

I wrote Secretary Rumsfeld about that and asked him to give me a date certain when they all would be well-equipped with this armor, because I had heard from a young soldier, who happened to be a West Point graduate, one of my constituents, he said, "Congressman, my men are wondering why they don't have body armor?"

The fact is that that decision was made to send our troops into battle without body armor, and the war started months before the vote on the \$87 billion that is now being used to accuse others of depriving our troops of this vital equipment. That is just one example. But we also know that they were sent there without armored Humvees and in insufficient numbers. These are examples that I would consider incompetent leadership. Incompetent leadership. It continues to this very day.

Now, the President was asked this past week how he could defend his statements about how well things were going in Iraq in light of the recent report from the intelligence community saying things were not going well.

He answered this way. He said, "Well, they laid out three possibilities: One, things would be lousy; two, things would not be so good; and things would be better."

Well, "things being better" was not one of the possible outcomes, as we heard from the intelligence community. The best that they said we could expect was just more of the same, of what we have right now, and the worst was out-and-out civil war within Iraq. There was no better scenario.

The President seems incapable of just speaking forthrightly and in a candid manner about the real situation to the American people. So we hear this happy talk, and every day, more and more and more of our soldiers are being lost.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I think what we are saying is please, Mr. President, just give it to us straight, okay? Try a little bit of Harry Truman. Lay it out there, the good, the bad and the ugly. The American people can handle it. The American people deserve to know. Unfortunately, this particular White House has an obsession with secrecy.

□ 2300

We know that. Everybody knows that. But if I can, just for one moment, get back to that \$87 billion that has emerged as an issue in this election. I voted against the \$87 billion. I do not know how either of my colleagues voted; they voted against it. I dare say we voted against it because rather than providing the money to the Iraqi government as a loan, this White House, this President, insisted that we just give it away to the Iraqi government. It was a big give-away. There is no other major donor to the reconstruction effort in Iraq that did not require the monies that are donated or given to be done on a basis of a loan so that their taxpayers would be repaid.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, if we go back and recall the circumstances surrounding that \$87 billion, remember when the President went on national television and announced to the American people he was going to ask for an additional \$87 billion, his approval rating fell like a rock, because the American people were upset that the needs here at home were being so woefully neglected, and here the President was, coming, asking for an additional \$87 billion.

So many of us thought that the fair thing to do was to take that portion of the \$87 billion that was going to Iraq for the rebuilding of schools and clinics and roads and bridges in Iraq, and to make that available as a loan that would be paid back to this country once Iraq was stable and they had these huge oil sales which was going to make it possible for them to repay that loan. And the White House said, no, no, no. We will only make this money available as an out-and-out gift.

Mr. DELAHUNT. A give-away.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Yes, a give-away. So they went to Madrid to this so-called donors' conference and they came back and they were trying to convince us as a Congress and as the American people that all of these other countries had ponied up, had given their fair share. And what did we find out, as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) has said here, all of these countries that made monies available made them available in the form of a loan. They will, in fact, at some point be repaid for whatever they give, but not the good old USA. We gave our money away, and now the President is criticizing those of us who fought to have this given as a loan, implying, I guess, that somehow we did not care about the troops. Which is, quite frankly, a little outrageous.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, there is another aspect of this \$87 billion that we need to point out, of whose money the President wanted to spend. He wants to spend our grandchildren's money. Because every single one of those \$87 billion he committed to Iraq, which had to be spent in some sense, but instead of us paying for it and dealing with it with taxes, he wanted, and he consciously decided to make it all deficit spending. We had a proposal to pay for it so that our grandchildren would not have that deficit spending obligation on them.

Now, why is this? I think this is symptomatic of why we need a new administration with a fresh policy. Winston Churchill said, all I have to offer you is blood, sweat, toil, and tears. This President said, you can fight this battle on the cheap. It will be sugar candy, roses, and champagne corks all the way. And as a result of that, we got \$87 billion deficit spending, 1,000 dead, and a silent draft that is going on now drafting our people to serve longer times than they really did sign up for

when they went into the military. That is why everybody in this chamber is hearing stories about 50-year old people who left their career for a year, came back, now have to go back for another year, and goodness knows how many years, because they have not committed the troops that are necessary to get this job done like General Shinseki told them.

This President wanted to fight this war on the cheap. It has cost us in lives, it has cost us in deficit spending, and we need a new policy. We do not say this just to be critical; we say this to get a new policy in Iraq. Unless we get that, we are heading into deep, deep trouble.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier this evening, the only people sacrificing for this war are the soldiers and the people who love them. They are the only ones who are sacrificing, and that is sad.

EMOTIONAL TRIP TO RUSSIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCOTTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for the remainder of the time until midnight.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise not to refute or answer the comments that we just heard for the last several hours, but I will make a couple of comments. First of all, rather than listen to Members of Congress and this body talk about the conditions in Iraq, tomorrow the American people will have a chance to listen to the Prime Minister of Iraq himself whose life has been threatened 4 times, attempted assassinations on him. I think the American people should listen to that gentleman, Prime Minister Alawi, to have us get an understanding of how well his country is responding to our effort.

In terms of the need for the use of our Reservists, as the vice chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, I would just remind our colleagues that it was during the 1990s that our troops were deployed 38 times. None of those deployments were paid for and, as a result, we had to cut the size of our military. The Army, for instance, in almost half, cutting our armored divisions down to 20; the Navy was cut from 585 ships to 314. As a result of those significant cutbacks during the 1990s, it was necessary to go to a policy that included the use of our Guard and Reserve forces. This was clearly understood in the 1990s because we had no choice. As our military budget was cut back, we had to rely more and more on the Guard and Reserves, that is why the Guard and Reserves are being used today in Iraq. I would add, Mr. Speaker, commitments were made that our troops would be out of Bosnia before Christmas of 1996. Our troops are still in Bosnia in the fall of 2004.

So again, the rhetoric on this floor is typical rhetoric that we hear before an

election, and I would just urge our colleagues and the American people to tune in tomorrow at 10 a.m., the Prime Minister of Iraq Alawi will present the case of the Iraqi people to this body in terms of how grateful they are and what level of success we are achieving.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to discuss a recent trip that a delegation of Members of Congress took in delivering a resolution that passed on the Floor of this body one week ago. It was my 38th trip to this country, Mr. Speaker, the country of Russia, which I have worked hard to try to assist our government, both Democrat and Republican administrations, in turning from an arch enemy of ours during the Cold War to a partner. This 38th trip was by far and away the most sad, Mr. Speaker, and the most emotional.

Three of us traveled to Moscow and, in spite of significant concern expressed by both our government and the Russian government, we were able to travel from Moscow after visiting the North Ossetian office in downtown Moscow to express the condolences of the people of America and this Congress in particular. We traveled down to Beslan in North Ossetia. We traveled along with the President of Kalmykia, and the purpose of the trip was simple, but it was profound.

We carried with us the resolution that was passed unanimously by this body expressing the solidarity of the American people and the U.S. Congress, Democrats and Republicans, with the people of Russia in their darkest hour. It was appropriate that we do this, Mr. Speaker, because it was, in fact, President Putin that was the first President to call the President of the United States after 9-11 to express the condolences of the Russian people in our darkest hour. And I can recall very vividly the embassy in Moscow, the American embassy after the 9-11 attack, where literally hundreds and thousands of bouquets of flowers and notes, expressions of sympathy, were laid outside of our embassy by the people of Russia.

So those of us in the Congress who supported the passage of the resolution on the Floor of this body one week ago and signed by the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) thought it was imperative that we travel to Beslan and stand in that school and convey to the people of Russia our conviction that we were with them in the fight against terrorism.

I want to briefly outline the trip, Mr. Speaker, and then comment on the implications of both the terrorist attack in Beslan and the terrorist attacks on 2 Russian airplanes and in downtown Moscow that have been occurring on a fairly frequent and regular basis.

In arriving in Beslan in North Ossetia in the presidential plane of the President of Kalmykia, we were greeted by the Speaker of the State Parliament, or Duma, of North Ossetia. North Ossetia is an autonomous republic within Russia. They have their own

President, their own parliament called the Duma, but they are, in fact, a part of the Russian Federation.

□ 2310

Therefore, the President was someone in that country we hoped and we did meet with. But the person who greeted us on our arrival at the airport in Beslan is in fact the Speaker of the Parliament of that country, equivalent to the Speaker of the House in our country. His job was to escort us through his country and explain to us in his own terms what happened at Beslan.

The Speaker of the Parliament when he arrived was certainly someone who we could relate to because he had a similar job to us in terms of his function and his job. His name is Taymuraz Mansurov. And it is interesting because he told us when we arrived that he had four children himself, two children in college and two children who in fact were attending the actual school that was attacked by the terrorists on the first day of classes just several short weeks ago. In fact, both of his children are today in hospitals in Moscow recovering from significant wounds. His 12-year-old daughter was shot in the face with a weapon as she was attempting to leave the school and she is being treated at a Moscow special medical center for that wound.

He told us that the state of trauma of his country and his city, the city of Beslan was just something that was impossible for people outside of North Ossetia to understand and appreciate. As we got off of the bus at the first stop on our way into Beslan, right next to a cemetery, we were struck by literally hundreds of graves that had recently been dug with mounds of dirt on top of each of them where the children of this school and their parents and their grandparents had been buried within the previous several days.

On each of those grave sites, and again there were probably 360 of those graves because that is how many people were killed, were flowers and items that were left by friends and other well wishers around the world.

I told our two colleagues who went with me on the trip, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS), that we would walk down the center aisle of these mounds of graves and that at some point in time we would stop, we would turn and face one grave and I would ask the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) to say a prayer, followed by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER), and then I would close.

The Russian media was filming every step that we took, and I felt it appropriate to convey at the grave site of these people the prayers of the American people. The irony was, among these hundreds of graves sites, these hundreds of mounds covered with flowers and other materials left behind, we stopped at one about two-thirds of the

ways down the center aisle. We turned to our left and the three of us stood around this one particular grave.

The large floral bouquet on that grave was red, white, and blue. Now, the colors of the Russia flag are red, white, and blue as are the colors of our flag. But as we looked down and bowed our head and as the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) began the prayers on behalf of this delegation, on behalf of the American people, standing firm with the people of Beslan and Russia, I could not help but cast my eyes to the ribbon that was attached to this floral bouquet. And having studied Russia in both high school and college and understanding the language, I saw the Cyrillic letters which said USA.

As I looked after the prayer was over at the rest of the ribbon, I could see who that floral bouquet had come from and where it had been sent from. That floral bouquet on the grave site out of hundreds that were there that we just happened to stop at was sent by the students, the teachers, and the community of Columbine High School in Colorado. What an amazing start to our visit to Beslan, the three members of Congress would stop in the midst of this brand-new graveyard where all of these bodies of children and adults were buried, and the one grave that we had prayed over would contain the floral recognition of people from one of our own tragedies.

After we completed our prayers at the grave site, we went back to our bus with the Speaker of the Duma, and he drove us into the town of Beslan, a small community in the southern part of Russia in the Caucasus that has just been rife with terrorism. Dagestan on one side, Chechnya not far away. And in fact, the fear of the Russians is that the 32 terrorists who caused this incident were in fact, and they have stated so publicly, a part of the Chechen uprising and the Chechen terrorist operation.

As we got to the town, we stood in front of this massive brick building that in the center had been reduced to rubble. Literally thousands of floral bouquets, it was there that the Speaker of the Duma gave us a summary of what actually had occurred.

He told us on the first day of school all of the children in this school assembled in lines by grades with their parents and their grandparents. The first day of school in Russia, Mr. Speaker, is a proud day. It is a family day. It is a community day. Everyone comes together to begin the new school year. In fact, it is considered a holiday throughout Russia. And on this day the students at this particular school all lined up neatly, ranging in age from the very young, some 2, 3 and 4, some who were too young to go to school, were there with their parents and they ranged up to the teenage years.

Along with these students were the parents and grandparents who had come out to see their children off on the first day of classes. As they stood

in the courtyard in front of the school, without any indication whatsoever, the terrorists surrounded the students and the faculty members and brought out their automatic weapons. And in a very deliberate and very nasty tone, ordered these 1,000 individuals inside the school building. As they threatened them with their automatic weapons and with their rifles and their pistols and threatened to harm them, the students were in a state of panic but in fact went through the only entrance into the building which led into a gymnasium area.

The Speaker of the Duma told us that when some of the younger students were not moving fast enough, they picked up the students and threw them through the windows without any regard for the well-being of these youngsters. Once assembled inside this school complex, they had them stand along the walls, and they began a process of intimidation that lasted for 3 days. They denied the students water. They denied the students and the adults food. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, the terrorists in the early hours of the siege took the youngest parents, the youngest fathers that were there with their youngsters on the first day of school and one by one they assassinated them right in front of the students. They then took their bodies and threw them out the back windows of the school so that over the course of the first day or so, all of those fathers who had gone to school with their children were wiped out by these inhumane terrorists.

As they got control of the hostages and they had reduced the level of men that were in the crowd that could provide perhaps resistance against them, the terrorists began to then focus on the mothers, the grandmothers, some of them very fragile, some of them very elderly, and the youngest children who were obviously in a state of shock and a state of fear.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, the Speaker of the Duma told us that they on a cellular phone had his children in the school call him on the cellular phone and the terrorists had his children plead with him to come and get them and to accede to the demands of the terrorists.

What tremendous personal turmoil that the Speaker went through with his two youngest children in the school as the terrorists contained them and yet required them to talk on the cell phone to their father, using them as pawns in this unbelievable siege.

Obviously, the leaders of the republic and the law enforcement officials who were around the school would not and could not accede to the demands of the terrorists.

□ 2320

The demands were too large in scope, and they were too unreasonable in nature. So it was basically a waiting game. Day one passed, day two passed and then day three came.

Now, perhaps there is a lot of second guessing that has been going on about the effort surrounding the school and acts that should have been taken, but I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, our delegation was talking to a father who had his two children in that building when it occurred and who arrived on the scene within a matter of hours after the siege occurred.

So this was not some sanitized message being given to us by Russian authorities. This was an elected official, the Speaker of the North Ossetia parliament, but it was also the father of two young children in that school. In fact, the Speaker himself had attended that school as a child, and his two older children also attended that school.

It was on the third day, Mr. Speaker, when a sense of frustration came upon everyone, those that were trapped inside the building and those around the building, the parents outside who were urging the police officers, the military to do anything possible to end the siege, to get their children out. Fathers that were outside were screaming that something had to be done.

Then an explosion occurred. The explosion was inside this school, and while it has not been fully determined as to the origin of the explosion, the initial thought by those outside, including the Speaker of the Duma, was that the explosion occurred because there was a movement of ammunition inside. When the explosion occurred, it set off a flurry of activity. Gunshots started to ring out, and family members on the outside of the school started to rush in. They were rushing in because they saw it as an opportunity to save their child, as over 1,000 children and adults were still in this complex.

The terrorists then responded by firing automatic weapons and gunning down the adults that were trying to get in. That explosion led to additional fires, and in matter of a short period of time, the entire gymnasium and center area of the school was an inferno.

Children on the inside started running out. Young children, 6-, 7-, 8-, 10-years-old, and the terrorists who were standing at windows, who had come outside, started firing at will at the backs of these young children, hitting some in the back of their head, others in their back and their legs. Children started to fall all over the schoolyard area.

At the end of the siege, Mr. Speaker, 31 of the 32 terrorists were killed. One terrorist was captured and is currently in the control of the authorities. I am not sure whether it is in Beslan or in Moscow.

This terrible incident had come to an end. The carnage was unreal. Immediately attempts were made to take those that were most severely burned to the local hospital, which we visited and was a typical hospital servicing a small town, not capable of responding to hundreds of injuries, hundreds of rifle shots, of wounds, of burns, that

were far beyond the capability of this small-town hospital. In fact, the chief medical person at the hospital, whom we met when we visited the hospital after stopping at this school, told us that they treated some 8- or 900 individuals who had serious injuries, and as soon as possible, within hours, they began flying them out to hospitals in neighboring cities and the most severely injured to hospitals as far away as Moscow where they are still located.

Mr. Speaker, as we listened to the story and saw the visual realization of what this school was and imagined what it was before this incident to a community that shared the pride of the education of its young, we just were overcome with emotion. In my case, being a teacher by profession, I could not imagine the feeling on opening day of school to have terrorists surround the building and to herd the students inside. I thought to myself, the Russians have been criticized for how they handled this, but I wonder if we would have been able to handle a situation at one of our schools, where on the opening day, a group of terrorists with automatic weapons or with rifles or pistols surrounded the schoolyard and forced those youngsters and family members inside of the building.

I think the Russian people and those in North Ossetia did the best job they could in an impossible situation. When the Speaker of the Duma finished explaining to us the details of what had occurred, we walked solemnly over to the entrance of the school.

We had prepared a special wreath, Mr. Speaker, a wreath that was red, white and blue, with a ribbon saying, "In Deepest Sympathy, from the Congress of the United States." We were carrying with us, Mr. Speaker, an American flag that we had flown over the Capitol the day before we left to present to the people of Beslan as a symbol of our friendship, as a symbol of solidarity between the American people and the Russian people in the fight against terrorism.

The three of us solemnly walked behind this floral bouquet as it was carried toward the center of the school by two local residents to be placed in the center of the building. We followed the floral bouquet in. They carefully placed it right next to a pile of literally hundreds of flowers. Mr. Speaker, in a sight that I can only describe as unbelievable, there were hundreds and thousands of bottles of water. Beslan's a poor community. Many of the family members could not afford to buy flowers, and yet all of them knew that those children and those parents and grandparents had been denied water for 3 days and food. So the people of Beslan brought bottles of water and set those bottles of water with open tops throughout the school complex and down the center corridor, interspersed with hundreds of flowers and bouquets. There were also Teddy bears and stuffed animals and the favorite toys of students who would never again be able to use them.

Following the setting down of the flowers, and again, the thoughts and prayers of the members of Congress, I opened up the American flag and asked my colleagues to join with me in presenting that flag as a symbol of the friendship of the U.S. Congress and the people of America to the people of Beslan, the people of North Ossetia and the people of Russia.

I have been to a lot of disasters, Mr. Speaker, during my 18 years in Congress and my career because, as many of my colleagues know, I have worked the issues involving disasters. In fact, before coming to this body I used to be a volunteer fire chief.

I have been to earthquakes, Hurricanes Andrew and Floyd, the wildfires in California and Oregon in the West, the Midwestern floods, the Murrah Building bombing with Chief Marrs, the World Trade Center in 1993 and the World Trade Center in 2001. They were all incidents of significant emotion, loss of life, terrible tragedy, terrible human suffering. But I can tell you in standing in this school, looking up at the basketball backboard that had been severely burned, looking at the scorched walls, seeing the evidence of where young people used to play and seeing hundreds and thousands of bottles of water placed all around this complex and still smelling this terrible smell of fire and of death, it was very difficult for us to provide remarks. In fact, all three of us had difficulty in getting through our statements.

As we spoke to the people of Beslan who had assembled there with us, in front of the TV cameras from throughout Russia who were recording our visit, but very simply, we told the story of the feelings of the American people, their anger at what had happened at this school, their frustration in dealing with terrorists, who have no regard for human life and especially the lives of innocent women, grandmothers and young children.

We told the Russians one very simple thing, Mr. Speaker, that on this day we were not Russians nor Americans. We were human beings who were standing together to tell the terrorists, the cowards that they are, that we would not stand for these kinds of actions, whether they would be in downtown Baghdad, whether they would be in the streets of Moscow, the streets of New York or Oklahoma City or the streets of a small town like Beslan. We told the Russian people that we were there expressing the sense of the United States Congress, that we shared their grief and we stand with them in solidarity.

□ 2330

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that there was a feeling in that school among the family members that were there of deep appreciation that the American Congress had taken the time to go to Beslan. We were the first and, to my knowledge, the only Americans that were allowed into Beslan to visit

the school. Our ambassador would visit the North Ossetia office the day after we arrived in Beslan to express the condolences of the American people on behalf of our State Department. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we wondered why it had taken 2 weeks for our ambassador in Moscow to make that trip to the North Ossetia embassy.

As we left the school and reflected upon what we had seen, we boarded the bus and asked to be taken to the local hospital. And there in the hospital we heard the briefings from both the chief psychiatrist who was brought in from Moscow and the chief medical leader of this hospital in Beslan about how they attempted to deal with these overwhelming casualties.

Then we talked about the kind of treatment that the patients were currently receiving, both in that hospital, the hospitals around Russia who had taken other patients and about the offerings of support from all over the world. But I want to convey this to you, Mr. Speaker, and to our colleagues, every place we went on that trip we heard from the people of Beslan that the people of America responded in an unbelievable way.

In fact, it was the speaker of the parliament and the mayor of the city who told us that, within hours, there was a planeload of supplies coming into his community from the people of America. It included health care needs. It included equipment. It included special beds and pharmaceuticals, from a Nation that had also suffered a very significant incident, responding to the needs of the people of Russia.

As we went through the hospitals, we talked with some of the patients. We talked to the nurses. We thanked the doctors. And then we stopped in a room with youngsters who were suffering from post-traumatic stress. I told the young girl who was in the sixth grade that my first year after college I taught sixth grade, and we talked about some common issues I knew she would have with sixth graders from America. I asked her if she had access to e-mail, and she said she could through the school or the local library. I asked her to e-mail my office so I could link her up with students of a similar age back in America.

Again, the medical personnel in that hospital were working under unbelievable circumstances, and they were doing a fantastic job.

We left the medical center, and my colleagues that wanted to make a simple contribution to the medical center, not on behalf of the American people but on behalf of ourselves. Each dug into our pockets and came out with an amount of money that we each could afford to give as a donation to that hospital on the spot. And I can tell you, the doctor was extremely gratified that we had taken the time to do that.

Since coming back to Washington, I have learned that I have a group in my own State, headquartered in Bucks County, that I will provide the name of

for the RECORD, Mr. Speaker, who has already raised almost \$800,000 for the people and the families of Beslan. Typical of America and the American people, responding to a tragedy thousands of miles away because of people in need.

As we drove from the hospital to the airport and drove through the streets of this small town, you just could not help but have a heavy heart in seeing homes where families had been torn apart. We learned of a mother who had taken her four kids to school that day. The mother was killed and so were all four children, all buried at one grave site at that cemetery we had visited.

As we arrived at the airport, we learned the president of North Ossetia would meet us there, an older gentleman. In fact, his name is Alexander Dzasokhov, and he warmly greeted us. We had a press event with the media, and we presented to him, Mr. Speaker, the framed resolution that our colleagues in this body passed unanimously 5 days earlier. That document, in a frame, was signed by the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), on behalf of all of us, Democrats and Republicans, who voted unanimously to express our solidarity in the suffering of the Russian people and those families impacted at Beslan.

We had discussions with the President about ways in which we could assist. We told him our burn foundations in America had offered assistance with burn treatment. We told him many of our people wanted to help with the monument being built at the grave site and the school.

And I might add, Mr. Speaker, what the speaker of their parliament told us was that, when that monument is completed on the 40th day of mourning, which is the official mourning period in Russia, and that monument is dedicated to the memory of the victims, that American flag that we handed them that flew over this Capitol building, will be raised with the Russian flag and the North Ossetia flag, because of their thanks and their gratitude for the friendship that we showed them, again, in their darkest hour.

We also discussed with the president other steps that we could take together as two nations fighting terrorism. We talked about the need to go after the terrorists, as President Bush and President Putin have been doing over the past several months and years. And then we followed up a dialogue we had had in Moscow with Duma Deputy Kokoshin. Chairman Kokoshin, who is a friend of mine, chairs one of the key committees in the Duma. The vice chairman of that committee is Deputy Lebedev, and we discussed with our North Ossetia leaders and the president our desire to host a conference in Moscow in the first quarter of 2005, a joint conference of Americans and Russians on the issue of homeland security and anti-terrorism.

It was somewhat ironic, Mr. Speaker, that the Monday before I left for Russia, I was in New York giving the opening speech to a homeland security conference attended by 3,000 people at the Javitz Center. That conference on homeland security also had Asa Hutchinson in attendance and scores of other people from the leadership of our own Homeland Security, on what we are doing to defend America from the threats of terrorism and the protection of our homeland.

Mr. Speaker, 260 corporations were exhibiting at that conference, which was put together by one of the largest conference organizers in America, EJ Krause. I talked to the EJ Krause folks before I left for Moscow, and they have agreed to organize the conference that we together will put on in Russia so that we can show a joint strategy, joint use of technology and a joint commitment to fight terrorism together.

Mr. Speaker, we left the president, went back to Moscow, continued our meetings and discussions, and I can tell you that every one of our colleagues in this chamber needs to know that the people of Russia were extremely pleased by the actions this Congress took. It was important for us to show solidarity with the Russian people because there has been some turmoil between our countries over the past several years.

And, Mr. Speaker, that leads to the second reason of my special order tonight and another reason why I felt it was important to make the statement that this Congress made in our resolution that passed last week.

There have been some who have been advocating that America should move away from Putin and Russia, that because President Putin, partly in response to terrorism, partly for other reasons, has clamped down on the media, has in fact recently passed new provisions that will limit the role of the people of Russia to elect their own governors of their regions, that will reduce the number of political parties from the current number to approximately two or three, similar to what we have in America; there are even those colleagues in this body, in both parties, good friends of mine who I hold in high respect, who have written to our colleagues that we should deny Russia access to the World Trade Organization, that we should punish Russia because of these anti-democracy actions.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that those actions would be the worst steps that we could take right now. Now is not the time for America to push Russia away from us. Sure, we are all troubled by some of the actions that President Putin has taken. I am concerned by the clamping down of the free media. I am concerned by some of the methods of intimidation. But now is not the time for us to be pushing Putin away, which would encourage more of the authoritarian efforts that we have seen rising up in Russia over the past several weeks and months.

Now is not the time for us to move Russia in another direction. Now is the time for us to bring Russia back, to give Russia perhaps what we have not given them over the past 12 years since they threw off communism.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at our relationship with Russia, I was very critical of the previous administration because I felt we did not have a consistent policy with Russia. We were talking a good game, saying all the right things, but there was not a follow-through in terms of implementation.

We had the radical nationalists in Russia back in the 1990s saying that America does not want to be our friend; you watch, they will move NATO up to our borders, and they are going to threaten us; you watch, they will abrogate the ABM Treaty; they want to dominate us.

□ 2340

Watch, they do not want us to be involved. They are going to steal our money and our assets. They want to use us. That was what the radical nationalists in Moscow said back in the early 1990s. That was what Uranovsky and that is what Zyuganov said. But many in Russia were pro-West, and they said, no, we are going to continue to move closer to America because America is the model that we want to work with.

But I think back, Mr. Speaker, over the past 12 years. We did move NATO up to Russia's borders, and I supported that. But we handled that miserably. We did not take the time to have the Russians understand that the movement of NATO to its borders was not to threaten or intimidate Russia, but rather to build a new sense of security and that one day, one day, Russia itself might be able to join NATO. And with the ABM Treaty, I was the one, Mr. Speaker, who offered the missile defense bill in 1998 that passed with a veto-proof margin, not because I wanted to dominate Russia, but when I took Don Rumsfeld and James Woolsey and Bill Schneider to Moscow the weekend before the vote on my bill, we told the Russians our concern is with North Korea, our concern is with Iran, our concern is with China, who were all developing long-range missiles that we have no defense against.

But, Mr. Speaker, from the Russian perspective in 1995 and 1996, we had one joint missile defense program with Russia called RAMOS. The Clinton administration tried to cancel it. Senator LEVIN and myself and a group of other Members in both parties and both bodies fought the administration, and we won. We kept that joint cooperative program together. But the Russians saw the handwriting on the wall: America does not want us to be partners in defending our people. They really want to dominate us. And they were convinced, and perhaps some still are, that that was our purpose in moving away from the ABM Treaty.

And then we bombed Serbia, perhaps Russia's best friend and ally, the Serbian people. We all wanted Milosevic out. But instead of using Russians to help us get Milosevic out of power, we went to NATO instead of the U.N., and we used NATO as an offensive force, invaded Serbia, and killed innocent Serbs. It was not until several months after we realized we could not get Milosevic out by bombing Serbia, by bombing innocent people, that Russia had to play a role. And it was, in fact, Russia through the special envoy of President Yeltsin and Victor Chernomyrdin that we were able to reach an agreement to end the war on the terms of the West, again with Russia's involvement at the 11th hour.

The Russians saw through all of this, and they said America does not want to be our friend. And then we had President Clinton on a number of occasions say that we should lift Russia out of the restrictions of Jackson-Vanik. President Bush has made at least ten statements over the past 4 years that Russia should not be subjected to Jackson-Vanik consideration any longer. Mr. Speaker, Jackson-Vanik restrictions were placed on the Soviet Union because back in the 1980s, the Soviet Union was persecuting Jews. The National Council of Soviet Jewry led that effort. I supported that effort because back in the Soviet era I used to meet with the Soviet Jews in Moscow who were being persecuted and harassed by the KGB and by Russia's leaders.

But in 2004, in 2000, in 1998, the persecution of Soviet Jews was largely ended. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I went to all the Jewish groups last August, and I asked will they send me a letter expressing their interest in elevating Russia out of Jackson-Vanik, and all the major Jewish groups in America did, Mr. Speaker. They sent me letters, JINSA, the National Council of Soviet Jewry, AIPAC, all saying, We no longer think that Russia should be held captive by Jackson-Vanik.

I went to the administration, and some of those people under President Bush who did not quite get his message said it is a trade issue, it is about poultry or steel. So I went to our colleagues who are Chairs of our trade committees, the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), and the three of them sent a letter to me saying that they too supported elevating Russia out of Jackson-Vanik. So, Mr. Speaker, here we had the support of leaders in this body on issues involving Soviet Jewry, on trade issues saying they support elevating Russia out. We have the President of our country demanding we do it. And we still have not done it.

So the Russians look at us and say our words are good, but there is no action. There is no follow on. And it was those same Russians during the 1990s who saw oligarchs who were put into place by Yeltsin but with the help of

American consultants and American academics who ripped their country off, who stole billions of dollars from the IMF and World Bank that were supposed to help build a Russian infrastructure.

I remember very vividly back in the late 1990s, 1997, and 1998, telling the Clinton administration we have evidence that there are American companies ripping off the Russians. They did not want to hear it, did not want to talk about it. It was in the late 1990s, 2000, that we finally heard the Justice Department indict Bank of New York officials for allegedly scamming \$5 billion out of Russia that should have gone for infrastructure but instead ended up in Swiss bank accounts and U.S. real estate investments.

And then we saw the technology proliferation out of Russia, individual retired generals and admirals selling technology to Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, North Korea. We blamed the Russians for that, the Russian Government, when, in fact, Mr. Speaker, and I remember doing speech after speech on this, we had documented 20 times we had evidence of retired Russian generals and admirals selling technology illegally, violating arms control agreements. Of those 20 times, our Nation imposed required sanctions four times. Yet we blamed the Russians for something that we ourselves should have taken action to control.

So if we look to the period from 1992 to 2004, we have to ask the question, What have we done to assist Russia in becoming our true partner? I would say, Mr. Speaker, not much. So now we criticize Russia. We criticize President Putin. We want to push him away further. President Putin and President Bush have a great personal relationship. They have met on three or four occasions. They get along very well, and they want to work together. But, Mr. Speaker, below the two Presidents there is a vacuum. The President says we want to do Jackson-Vanik elevation. He said it 10 times. The people under the President say not now, now is not the right time. They should be fired. The President sets the foreign policy of our country, but some of those serving him do not get the message. And Russia bears the consequences of our lack of action.

The President calls for joint cooperation on missile defense. He has said it five times and so has President Putin. But this year our Department of Defense and Missile Defense Agency again canceled the RAMOS program. We have no cooperation with Russia on missile defense right now.

We talk about Russian cooperation with weapons of mass destruction. But we have corruption on the Russian side, corruption on the American side. We are not being given access to those sensitive sites. And again we wonder why the Russians do not trust us.

Mr. Speaker, we need Russia. We need Russia to be a partner of ours. We need Russia to be a partner of ours for

several reasons. If we look at the world's situation right now, we are certainly unhappy with some of the direction of President Putin, but we have no leverage with him to get him to understand that he is taking the wrong steps as a democratic nation. We look at the Middle East. We heard our colleagues for 2 hours talk about Iraq. Mr. Speaker, the problem in Iraq is not being caused by the people in Iraq. The people in Iraq did welcome us. They did give us flowers, and they are happy that we are there. Ask our troops. Tomorrow we will hear Prime Minister Allawi tell us the real story of the gratefulness of the Iraqi nation. The problem in Iraq is not with the Iraqi people.

Mr. Speaker, the problem with Iraq is the problem of the neighbor Iran. Iran has been involved in undermining our efforts to stabilize Iraq for the last 18 months. I remember going to CIA Director George Tenet 18 months ago when a former Member of this body, a former Democrat Member, came to me and said, I have a source that wants to work with us, a source that will tell us where bin Laden is and will give us information about Iran's involvement in Iraq.

I went down to meet with Tenet, and for the past 18 months, Mr. Speaker, on a regular basis, I have interacted with this informant based overseas in Europe. We have gotten continuous information that I have passed along to the CIA, all of which has been verified, that Iran has been behind the destabilization of Iraq on a continual basis. I told the CIA over a year ago, Mr. Speaker, that the Ayatollah Khamenei, the religious fanatic in Iran, not Hatami, the governmental leader, but the Ayatollah Khamenei was providing \$70 million of funding to Sadr.

□ 2350

The CIA at that time, Mr. Speaker, no one knew who al-Sader was. I told the CIA that Iran was crashing on a nuclear program. I told the CIA that my informant had even found evidence of two groups of Iranians going up through China into North Korea in an attempt to acquire their nuclear weapons materials. And I told the CIA that Ayatollah Khamenei had ordered his country to prepare for an attack on one of our nuclear powers plants, and the letters were beginning with SEA, Seabrook.

Mr. Speaker, that was in June of last year. In August of last year, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested two al Qaeda-linked individuals who were flying a plane scoping out a nuclear power plant up in the Northeast near Seabrook.

Mr. Speaker, Iran has been our problem, and it does not take a rocket scientist to figure that out. On one side of Iran you have Afghanistan, a country that now has 10 million people registered to vote in their first elections, a constitution in place, a country moving toward a democracy.

On the other side of Iran you have Iraq, stabilizing, moving toward a constitution, moving toward free elections. So on both sides of Iran you have democracy breaking out.

And right down the road, Mr. Speaker, you have Libya, where Moammar Gadhafi has voluntarily given up all of his weapons of mass destruction without us firing a single shot. I know Gadhafi's purpose, because I led both delegations to Libya earlier this year in January and March. Sitting across the tent from him in the desert in Tripoli, looking out at his house that we had bombed in 1986, he said, "Congressman WELDON, I don't want my people to suffer the fate of the Iraqi people and I don't want to be Saddam Hussein."

Mr. Speaker, the Iranians understand what is happening. The Ayatollah Khamenei understands he is not popular in Iran. When they had elections earlier this year, only 9 percent of the people eligible to vote voted. They despise radical fundamentalism, but they cannot do anything about it.

So Iran understands their days are numbered, and that is why they are crashing on a nuclear program. That is why they are attempting to undermine Iraq, because Iran does not want Iraq to succeed.

Our colleagues on the other side said we should have anticipated that. Mr. Speaker, there is no way the President could have anticipated that. We are dealing with it now.

But how do we deal with Iran, Mr. Speaker? We do not have any leverage with Iran. We do not even have discussions with Iran. One country does, Mr. Speaker, and that country is Russia.

Russia has worked with Iran over the past 10, 15 years. They have a regular entry into Moscow. They interact with the Members of the Duma and the Federation Council, and President Putin has a relationship with Iranian leaders that we need. But the problem is, Mr. Speaker, we do not have the leverage with President Putin.

Yes, President Bush and President Putin have a good personal relationship, but there is a vacuum under that in both countries. Now we tried. Back in 2001, Mr. Speaker, we gave this document to Bush and Putin, 48 pages, 108 recommendations, signed by one-third of the Congress. DICK LUGAR, CARL LEVIN, JOE BIDEN, myself, liberal Democrats, conservative Republicans, one-third of the Congress saying we are ready for a new relationship.

Unfortunately, the people under President Bush have not been listening. They were not listening when President Bush said remove Jackson-Vanik. They were not listening when President Bush said do joint programs in missile defense. Now we are paying the price for that.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I proposed to the President and that is why I am announcing tonight a new initiative, renewed commitments, strengthened relationships. This four-part strategy

will give us a series of initiatives that will give President Putin and the Russian people a clear signal that finally we want to be their close friend and partners it is a simple strategy. It builds on successes of the past and deals with issues that we have talked about.

The four strategies are fairly simple, Mr. Speaker. It calls for us to terminate Jackson-Vanik limitations on Russia, as our President has called for. We can pass that resolution in this body and the other body under a suspension.

It calls for a new threat reduction initiative using a new process to get entry into President Putin that we have been working on for 2 years that will allow us to reduce the theft and corruption of American tax dollars and will give us access into sites we have never had access to before.

Last August I took two members of the other side with me to the closed city of Krasnoyarsk 26, without any help from our State Department, no help from our Defense Department, no help from our Energy Department and no help from the CIA. We went in the mountain where the Soviet Union built their three largest plutonium producing reactors.

We met in Moscow, and our Russian counterparts said if you follow this new process, you get access to any site in Russia you want.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I have proposals signed by the Russians for six new biological weapons sites that they want to open up for American joint cooperation. I handed those six initiatives in both Russian and English to John Bolton the day I left for Moscow last week. The Russians do want to work with us in a new way, a new way of trust and confidence in solving problems with weapons of mass destruction.

The third element of this plan, Mr. Speaker, calls for substantive work on joint missile defense cooperation. President Bush has called for this repeatedly, publicly. So the question is, why have we not done it? The answer is, the Defense Department told me they could not get a meeting with General Baluyevsky, who 6 months ago was the number two general in the Russian military.

I told General Kadisch at Missile Defense Agency, you cannot get a meeting with him? Send someone over with me and I will get you the meeting.

So, Mr. Speaker, two months ago I took a delegation to Moscow. From the Missile Defense Agency I took General Obering, who is now the three star general in charge of that agency. He took three other associates with him.

We arrived in Moscow and they took us to Starya Plohad, which is equivalent to our East Wing of the White House. We sat at a table across from Putin's representative to the Duma and the Federation Council, the chairman of the committee overseeing the Ministry of the Interior, Alexi Alexandrov, and in walks General

Baluyevsky. General Baluyevsky, in a business suit, talked with General Obering and began a dialogue that we could not get for a year on missile defense cooperation.

Two weeks after we left Moscow, President Putin relieved the chairman of their Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Kvashnin, and replaced him with General Baluyevsky.

The fourth item in this initiative, Mr. Speaker, calls for the announcement of the U.S.-Russian free energy trade agreement. Not free trade agreement, but free energy trade agreement. We have significant energy needs. Russia has significant energy reserves. They are trying to get their energy to the marketplace, we want to use that energy and need it.

What I am calling for, Mr. Speaker, is an equivalent relationship similar to Gore-Chernomyrdin in the previous administration between the two presidents of our countries, so that Putin and Bush appoint a joint effort of having our energy leaders, private sector and government, work together with Russia's energy leaders, so that we can help bring their energy out and use it in our marketplace. It is already happening. We simply want to expedite that process, both in terms of fossil fuel and in terms of nuclear power.

Along with this four-part position paper, Mr. Speaker, we need to work together with Russia on anti-terrorism.

I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, if we follow these actions, if the President takes the bold leadership that is outlined in this document, then we will have the leverage for President Bush to go to President Putin and say, "Vladimir, you are going too far in your actions in providing autocratic rule over your country. Allow democracy to survive, to grow and prosper. Vladimir, I need your help in allowing us to deal with Iran. Help us deal with the problem of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, because if we do not deal with that power plant, Israel will eventually try to take it out because they see it as a nuclear threat to their security.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time for us to join with Russia, to be Russia's best friend, to be Russia's partner; to hold Russia accountable, to talk about human rights. But to do it in a way that Russia understands is in our mutual interest, not a condescending approach where we look down on Russia, as we have done in the past, and tell Russia to do what we have outlined for them.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced nothing is more critical. The timing is right, and we must act quickly.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD these documents.

U.S.-RUSSIA PARTNERSHIP—RENEWED COMMITMENTS, STRENGTHENED RELATIONSHIPS, AUGUST 2004

INTRODUCTION

Long before Perestroika, Gorbachev and the fall of the Soviet Union, I developed a deep interest in U.S.-Russian relations. The

Soviet Union, an enemy of the United States, demonstrated its strength and intent to protect its country by producing massive stockpiles of nuclear and biological weapons. The aggression between our two countries led me to major in Russian Studies, believing that one day, our relationship would change and the United States and the Soviet Union would normalize relations. As a county commissioner, I hosted my first group of young communists in Pennsylvania in 1985. This relationship, forged 19 years ago, has maintained its strength and expanded even further to include a larger circle of Russian citizens. I take great pride in my efforts to reach out and establish a solid base of understanding and cooperation to achieve stability for the people of Russia and the surrounding former Soviet republics.

For the past 10 years, I have co-chaired the Duma-Congress Study Group, the official inter-parliamentary relationship between the United States and Russia. This exchange plays a vital role in strengthening our relationship with Russia. The overriding purpose of this relationship is to demonstrate to the Duma and its leaders how an effective inter-parliamentary relationship can lead to positive changes in both our countries. Today, Members of Congress work with their counterparts in the Duma on common interests such as the environment, health care, social and economic issues. By building and strengthening a working relationship, we are then able to confront more difficult issues such as missile defense, non-proliferation, Iran and other multilateral relationships.

Three years ago, I unveiled a comprehensive plan to cooperate with Russia on eleven different issues ranging from defense and security to agriculture and healthcare. This proposal, *A New Time, A New Beginning*, was widely supported in the U.S. and Russia. However, recently, I have watched Russia lose confidence in the United States and move further away from the West. The start of Russian distrust in the United States began shortly after the fall of Soviet communism. Russians believed that with the break up of the Soviet Union, prosperity would soon follow. Instead, in 2001, \$4.08 billion of U.S. foreign direct investment flowed into Russia while in 2001, Communist China received \$10.53 billion in U.S. foreign direct investment. This was the first of many negative messages the U.S. sent to Russia.

Additionally, Russians are still bitter of our handling of the war in Kosovo. Russia believed we could have, and should have, ended that war much earlier. In fact, instead of ignoring Russia's relationship with Yugoslavia, we should have encouraged Russia to play a more aggressive role in peacefully removing Milosevic from power. It was not until one year after we began the bombing that we finally requested Russia's assistance.

Furthermore, when news of the biggest money laundering scandal broke in late 1999, the Clinton Administration ignored the theft of billions of U.S. dollars destined for Russian citizens. The Russians watched as the oligarchs, including some with close connections to President Boris Yeltsin, lined their pocketbooks. The United States downplayed the Bank of New York scandal and continued to protect the Clinton-Yeltsin relationship.

The September 2000 Speaker's Advisory Group on Russia concluded that both Russian government agencies and private entities were directly involved in at least 26 transfers of proliferation to such states as Iran and Iraq. Instead of sanctioning Russia, the Clinton Administration continued to rely on personal assurances from its small cadre of contacts in the Russian government.

The Clinton Administration's willful blindness to Russian proliferation produced immense damage to our relationship with Russia. Our policy under President Clinton was based on a personal relationship between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, and Vice-President Gore and Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. As long as these Russians were in power, nothing else mattered. While Russians lost faith in Yeltsin, the U.S. continued to support this failed leader.

During the Clinton Administration, tens of thousands of young Russians were outside the American embassy in Moscow throwing paint, firing weapons at our embassy and burning the American flag. In fact, the State Department had issued travel advisories to Americans traveling to Moscow because the hatred for America had grown so great in such a short period of time that the Russian people were adamantly opposed to any Americans in their country.

To repair our relationship, I have developed a new approach to improve our relationship with Russia that builds upon the recommendations in *A New Time, A New Beginning*. The four initiatives in this proposal are not new to U.S.-Russian relations. Rather, they are programs that could easily regain Russian support and trust in the United States if implemented in the short term. The U.S. needs Russian support not for our own security concerns, but for international stability. In that regard, I firmly believe that the key to stabilizing the situation in Iraq lies in improving our relations with Russia. It is no secret that Iran continues to fuel the bulk of terrorist activity in Iraq. However, given our cold relationship with Iran resulting from their continued pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, support of global terrorism and atrocious human rights record, there is little room for diplomatic negotiations. In contrast, Russia's deep and lucrative investments with the Islamic Republic may provide the necessary leverage to effect change in that country's activities in Iraq. Specifically, as a major supplier of arms and nuclear technology to Iran, Russia can exert significant economic pressure. In addition to its trading activity, Russia has made strategic policy agreements with Iran to keep them out of the Caucasus and has coordinated its policy in Central Asia with specific regard to Caspian oil reserves.

It is also in Russia's best interest to continue to engage Iran and improve its own bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic. Iran's military capabilities continue to threaten Russia as well as its possible support of radical separatism in Russia's turbulent "southern rim".

As such, improving our relationship with Russia would provide needed leverage to induce Russia to use its influence with Iran to help stabilize the situation in Iraq. I firmly believe that we have reached a crucial juncture in our relationship with Russia and the independent states of the former Soviet Union. By taking action in four key areas, we can dramatically improve our relationship with our former Cold War enemy for years to come. These four key areas are as follows:

Terminate Jackson-Vanik restrictions against Russia. Although not a high profile issue in the U.S., Jackson-Vanik continues to be a political hot-button for the Russian government and its citizens. Removing the restriction would send a tremendously positive message that the U.S. is serious about improving relations between our two nations.

Renew our commitment to Cooperative Threat Reduction programs. An opportunity exists for the administration to undertake a new cooperative program with Russian officials to secure biological weapons facilities

that at present are poorly protected. The interagency Russian International Exchange Group (IEG) is comprised of senior military, intelligence and political officials. Operating with the support of Russian President Putin, the IEG has been established to remove bureaucratic obstacles to the implementation of U.S. funded nonproliferation programs. The IEG concept has been briefed to senior staff of the Office of the Vice President. The IEG has offered to work with the appropriate U.S. agencies—most likely DOD/DTRA—on a pilot project whose goal would be to secure five biological weapons sites.

As many as 89 additional sites could be worked through the IEG. DTRA is in the process of being briefed on this initiative. White House support for the concept would be instrumental in capitalizing on a new opportunity for the administration to demonstrate it is working with Russia in limiting the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Improve Russian energy infrastructure. Russia and the independent states of the former Soviet Union possess vast oil and natural gas reserves. Despite their incredible natural resources, Russia continues to struggle to get these resources to the world market. Lacking the necessary capital, much of Russia's natural resources remain untapped. By assisting Russia in reforming and clarifying their tax code could result in Russia's ability to extract, transport and market its energy resources. Russian natural resources could lower skyrocketing fuel costs and dramatically improve our economy. Utilizing Russian natural resources would significantly improve our national security by lessening our dependence on Middle East oil. In exchange Russia would receive the much needed upgrade in its energy producing capabilities and gain the world's largest energy consuming market as a key customer. Continued cooperation with Russia on energy policy is also needed to improve the environment for foreign investment. Assisting Russia improve its energy infrastructure is the necessary first step towards attracting the private investment that will sustain Russia's energy industry for the future.

Improve and enhance our cooperation on missile defense. Emerging threats of missile attacks from rogue nations may confront both the U.S. and Russia over the next decade. A major objective of the Missile Defense Act was to establish cooperative projects between the two nations. With a new director at the U.S. Missile Defense Agency and changes at senior levels in the Russian military establishment, the U.S. should pursue this cooperation immediately.

With the accomplishment of these four proposals, the United States will win a major victory in Russia, and in return, Russia will be more willing to cooperate on issues significantly important to the United States. It is time the bilateral relationship go beyond the diplomatic posturing and produce real results.

TERMINATION OF JACKSON-VANIK

Thirty years ago, the Jackson-Vanik amendment was included in the Trade Act of 1974 to protect religious freedom in the former Soviet Union. The United States Congress made a courageous decision to pass the Jackson-Vanik amendment and link it to the Soviet Union's trade status and its record on Jewish emigration. Jackson-Vanik set guidelines for a string of changes in the Soviet Union and allowed for Jews to escape oppression and begin new lives. It was the right policy for the right time.

Since 1994, Russia has been in full compliance of Jackson-Vanik and Russian Jews are free to emigrate from the former Soviet Union. Major Jewish organizations—the Jew-

ish Institute for National Security Affairs, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the National Conference on Soviet Jewry—that long opposed terminating Jackson-Vanik, are in agreement and on record that the United States should terminate this obsolete provision.

Although President Putin requested, and President Bush promised Russia's elevation from Jackson-Vanik two years ago, there are some in Congress and in the administration that want to change the original intent of the amendment to meet unrelated trade disputes. Two years ago, due to Russian safety concerns, President Putin blocked U.S. poultry imports causing a major disruption in the U.S. poultry industry. While I empathize with our farmers, using an emigration provision to negotiate a trade dispute undermines U.S. foreign policy. Trade disputes are natural components of an evolving trade relationship, and under current trade laws, there are effective remedies to address them. In resolving the poultry disagreement, I worked with the key Members of Congress concerned with agriculture issues. As a result of my efforts, Representatives Pombo, Boehner and Goodlatte signed a letter to Representative Bill Thomas, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, which has trade jurisdiction, indicating their disagreement that the lifting of Jackson-Vanik restriction to poultry trade was inappropriate.

Additionally, using the amendment to leverage Russia's accession to the WTO, as some have suggested, would weaken U.S. credibility. WTO rules already require that every member of the working party agree before a country is granted membership. Therefore, Russia cannot accede without consent from the United States. This guarantees that U.S. negotiators have adequate authority to monitor and guide Russia's accession.

An overwhelming majority of U.S. companies active in the Russian marketplace also agree that terminating Jackson-Vanik is appropriate, especially since Russia is currently recognized as a market economy under U.S. trade law.

In addition to fulfilling the Jackson-Vanik requirements, President Putin was the first foreign leader to contact President Bush after Sept 11, 2001, to offer condolences, intelligence assistance and other support, including agreeing to the positioning of U.S. forces in Central Asia, which was a key to our military success in Afghanistan. In October 2001, Russia appealed the United States by closing their Lourdes Listening Facility in Cuba. More recently, instead of protesting NATO expansion, which brought the organization up to Russia's borders, Russia negotiated with NATO to establish a formal method of cooperation. Although Russia has shown the U.S. its willingness to cooperate and accommodate our many requests, the United States, has not sent one positive message to Russia.

Jackson-Vanik is not a high profile issue in the United States, but it continues to be a sensitive issue for the Russian government and its citizens. While the changing nature of our strategic relationship with Russia has been full of promise, it has been challenged by a growing number of domestic constituencies within Russia. Russian media reports consistently remind Russian citizens of this unfulfilled promise. This opposition can easily be resolved by granting Russia what it rightfully deserves—elevating Russia from the Jackson-Vanik amendment. This would send a positive message that the U.S. is serious about improving relations between our two nations.

NEW THREAT REDUCTION INITIATIVE: U.S.-RUSSIA COOPERATION ON SECURING BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS AND RESEARCH SITES

Since 1992, the United States and Russia have engaged in a series of cooperative threat reduction programs, commonly referred to as Nunn-Lugar programs. Primarily, this cooperation has focused resources on reducing the threat posed by the theft or diversion of nuclear weapons and materials. Some successes have been achieved, but the current programmatic approach to this daunting challenge has in some cases been bogged down in a maze of bureaucratic missteps and a flagging sense of urgency. In other cases, programmatic implementation has been slowed by bilateral disputes over taxes and liability.

This new initiative addresses a topic of heretofore—limited bilateral cooperation—programmatic work to enhance the security at Russian biological sites that hold dangerous pathogens of interest to rogue states or terrorist groups—and also proposes a new cooperative model for implementing this work. Central to the success of this initiative is the cooperation of Russian authorities that control access to these facilities. Reflecting internal concerns about the pace and scope of existing cooperative threat reduction programs with the United States, the Russians established an interagency group, supported by President Putin, senior military, security and political officials, whose goal is to find solutions to the bureaucratic obstacles that have plagued existing programmatic efforts. Known as the International Exchange Group (IEG) within Russia, as a sign of its bona fides and influence within the Russian government, IEG has presented to U.S. officials a list of 89 biological facilities as candidates for security enhancement work.

Recognizing the challenge and expense of working at such a large number of sites, the IEG has proposed a pilot project that would encompass work at six biological sites, including Biopreparat, the military's leading producer of biological pathogens. The IEG has contracted official agreements with all six facilities. These sites would have to be assessed carefully by U.S. experts to determine the appropriate amount of funding and most effective set of security enhancements required for implementing the project, but an overall initial estimate of \$10 million to complete work at the six sites is required. Funding for this project could be made available through funds existing within the Department of Defense's Cooperative Threat Reduction Program.

In addition to the national security benefit of securing hazardous biological pathogens, the pilot project would have two innovative programmatic elements. The first is that the Russian side would commit its own "up-front" funding to begin the projects. The IEG would expect U.S. funding to be made available to ultimately fund the six site pilot projects, but they are prepared to cooperate in the establishment of a joint U.S.-Russian management team that would oversee the project. The management team would place U.S. funds in an escrow account, releasing those funds to the Russians only when mutually agreed upon project milestones had been achieved and verified. The second innovative element of this initiative is that unlike much of the security enhancement work currently funded that relies heavily on U.S. contractor involvement—triggering legal disputes over liability—the pilot project would be carried out by Russian contractors, working in Russia at Russian sites. In so doing, the Russians would accept all the legal liability for performed work and there also would be no Russian claim that

funding should be subject to Russian taxation.

A number of independent states of the former Soviet Union have been helpful to the United States in the war on terrorism. Such states are new and struggling democracies and would benefit considerably from assistance to create sustainable jobs for their underemployed or unemployed scientists, engineers and technicians who were formerly engaged in activities to develop and produce weapons of mass destruction for the Russian Federation or other such state. The United States should establish and promote programs that prevent the proliferation from scientists, engineers and technicians of the former Soviet Union to countries with potential for proliferation, development and production of weapons of mass destruction.

The Teller-Kurchatov Alliance for Peace, as included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (H.R. 4200), should immediately be enacted to award scientists employed at the Kurchatov Institute of the Russian Federation and scientists employed at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, international exchange fellowships in the nuclear nonproliferation sciences. This program, between the leading U.S. and Russian nuclear facilities, would promote peaceful uses of nuclear technology and provide opportunities for advancement in the field of nuclear nonproliferation to scientists who, as demonstrated by their academic or professional achievements, show particular promise of making significant contributions in that field.

Removing potential nuclear weapons materials from vulnerable sites around the world would reduce the chance that such materials would fall into the hands of groups hostile to the national security of the United States. A Task Force on Nuclear Material Removal should be established by the President appointing the Department of Energy to ensure that potential nuclear weapons materials are entirely removed from the most vulnerable sites as soon as practicable.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Republic of Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, all part of the Silk Road region, would benefit from the Silk Road Initiative to develop sustainable employment opportunities between the United States and the Silk Road nations for scientists, engineers and technicians formerly engaged in activities to develop and produce weapons of mass destruction. This program will incorporate the best practices under the former Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention program and facilitate commercial partnerships between private entities in the United States and scientists, engineers and technicians in the Silk Road nations.

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union presented the U.S. with a clear and identifiable threat to our national security. For decades, the Soviet Union developed massive stockpiles of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. With the fall of the Soviet Union, these stockpiles are largely unaccounted for and in dangerously insecure locations and facilities.

In the post-September 11th world, in which our nation faces new threats from underground terrorist organizations, it is more important than ever to work with Russia to eliminate and secure their weapons of mass destruction so that they do not fall into the wrong hands. By implementing and engaging Russia in these programs would secure our national security.

U.S.—RUSSIA COOPERATION ON MISSILE DEFENSE

Recognizing the emerging threat of missile attack from rogue nations that may con-

front both the U.S. and Russia over the next decade, a major objective of the Missile Defense Act was the establishment of cooperative projects between the two former rivals. With a new director at the U.S. Missile Defense Agency and changes at senior levels in the Russian military establishment, the time may be right to advance this cooperation.

Central to the development of bilateral cooperation in missile defense would be commencement of an ongoing dialogue between senior U.S. and Russian officials and their experts. In July 2004, such a meeting occurred in Berlin. Sustaining this fledgling momentum will be essential and, if supported by the administration, the Congress and its counterparts in the Russian Duma, that outcome can be achieved. Such cooperation is in the national security interest of the United States. Russian assistance in such areas as sharing data from target acquisition radars, currently unavailable to the Missile Defense Agency, would address one of the information gaps in the system's current configuration.

Comprehensive data exchanges could be the first area of possible bilateral missile defense cooperation. Under the auspices of the IEG, a series of senior working group meetings could be established with U.S. counterparts. The working group would be empowered to establish agenda topics reflecting the interests and priorities of each side. In addition, and as part of that mechanism, the sides might agree on a process where they would report to their respective political leadership, as well as representatives of the U.S. Congress and Duma, on the progress being achieved by the working group.

Currently, a government-to-government agreement must be in place to serve as a framework for any industry cooperation on missile defense. Regular meetings and discussions between officials of the two governments are ongoing and contributing to this framework agreement. These discussions should also review U.S. and Russian export control and liability policies in order to normalize the trade relationship.

Additional areas of potential missile defense cooperation that may be beneficial to the two nations include targets, radars and sensors.

Targets—Both the United States and the Russian Federation have space-based Early Warning Systems (EWS) and long histories of development therein. A major new thrust is the need for the future Ballistic Missile Defense System to detect missile launches much earlier than provided by current EWS capabilities. This is important to support the boost phase intercept element of BMDS where alert and launch of interceptors within tens of seconds of the threat missile ignition are extremely valuable to the operational concept.

Currently, an initiative exists that is ongoing within the Missile Defense Agency dealing with targets and countermeasures. Through this initiative, targets are provided for missile defense interceptor tests. Competition exists between U.S. contractors to provide targets and these awards, if appropriate could be competed to include non-U.S. entities, including Russian firms to provide realistic targets to the Missile Defense Agency.

The Russian Federation has been requested by the Missile Defense Agency to provide ballistic missile targets and launch services for radar evaluation. In the long term, this could evolve into an expanded test program to include target intercepts. Both nations will cooperate to access threat representative targets and provide more operationally realistic testing opportunities.

Radars—Early Warning Radars offer a propitious opportunity for cooperation. A cooperative effort with Russia to co-develop early

warning radars, located along the Russian southern border looking toward Middle East and Southwest Asia threats, is critical to both nations. UHF technology is globally widespread and, therefore, in a category of technology considered exportable. Early warning data alerting our two governments of a Middle East threat would go to a Russian site, a U.S. site or it could go to a third site that would then pass the early warning data to both countries.

Sensors—A great deal of attention is being paid by Homeland Security and the Defense Agencies to detect the presence of Special Nuclear Material or nuclear weapons at points of entry or those assembled clandestinely here at home. However, once a nuclear weapon or a dirty bomb has been detonated or a successful disastrous attack on a nuclear reactor has been made, the important problem remains of defining the contaminated areas for evacuation and subsequent decontamination. The better and more quickly the delineation of the dangerous areas can be accomplished, the sooner the civilian population can be rescued and their fears alleviated and the more quickly the decontamination effort can proceed with protection for the clean up crews.

Present technology depends in large part on the use of detectors that are sensitive to the gamma rays emitted by the decay of radionuclides. However, these detectors require that they be used within the irradiated region that could produce possible radiation effects on the operator. This means of free path of the gamma rays, however, is not sufficiently long enough to permit the use of a gamma sensor from remote platforms such as a helicopter or UAV that could provide a rapid assessment of the situation and mapping of the affected areas.

Little known measurements, made a number of years ago, showed that the radioactive decay products (alpha, beta and gamma rays) cause the atmosphere to fluoresce principally in the ultraviolet (UV) and to a lesser extent in other regions of the spectrum. Using this phenomenon it is possible to measure and localize the UV emission from these radiations remotely on the ground or from aircraft or a UAV.

The Russians have demonstrated expertise in ultraviolet sensors under the RAMOS program. In addition, there are ongoing activities with the Russian nuclear community for Threat Reduction. The United States and Russia should broaden and fuse these capabilities to this new program for remote sensing and mapping of radiological contaminants.

Measurements and modeling of the visible/infrared signatures (spectral, temporal, and spatial) of Russian missile plumes is a near term project that could be placed under the RAMOS program. Of particular interest are data taken on plumes of the Russian rocket motors and technologies that have been previously exported or copied by third world countries of concern. In addition to measuring the boost phase of Russian and U.S. missile launches, there is also interest in observing static tests.

The key to forging a U.S.-Russian missile defense alliance is now, before U.S.-Russian relations deteriorate further. Even the most modest proposals and programs already underway should be viewed as reforming a still adversarial relationship between Washington and Moscow. Current discussions between the Department of Defense, the Missile Defense Agency and Russian officials should continue to provide a strategy to evaluate the feasibility of increasing technical cooperation with Russian military industry on missile defense technologies such as the Russian S-400 and S-500. These cooperative opportunities would benefit Russia through a

long-term relationship and direct involvement in the U.S. BMDS as well as significant Russian industry involvement and monetary benefits.

ENERGY

Russia, with its vast oil and gas resources, a growing and diverse number of private sector companies and a renewed commitment to investment by international energy companies, offers a unique opportunity to provide energy stability to an often volatile and insecure world energy market. Working with Russia, the U.S. can play a critical role in supporting energy development among the resource rich countries of the former Soviet Union. In a time of historically high crude oil and natural gas prices, the United States and Russia must establish a more effective energy partnership. Both the United States and Russia have emphasized the importance of energy in the bilateral relationship, and have sought ways to encourage trade and investment, but the results of their actions have not been sufficient. Russia's vast energy resources have not flooded the United States market.

Russia's energy sector is at full capacity, unable to export greater amounts of oil and gas. Increasing Russia's oil and gas exports will require sequenced long-term investment in exploration, production and transportation to increase total system capacity.

Large-scale direct investment by United States companies, with its major inputs of technology and management, in the Russian energy sector is vital in order for Russia to substantially increase its energy output for the benefit of both the United States and Russia. American energy company investment in the Russian energy sector will improve Russia's economic development and political stability, while at the same time supply the United States with additional oil and gas, thereby enhancing energy security by decreasing dependence on the Middle East.

While Russia's foreign direct investment has increased, it remains far below its potential. Russia's government policies, regulations and practices still make American investors wary of its uncertain business environment. United States companies require greater security and protections of their interests in order to invest further in their human, technical and financial capital in Russian energy markets. Numerous American companies have struggled with Russian entities over asset ownership and appropriate taxation.

If Russia seeks to encourage foreign investment, it must create a transparent business environment. The United States and Russian government must take action, simultaneously, so that United States companies will overcome this uncertainty and invest in Russia's energy market.

A. Asset Ownership and Taxation.—Despite financial incentives, such as the United States Export-Import Bank loan guarantees to American exporters of oil and gas equipment to Russia and Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) insurance and financing to American investors in the Russian energy sector, the United States government must provide further incentives to encourage greater investment in Russia such as relaxing the foreign tax code. Over the decades, there have been few major changes in the structure of the United States international tax system. Reducing the relative tax burden on foreign investment would increase the extent to which American companies invest abroad. Policy options include liberalizing the foreign tax credit's limitation and Subpart F's restrictions on deferral for Russian energy investment, exempting all income from Russian energy production,

or at least providing a substantial reduction in the tax rate on repatriated earnings, and implementing tax sparring for Russian, and especially the former countries of the Soviet Union, energy investment.

For Russia to recognize its potential, both Russian and non-Russian investors must have confidence that, when disputes arise, a judicial system exists that will fairly and impartially enforce the rules applicable to their operations and honor their agreements. In addition, a banking system capable of providing the funds to finance this growth must exist. By creating a joint United States-Russian Energy Bank similar to the World Bank, European Development Bank or International Monetary Fund but limited to the United States, Russia and former countries of the Soviet Union, could create a positive investment environment and produce long term development of the energy sector in Russia. At least, during the appropriation process, Congress must encourage that funds appropriated to these development banks be used in energy projects in Russian and the former countries of the Soviet Union.

Russia also needs to clarify and fix either the tax scheme under which new exploration and production would be covered, or revisit a Production Sharing Agreement. United States energy companies need to be able to quantify their potential outcome prior to investing in explorations, or even seismic analysis to determine their interest in exploring a given area.

B. Improve Russia Production Capabilities.—Russia's ability to transport and export oil and gas is significantly below its production capabilities. In 2004, Russian oil exports will expand almost 12% over the 250 mm tons exported in 2003. However, in the following two years, exports will increase only 3% annually because the existing pipeline system is unable to pump greater quantities of oil. The Russian government must define the rights of investors in private pipelines so that outside investment can construct additional major pipelines to increase output. Currently, energy transportation out of Russia is controlled by the Russian government which may restrict capacity. Russia should open transportation capability to non-Russian entities so that U.S. companies investing in Russia may determine allocating capacity.

Russia should also remove the government's current requirement that a fixed percentage of new production must be sold into the Russian domestic market at a significantly lower price than the true market price. This would provide an incentive for new production, since currently an estimated 65% of all production is sold at such a discount. The Russian government could become economically indifferent when an appropriate tax scheme is defined at the outset of the agreement.

Additionally, if Russian companies aspire to become global leaders in the energy production market, the U.S. can assist Russian oil companies to develop their resources, shift their products to the United States market and help advance and solidify Russia's integration into the international energy economy. U.S. companies can offer the technical capability, the access to capital and the international expertise to Russia. Furthermore, the United States can provide Russian companies adequate storage at refineries and ports. Old U.S. military bases, which are no longer used by DoD, could provide the storage and security for energy imported from Russia.

C. Commercial Energy Dialogue.—The foundation formed by President Bush and Putin's 2002 United States-Russian Commercial Energy Dialogue must continue to be

built upon, but at a faster pace. The U.S. Department of Energy and the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy should continue to convene annually with U.S. and Russian agency officials, legislators, industry and academic institutions and identify areas of further cooperative efforts and potential areas for new collaborations.

When the President and other high level United States officials meet with their Russian counterparts, they must emphasize the great need for Russia to improve its domestic investment climate as a prerequisite for higher levels of United States investment in the energy sector.

While this dialogue is committed to pursuing new energy opportunities by fostering closer relations between educational and professional institutions and resolving current trade and administrative disputes, the commission should also review immigration policies practiced by the U.S. and Russian agencies granting visas for energy sector officials and employees. If this dialogue is to be successful, the participants of both nations should receive visas in a timely manner.

Additionally, as co-chairman of the Duma-Congress Study Group, I propose creating a task force between the two legislative branches in order to expedite legislative reforms recommended by the commercial energy dialogue. The task force should hold annual exchanges between members and staff of the energy committees.

Russia has a renewed commitment to investment by American energy companies. Recent actions by President Putin signal the importance placed on energy trade and investment with the United States. He has called for increased pipeline infrastructure development to facilitate the export of oil to Europe and the United States stating "... I would like relations between Russian and United States businesses to develop more actively, especially in the strategically important area of energy. ..."

It is clear, both the United States and Russia want and need to increase Russia's exportation of energy. This is a rare and distinct opportunity where American and Russian collaboration on energy research might be beneficial in fostering a cooperative, market-based approach to energy security, reducing dependency on the tumultuous Middle East. This can be the new model of future energy partnerships. The United States and Russia can play a critical role in supporting energy development among the energy rich countries of the former Soviet Union, further improving global energy diversity and energy security.

OMISSION FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2004 AT PAGE H7267

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of a family emergency.

Mr. KLECZKA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 5 p.m. and the

balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

Mr. WICKER (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HINOJOSA) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. HINOJOSA, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFazio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONYERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STRICKLAND, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HINCHEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MORAN of Kansas) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SOUDER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. NORWOOD, for 5 minutes, September 23.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 2279. An act to amend title 46, United States Code, with respect to maritime transportation security and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Mr. Trandahl, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 265. An act to provide for an adjustment of the boundaries of Mount Rainier National Park, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1521. An act to provide for additional lands to be included within the boundary of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial in the State of Pennsylvania, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1616. An act to authorize the exchange of certain lands within the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site for lands owned by the City of Atlanta, Georgia, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1648. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain water distribution systems of the Cachuma Project, California, to the Carpinteria Valley Water District and the Montecito Water District.

H.R. 1658. An act to amend the Railroad Right-of-Way Conveyance Validation Act to

validate additional conveyances of certain lands in the State of California that form part of the right-of-way granted by the United States to facilitate the construction of the transcontinental railway, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1732. An act to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Williamson County, Texas, Water Recycling and Reuse Project, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2696. An act to establish Institutes to demonstrate and promote the use of adaptive ecosystem management to reduce the risk of wildfires, and restore the health of fire-adapted forest and woodland ecosystems of the interior West.

H.R. 3209. An act to amend the Reclamation Project Authorization Act of 1972 to clarify the acreage for which the North Loup division is authorized to provide irrigation water under the Missouri River Basin project.

H.R. 3249. An act to extend the term of the Forest Counties Payments Committee.

H.R. 3768. An act to expand the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Florida.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at midnight), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, September 23, 2004, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

9660. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the 2003 Annual Report regarding the Department's enforcement activities under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1691f; to the Committee on Financial Services.

9661. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Atka Mackerel Lottery in Areas 542 and 543 [Docket No. 031126295-3295-01; I.D. 081104A] received August 30, 2004, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Resources.

9662. A letter from the Assistant Director, Executive and Political Personnel, Department of Defense, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

9663. A letter from the Assistant Director, Executive and Political Personnel, Department of Defense, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

9664. A letter from the Assistant Director, Executive and Political Personnel, Department of Defense, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Government Reform.

9665. A letter from the Assistant Director, Executive and Political Personnel, Department of Defense, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act