods. Because of policies similar to oil we are now importing 60 percent from foreign countries.

Endangered Species Act needing to be changed, positively, to save endangered species; but it has been used by radical groups to push their will on the American citizens and supported by the Gore-Clinton administration.

Regulatory process, something Americans do not think enough about, because, in my view, an overzealous bureaucracy that regulates you, they are regulating instead of legislating. When we legislate, we debate. We debate the facts. We make decisions. We cast votes, but when the regulators have too much power, and I think everyone agrees that the Clinton-Gore administration has been far too zealous in their regulatory powers. The courts have been turning over many of their regulations.

So as we go through these issues and a few others tonight, the first person I want to call on is my good friend, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATKINS), of the third district who is interested in agriculture in Oklahoman agriculture and energy, and how it affects Oklahoma and how it affects rural America.

Mr. WATKINS. First, let me thank my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) for his concern and for his time tonight for us to talk about some of this inappropriateness and lack of action by this Gore-Clinton administration.

Mr. Speaker, I would like first for my colleagues to know that I stand tonight not for political reasons, but because of an emotional concern, a life-long emotional concern about small towns and rural areas of this country, yes, our farms and our agriculture interests also throughout this Nation.

Let me share with my colleagues, I loved agriculture to the point in small town rural America, but even to the point that I majored in agriculture when I went off to college, I got a couple of degrees in agriculture, so I stand