

can haul it down the road or highway and take it somewhere. It is on all the oceans of the world, and nobody is even talking about it.

Then we are arguing about, once you get it there, it is just too scary to think of storing it there.

France has about 80 percent of its energy in nuclear. They get the benefits of what I am bringing to the surface now—there is no air pollution to speak of in France because nuclear power does not create the air pollution we are worried about with reference to global warming.

The United States of America runs around the world negotiating how to clean our air so we will not have global warming. And here we're talking about the principal source of electricity that would be totally clean. We scare our people to death about moving fuel rods down a highway when the oceans and seas of the world have nuclear power plants floating under water and on top of the water by virtue of 100 U.S. Navy ships at sea.

Actually, France, which I just described, does not today have a permanent repository.

You heard the argument, fellow Senators, and those listening, that we don't want to have interim storage until we have a permanent repository for certain.

I think France is pretty concerned about the health and safety of their constituents, the French people. They aren't building underground repositories yet because they are very satisfied with having interim, temporary storage. Sooner perhaps than later, they will find a way to use that spent fuel, which is highly radiated, either to produce more energy, or they will break it into its components and make sure they can safely put it somewhere.

There is no question in this Senator's mind, that this is a big issue. This is America trying to turn science, engineering, and safety on its head to try to make fear where there is no reality of fear, to try to conclude that this great Nation cannot take care of the nuclear waste coming out of our powerplants with the end product being no more nuclear power.

What a shame, if that happened in the Nation that started it, that led it, that built the safest reactors in the world—safer than 20 or 30 coal-burning, electricity-generating plants, or any kind of plant.

What if we as a matter of fact kill nuclear power while the rest of the world proceeds to use it in China, Japan, Europe? We're doing that by not finding a way to do the easiest part of the fuel cycle, which is to temporarily put spent fuel somewhere in a repository of interim measure?

It would appear to me that, innocently or intentionally, those who oppose it are failing to recognize the significance of the future of nuclear energy and nuclear power for America and for a world that wants to be clean and wants to have growth and prosperity without global warming.

From my standpoint, not only do I refute the argument that this is not important, that there are other issues more important.

I want to say that the President is making a very big mistake for America's future by vetoing this compromise bill. The Congress passed it in both bodies overwhelmingly. Now, because of his veto ban, we need 66 votes in the Senate. That is probably too hard to do for an issue such as this. But sooner or later, a President will sign a bill. I am hoping it is sooner.

Obviously, we shouldn't try it again with the current President because it won't fly. But I personally believe the day will come soon when we will have the repository, wherever it is, and we will not come to the floor of the Senate and hearken back to the numerous times we have denied the validity and credibility of the fact that it can be easily and safely transported and easily and safely put in 30- to 50-year interim repositories.

I yield the floor. I thank the Senate for listening.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous agreement, the Senator from West Virginia is recognized for up to 10 minutes.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I thank the Presiding Officer.

VIETNAM: HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, this past Sunday, April 30, was the 25th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam war. And that reaches deep into the soul of every Member of this body, all across America, and all across the world.

Our involvement with Vietnam was filled with discord, it was filled with anxiety, and it tore sections and generations of our country apart. It began slowly. It gradually escalated and became "a bottomless quagmire" for America, "our longest, costliest, and . . . least popular war," until it finally came to an end.

Many in our country were very ambivalent about this war. Some thought we didn't fight hard enough, some thought we turned our backs on the South Vietnamese, and some thought we should have fought a lot harder. Many became disillusioned with our Government. I think that experience changed the nature of American politics and public life for at least some time to come.

However, there should be no ambivalence whatsoever about those who fought that war. Today I want to pay homage to those who fought that war. It doesn't matter whether you were for or against the war. All who served there deserve our appreciation, our respect, our caring, our compassion. It would have been easier to fight in a popular war. There are such wars, oddly enough. It is obtuse to say that, but it is true.

But it took guts, courage, and endurance to fight in that war and survive

it; to resist the erosion of the bad morale which overtook at least part of our ground forces in Vietnam. And then, of course, there was the lack of united support from the home front which had to have just overwhelming consequences, not only while the soldiers were there, but even more so when they returned.

Those who served did their duty, and they did it under very difficult, trying circumstances. Their motto might very well have been what Alexander Pope said:

Act well your part, therein all honor lies.

Looking back at this war, like the war before it and others, what strikes me with enormous poignancy and tenderness, is how young our soldiers were. Many were teenagers—18- and 19-year-old men and women—from familiar and comfortable surroundings, leading lives we all might identify with, sent to a completely foreign country, a foreign culture, halfway around the world, not knowing what to expect. They encountered baking heat, torrential rain, fire ants, leeches, and the enemy. They could not imagine the world of horror that awaited them when they got there. Presumably they were trained and told about it, but I think it was unimaginable to them when they got there. There was no clear enemy line. They could be ambushed at any minute. They couldn't tell enemies from allies.

Some never came back. The more than 58,000 names on the Vietnam Memorial Wall attest to that. But painful as it is to view those names, it does not begin to encompass the scope of pain caused by that war. Like a pebble thrown in a pool, each single name on the wall is ringed by concentric circles of others touched by that person's death—widows, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, friends. For all in that pool, certain hopes and dreams died as well. We grieve for all of them.

Some came back wounded. In an instant, life could change. Soldiers could step on a landmine; they could be killed by friendly fire; they could come under random attack. They never knew from moment to moment. Due to the wonders of modern medicine, many of those who, in earlier wars, would have died, did not and were saved; they survived. But merely surviving posed tremendous burdens on those who did. The process of adapting, accepting, and moving on is easy to say, very hard to do.

So I salute the stubborn resilience and perseverance of those who did move on with life after recovering from injury.

Some came back suffering from emotional trauma—people call it PTSD—and many other things. For them, it has been a very hard road to make peace with the past. They are still haunted by it, fighting it in their nightmares, in startle reflexes to sudden noises which bring back memories of perceived danger. They may turn to

alcohol to numb the constant pain, to drown the memories.

Veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder deserve our most profound compassion, love and caring. As we have discovered, PTSD in fact goes back even to World War I. We are discovering a lot of things about the consequences of war. We have no way of knowing what people have been through, those of us who were not there. But we cannot judge their continuing pain. We cannot judge them. But we can honor them, and we need to do that, to respect them for what they have done, and to hope they will recover as others did.

As a Senator from West Virginia, I have more than a personal interest in this war. Statistics show that West Virginia's soldiers suffered more casualties per capita during that war than any other State in the Union. On this day, I salute our West Virginia veterans in particular. I am enormously proud of the sons and daughters of West Virginia, who, as they have done throughout history, volunteered or were drafted, and went to fight and to protect their country and their freedom, mountain men doing what needed to be done.

That fighting spirit and strength of character runs incredibly deep in this Senator's State, and this Senator is very proud of it.

Lyndon Johnson called the war "dirty, brutal and difficult." It tore apart our country, devastated lives, caused tremendous personal hardship and unbearable pain. Twenty years later, the scars are still healing.

I am reminded of the words of Maya Lin, the young architect student who designed the Vietnam Memorial. In conceptualizing the form of her design, she wrote:

I thought about what death is, what a loss is. A sharp pain that lessens with time, but never quite heals over. The idea occurred to me there on the site. Take a knife and cut open the earth, and with time, the grass would heal it.

With time, the wounds of Vietnam will heal. But we should never forget the courage and bravery of those who served there. Let us always honor our men and women who fought and died in Vietnam.

(The remarks of Mr. ROCKEFELLER pertaining to the introduction of S. 2494 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to Senator GRAMS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT OF 2000—VETO—Continued

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I want to take just a few minutes today to speak about the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act and the President's recent veto of this legislation.

Throughout the past 5 years, I have repeatedly come to the Senate floor to discuss this important issue and its impact on my home State of Minnesota. I have, on countless occasions, laid out for Members of the Senate the history of the nuclear energy program and the promises made by the Federal Government. Every time I sit down to discuss this matter with stakeholders, I am reminded that the Federal Government not only allowed, but strongly encouraged, the construction of nuclear power plants across the country.

This point needs to be clearly understood by the Members of this body. Our Nation's nuclear utilities did not go out and invest in nuclear power in spite of Federal Government warnings of future difficulties. Instead, they were encouraged by the Federal Government to turn to nuclear power to meet increasing energy demands. Utilities and states were told to move forward with investments in nuclear technologies because it is a sound source of energy production.

It is important to note that the Federal Government's support for nuclear power was based on some very sound considerations. First, and I believe most important, nuclear power is environmentally friendly. Nothing is burned in a nuclear reactor so there are no emissions released into the atmosphere. In fact, nuclear energy is responsible for over 90% of the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that have come out of the energy industry since 1973. Between 1973 and 1996, nuclear power accounted for emissions reductions of 34.6 million tons of nitrogen oxide and 80.2 million tons of sulfur dioxide.

Second, nuclear power is a reliable base-load source of power. Families, farmers, businesses, and individuals who are served by nuclear power are served by one of the most reliable sources of electricity. In Minnesota, nuclear power accounts for roughly 30% of our base-load generation.

Third, nuclear energy is a home-grown technology and the United States led the way in its development. We have long been the world leader in nuclear technology and continue to be the world's largest nuclear producing country. Using nuclear power increases our energy security.

Finally, much of the world recognizes those same values and promotes the use of nuclear power because of its reliability, its environmental benefits, and its value to energy independence.

Because of those reasons, the Federal Government threw one more bone to our Nation's utilities. It said if you build nuclear power, we will take care of your nuclear waste. We will build a repository and take it out of your States. In response to those promises, over 30 States took the Federal Government at its word and allowed civilian nuclear energy production to move forward.

Ratepayers agreed to share some of the responsibilities, but were promised

some things in return. They agreed to pay a fee attached to their energy bill to pay for the proper handling of the spent nuclear fuel in exchange for an assurance that the Federal Government meet its responsibility to manage any waste storage challenges. Because of these promises and measures taken by the Federal Government, ratepayers have now paid over \$15 billion, including interest, into the Nuclear Waste Fund. Today, these payments continue, exceeding \$600 million annually, or \$70,000 for every hour of every day of the year. In Minnesota alone, ratepayers have paid over \$300 million into the Nuclear Waste Fund.

In summary, the Federal Government promoted nuclear power, utilities agreed to invest in nuclear power, states agreed to host nuclear power plants, and ratepayers assumed the responsibility of investing in the long-term storage of nuclear waste. And still, nuclear waste is stranded on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minnesota and on countless other sites across the country because the Department of Energy has a very short-term memory and this administration has virtually no sense of responsibility.

We can argue all day long in this Chamber on the merits of nuclear power. But we cannot deny that the Federal Government promoted nuclear power and promised to take care of nuclear waste.

The Clinton administration, however, would have you believe that they do not have a responsibility to deal with nuclear power. I have been working with Senator MURKOWSKI and many other Members over the roughly 5 years that I have been in the Senate to establish an interim repository for nuclear waste and move forward with the development of a permanent repository. We have brought a bill to the floor that accomplishes those objectives in each of the past two Congresses. Each time, we passed the bill in both the House and the Senate with overwhelming, bipartisan support. Just over 2 years ago, we passed a bill that would have removed nuclear waste from States by a vote of 65-34 and the House passed the bill with 307 supporters—a veto-proof majority. We have had extensive debate with the opportunity for anyone to offer amendments. We have thoroughly addressed most issues related to nuclear waste storage, including the transportation of waste across the United States. Yet every time we have passed a bill that fulfills the Federal Government's commitments, President Clinton has issued his veto threat and stopped our efforts in their tracks.

Here we are again. The President has vetoed the legislation before us today and apparently taken great pride in doing so. Time and again, when confronted with making the tough decisions about the future of our Nation's energy supply, this President has "punted," and refused to take any responsibility for the energy needs of our growing economy.