

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.

If it were not such a serious matter, I would have to say that the President's approach to energy policy is comical. When was the last time anyone here heard the President speak in any great detail about energy issues? He does not. I do not think he cares or at least his policies reflect a great degree of indifference to the energy needs of our Nation's consumers.

He has turned over the reins of the Energy Department not just to Secretary Richardson, but to AL GORE, and Bruce Babbitt, and Carol Browner, and anyone else who has an agenda with an aspect of the energy industry.

As many of my colleagues know, I have been a strong critic of the Department of Energy since coming to Congress in 1992. I have long argued that the Department has failed miserably on its most basic mission of increasing our Nation's energy independence. The Department was created in the late 1970's in response to that decade's energy crisis. Since that time, our reliance on foreign oil has increased from 35% to almost 60% today. In the 1970s, we were looking to increase our use of nuclear energy, today we are looking at closing down plants before their licenses have expired. In the 1970s, much like today, hydro power was a very popular form of electricity generation among the American public. Even still, this Administration wants to rip apart hydro dams in the Northwest and, I guess, replace them with fossil fuels.

Therein lies the great irony of the Clinton administration's approach to energy and the environment. This administration had the vision to agree to legally binding reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while at the same time failing to take even the most basic steps to protect emissions free nuclear power plants from shutting down. I asked the administration's chief Kyoto negotiator, Stuart Eizenstat, about nuclear energy during a Foreign Relations Committee hearing and he said that we absolutely needed nuclear energy to meet the demands of the Treaty. In fact, he said that he believed his own administration ought to have done more and ought to be doing more to promote nuclear power. Mr. Eizenstat, the President's signature on this bill would have been a great first step. Instead, this President has taken an action which I argue is harmful to the environment and contradicts his statements and actions that he wants to improve air quality in our country.

Nuclear energy, however, is not the only example of this administration's hypocrisy on energy and the environment. Hydro power, as well, is an emissions free form of electricity generation. Yet this administration is engaged in at least two separate activities that undermine the future of hydro power and its environmental benefits. As I mentioned earlier, this administration wants to rip open hydro dams in the northwest and, I guess, replace that electricity with fossil fuels. Sec-

ond, this administration, in its electricity restructuring proposals, wants to require a certain usage of renewable energy but refuses to include hydro power as a renewable energy source. These are all perfect examples of how this administration isn't truly interested in results oriented clean air goals. Instead, they want to deeply involve themselves in the process of achieving environmental goals, regulate like crazy, and predetermine winners and losers. Unfortunately, the only real losers in the Clinton energy circus are the American consumers.

I want to touch on one last Clinton administration energy and environment contradiction. As my colleagues know, this administration has been opposed to new oil and gas development on public land. In fact, Vice President GORE recently stated that he would do everything in his power to stop offshore oil and gas leasing. Both President Clinton and Vice President GORE tout these stances against oil and gas development as part of their legacy of environmental protection. I ask my colleagues, do you think other nations on whom we rely for our oil supplies are employing the environmental protections and reviews that we require? Do you think Iran, Libya, or Iraq are going the extra mile to protect the environment? Do you think the OPEC nations are holding themselves to the stringent environmental standards to which we hold companies on U.S. soil? We all know the answer is an emphatic no. Yet this administration is opposing virtually any exploration of oil and gas reserves on public land for environmental reasons, while at the same time, it employs its "tin cup diplomacy" that relies upon countries like Iran, Iraq, Libya and others to increase their production for us. I ask my colleagues, if you look at the global impacts of the Clinton administration's actions, who are the real environmentalists? Certainly not the Clinton administration. It is clear to me that this administration's policy against exploration and development, when compared against its policy of begging for increased oil production abroad, is a net loss for American jobs, family checkbooks, domestic energy security, and the environment.

I am getting a little off track, but I believe this point needs to be clearly understood when we are talking about a long-term plan to remove, transport, and store nuclear waste. This administration is not concerned about results, nor is it really concerned about the environment. Instead, this administration is concerned solely with its political agenda and keeping the nuclear industry on the ropes.

We can, as a nation, move forward now and deal with our nuclear waste. There is simply no scientific nor technological reasons why we cannot move waste from civilian reactors to a central repository. In fact, we ship waste across our Nation right now—including the waste we have accepted from 41

other nations under the Atoms for Peace program. Our Nation's fleet of nuclear powered vessels go from international port to port. They protect the world and our Nation's interests in a way that is only allowed them through the use of nuclear power. There is overwhelming proof that we can transport nuclear waste on ships, roads, and rail without a threat to either the environment or human beings.

I am going to support the legislation before us, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. If the President is not going to have an energy policy, then we in Congress had better step forward and forge one of our own. When the brownouts begin increasing in frequency and energy rates rise, President Clinton will be long gone and we will be left to explain to our constituents why their family lost its power, their business lost a days work, or their farm was unable to milk its cows.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I thank Senator GRAMS for his statement, particularly for highlighting the risk we face in not acting, inasmuch as some of our plants that anticipated having Yucca Mountain available for permanent storage, indeed, are in danger.

Maryland, for example, has two reactors at Calvert Cliffs producing over 13,000 kilowatts a year. They provide 26 percent of the clean electricity for the State of Maryland. The consumers in Maryland have paid \$337 million into the nuclear waste fund since 1982. There are 741 metric tons stored there, and it is short term. It is temporary because, when they built that plant, they were looking at Yucca Mountain as a permanent storage. Indeed, there is genuine concern about the ability to maintain this very clean source of energy if, indeed, we do not act in this body and override the President's veto.

Before we break, I wish to take my colleagues through a brief summary of the inconsistencies of this administration with regard to transportation.

In 1996, the Clinton administration agreed to participate in the Foreign Research Reactor Program where, over a 13-year period, some 20 tons of spent nuclear fuel from 41 countries will be shipped to the United States for storage. It goes into Concord, CA, and up to Idaho on railroads and highways. It goes into Savannah River and is moved there through the rail system, as well as highways.

At the Savannah River site in South Carolina, as well as the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, this waste is moved, depending on whether it comes from the west coast or east coast—shipment comes in on freighters through the Charleston Naval Weapons Station in South Carolina and the Concord Naval Weapons Station in California—the spent fuel is transported from the ship to a final designation by either rail or truck.

Shall we leave it in California? Shall we leave it in South Carolina?

The President mentions the importance of nonproliferation goals that a central repository will meet and that the nonproliferation for these shipments of foreign spent fuel is a good one. We do not want terrorists or rogue governments coming into possession of these weapons, but let's look at reality.

For example, when the program started in 1996, we were faced with transporting spent fuel from a reactor in Bogota, Colombia. The spent fuel was moved from the reactor, loaded into a shipping cask, placed into a semitractor trailer truck for shipment, and then what did we do? We went to the Russians.

We chartered a Russian Antonov AN-124 airplane large enough to carry tanks and helicopters and drove the semi aboard the plane and flew the shipment to the seaport city of Cartagena and placed it on a freighter. It then joined spent fuel already loaded from Chile. It was delivered to the Charleston weapons center where it was loaded on railcars to Savannah River.

This was the Department of Energy acting to pull out all stops, sparing no expense to complete this important shipment. Administration policy then is to take nuclear fuel from foreign nations flying, shipping, and trucking all over the world and storing it at military facilities, and even building interim storage sites in the United States, but this administration will not address the waste generated by the domestic nuclear power industry; it will not reconcile a policy to address this in a responsible manner. It would rather leave it at the 40 States in 80 sites. That is what this administration proposes to do. It is unconscionable at a time when we are looking to the nuclear energy for roughly 20 percent of the power generated in the United States, and this administration does not accept its responsibility. That is why I urge all my colleagues to look at this realistically: Do we want the waste concentrated where it is in temporary storage, or do we want it in a permanent repository where we have already expended some \$7 billion to place it?

I believe my time has expired or is about to expire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has a minute and a half left.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. In a minute and a half, I note the Senator from California showed a beautiful picture of Death Valley. I will show you a beautiful picture of the proposed location of the repository out at Yucca Mountain.

This is it. It is not very pretty. We have had 800 nuclear weapons tests in the last 50 years. That is the area we are talking about.

Some suggest, why are we talking about this when we have other more important things to do? This is an obligation of this Congress. The House has

acted. It is up to the Senate to act now and move this legislation over the President's veto.

This is important. This costs the taxpayers money. We have an obligation. Furthermore, this is the pending business of the Senate at this time because the House voted. It went down to the President. The President vetoed it. It is the standing order of business before this body. So it is most appropriate that we resolve this matter today.

I encourage my colleagues this afternoon to vote to override the President's veto.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. BRYAN. In my 12 years in the Senate, I have to say this is the most unfocused debate we have had on this issue. We are not here today to debate whether or not nuclear power is good or bad for the Nation. We are not here today to debate whether interim storage is an appropriate response. We are not here to debate whether or not France has no pollution, as some have suggested, because they have nuclear reactors. I must say, parenthetically, I am not aware that France propels its automotive fleet through nuclear power. But perhaps we can discuss that at some other date.

Very simply, what we are here to talk about is a piece of legislation which the President of the United States has courageously vetoed that would alter the health and safety standards for the Nation. That is the issue. Every American—regardless of his or her politics—should be proud of the President's position.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have taunted our colleagues who support the position that my colleague from Nevada and I have been advocating, as well as the distinguished Senators from California and New Mexico today, saying: What are you going to tell your constituents when you return home? The answer that every Member can give, with a straight face, in responding to that question is: Look, I voted to uphold the health and safety standards of the Nation. I was not prepared for any industry, even though I might support nuclear power, to reduce the health and safety standards for millions of people in this country. I will not do it for nuclear power. I will not do it for anything else. I will not be beholden to a special interest. I am voting in the best interests of my constituents and the Nation in upholding public health and safety.

That is the answer. That is the most powerful response that can be given.

May I inquire how much time I have left.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Twelve seconds.

Mr. BRYAN. Twelve seconds.

I yield the remainder of my time.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30

p.m. having arrived, the Senate will be in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:33 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:16 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. INHOFE).

NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2000—VETO—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 2:15 p.m. having arrived, there will now be 30 minutes under the control of the Senators from Nevada, Mr. REID and Mr. BRYAN, and 30 minutes under the control of the Senator from Alaska, Mr. MURKOWSKI.

Who seeks time?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I yield 6 minutes to my good friend, the Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I have been around this place a long time and a lot of things have happened that I can't quite understand, one of them being the veto of this measure by the President of the United States. If you stop and think, you see that it is purely political. For that reason, I hope this Senate will not hesitate to vote to override the veto of S. 1287, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000.

The President's decision to veto this vital legislation is just further evidence that the Clinton administration has no energy policy, except the appeasement of the doctrinaire environmentalists.

Because of the President's purely political veto, the United States will continue to have spent fuel assemblies piling up at all nuclear generation facilities throughout the United States—including five facilities in North Carolina.

The taxpayers of my state alone have paid more than \$700 million into the Nuclear Waste Disposal Fund justifiably expecting that the spent fuel assemblies would be transported to Yucca Mountain, Nevada, for permanent storage.

But no, it was not to happen, according to the environmentalists, and therefore according to the President of the United States, who immediately got his pen out and vetoed it.

A portion of the monthly electric bill payments of North Carolinians and other states goes into this fund, but while the Administration plays its political veto game, North Carolina's utility companies have been forced to construct holding pools or dry cask storage facilities to store this used material. This has caused additional expense for the utilities and higher prices for their customers.

Why did Mr. Clinton veto this legislation? Clearly it was to appease the self-proclaimed environmentalists, who so piously proclaim their concern about the air Americans breathe. We are all concerned about that.

Mr. President, it has long been self-evident that these so-called self-proclaimed environmentalists are opposed