

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

#### CHANGE OF VOTE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Colorado for yielding. On rollcall vote No. 307, I was recorded as voting yea. I voted no. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the official record be corrected to accurately reflect my vote. This will in no way change the outcome of the vote.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Colorado.

#### ENERGY INDEPENDENCE: A 21ST CENTURY IMPERATIVE

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an urgent problem that continues to confront this great Nation. The problem is simply stated. Today, America is held hostage to our overdependence on foreign oil. That dependency is continuing to grow at an ever-alarming rate. America deserves better.

The problem is a result of the malignant neglect of the United States of a meaningful national energy policy for the last three decades. From the formation of OPEC and President Carter's national statement that we must embrace energy independence with "the moral imperative of war," Washington has been stuck in the swamp of inaction. It is time to change this neglect and, for the sake of ourselves and for our children, find our way out of this swamp of inaction.

Ever since 1970, America's domestic production of oil has been dropping. And ever since, many speeches have been given in Washington about the importance of achieving energy independence. Many of us remember the speeches of Richard Nixon and President Carter in the 1970s and the 1980s.

In 1973, following the formation of OPEC, President Nixon gave a speech to the Nation where he said:

our overall objective . . . can be summed up in one word that best characterizes this Nation and its essential character. The word is "independence."

Then again in 1980, President Carter spoke to the Congress at his State of the Union address. In that speech, President Carter said:

Our excessive dependence on foreign oil is a clear and present danger to our Nation's security. The need has never been more urgent. At long last, we must have a clear, comprehensive energy policy for the United States.

That was President Jimmy Carter in 1980. Well, here we are in 2005 and the Nation has miserably failed to achieve any meaningful reform and any progress toward energy independence. Instead, we have retreated and gone backward. We have become more dependent on imports of foreign oil. The words of President Nixon and President

Carter today in 2005 sound hollow because there has not been action to follow the words that have come out of Washington. I am sure both President Nixon, if he were alive today, and President Carter today would be frustrated with the refusal by Washington, the refusal by the White House, to move this great Nation toward energy independence.

I, too, am tired of this talk, and I believe many of my colleagues in this Chamber are tired of this talk. I am tired of the maneuvering of Congress to protect the special interests, and it is time for us to take action.

The facts do not lie about the national energy crisis that we are in and how we are being held hostage to the whims of foreign governments. The conclusion is inescapable when one reviews the facts. Let me review just a few of those important facts. One, Americans today consume one-quarter of the world's oil, but we only stand on top of about 3 percent of the global reserves. So we consume one-quarter of the world's oil, but we only have 3 percent of the world's reserves.

Currently, the OPEC member countries produce about 40 percent of the world's oil, but they hold 80 percent of the proven world reserves. That is a second fact that should be alarming to us because 85 percent of those reserves are in the greater Middle East in countries such as Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

Third, 22 percent of the world's oil is in the hands of state sponsors of terrorism under U.S. or U.N. sanction, and only 9 percent of the world's oil is in the hands of free countries.

Today, as we debate the Department of Defense authorization bill to make sure that we remain a strong America, this ought to be something in the back of our minds and in the front of our minds, that we cannot really have a strong America unless we address this most fundamental national security threat of our overdependence on foreign oil.

In the 1970s, this Nation imported about a third of our oil needs. Today, we import almost 60 percent, and the projections are that 20 to 25 years from now we will be importing 70 percent of our oil from foreign countries.

Fifth, we are importing more oil at a time when other growing nations such as China continue to grow in their importation of oil from other countries. China, today, has become the No. 2 petroleum user on the entire globe. Experts predict that China's 1.2 billion people and its large and rapidly growing demand for oil will have serious implications for the United States and for oil prices and supplies at home.

Fully one-quarter of the U.S. trade deficit today—those of us like my colleague from Oklahoma who is here today, who is concerned about the growing deficits that we have in America today, understand that one-quarter of the U.S. trade deficits are associated with oil imports. The problem that we

face for sure is due in part to dwindling resources in America. Domestic reserves of oil and natural gas are declining although our demand continues to grow. However, the reality is that there has been a deliberate unwillingness to address this problem in America.

As proof, the average American vehicle gets fewer miles per gallon today than it did in 1988. That is right. Even though transportation fuels represent about two-thirds of our demand for petroleum products, our current fuel economy is worse today than it was 17 years ago. According to EPA estimates, back in 1988 passenger vehicles in America had an average fuel economy of 26 miles per gallon. Today, in the midst of this national crisis, we have 50 million more passenger vehicles on the road and the average fuel economy has declined to less than 24 miles per gallon. That is going in the wrong direction. How is it possible that the world's biggest economy with the world's best scientists and engineers, we, the United States of America, are doing worse today on fuel economy than we were 17 years ago?

We find ourselves in this mess because we have not taken our energy consumption problem seriously. Since most of the known oil reserves lie in one specific region of the world, the Middle East, our addiction to foreign oil means that we will continue to be held hostage to the whims of despotic or increasingly unstable regimes. Ominously, the money we pay today for foreign oil helps pay for the activities of extremists and terrorists around the world who hate the United States and the West in general. We only need to recall the horrors of 9/11 to know how real that hatred is.

Even worse, the money pit grows deeper because we as a world consume more oil and that oil becomes more expensive and the money that keeps some of these regimes in place gets more concentrated in the hands of these few countries. So, yes, America is held hostage and in a tighter and tighter grip.

There is only one way for us to fix this. America must stop the rhetoric, and we must embrace a true imperative of energy independence.

I wish to say a word about the work of this body, this Congress, in the last year with the Energy Policy Act of 2005. I wish to say two things about that legislation. It was the first time in 13 years that any significant energy legislation came out of Washington, DC, again, demonstrating the malignant neglect. There are two important lessons we should take from the act. The first is it was a good template of bipartisan cooperation. In this body, with more than 80 votes, Republicans and Democrats coming together saying we need to embrace a new National Energy Policy Act, we are making a statement that this is an important issue for the American people. We ought to find more places where the American people can get that kind of

bipartisan action on the part of the Senate, the Congress.

Second, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 did some good things in making us move forward toward energy independence. It embraced an ethic of energy conservation, of which all of us should be proud, and included in that are efficiency standards for the 14 appliances that are most commonly used in our homes. That is an important step for the United States of America to take because we know from the experts at the Department of Energy that we currently waste about 62 percent of the energy we consume.

Second, the 2005 Energy Policy Act also took some major steps forward with regard to renewable energy. We embraced an ethic that said we can start growing our way toward energy independence. We increased the amount of ethanol that will be produced in America so we will have 7.5 billion gallons of ethanol being produced by 2012. That is only 5 years away. That will be very helpful to us as we move toward energy independence.

Third, the new technologies that were embraced in this law are important. When we look at the possibility of coal gasification, we know the huge reserves we have in America can be used in a way to help us fill up that menu board that we must fill up if we are going to find our way toward energy independence.

Finally, there are approaches in the legislation that will help us with the balanced development of our current natural resources, including the appropriate development of oil shale within my State of Colorado.

While I have been a fan of our 2005 legislation, I believe there is more that we must do to set America free from the overdependence on foreign oil. We need to do more. There is a hard winter ahead for many Americans. Gas prices remain very high. Diesel prices remain even higher. This directly affects the pocketbooks of people across America.

In Colorado, as across the Nation, high fuel prices affect everyone, and they also hit our agricultural producers and perhaps hit them the hardest. Farming and ranching equipment uses diesel fuel. When you have to tend to hundreds of acres, you use a lot of it.

Americans are in for a one-two punch on energy prices this winter because home heating prices are going to be high as well. The cost of natural gas is at an unprecedented level and, similar to the high prices at the pump, the resulting high heating costs will affect every American. We should take action.

Back in August I remember traveling around in places where I saw gas prices hit \$3 for the first time around. Yet through the ravages of Katrina and Rita and the escalation of gas prices over the last several months, we in Congress have had a few hearings but we have not taken action to deal more effectively with the crisis at hand. We must do more. We must begin now. I

suggest we start in the following three ways.

First, we should embrace a national price-gouging law. That is a law which was discussed by Senator BINGAMAN and Senator STEVENS in a hearing that was held in the Senate last week. The oil companies should have nothing to be afraid of with respect to price gouging because they say they have not engaged in price gouging. But we need to have a definition of what price gouging is so in the future we can make the determinations as to whether price gouging has occurred on the backs of the American people. We ought to be able to pass a price-gouging law in America today.

Second, we need to immediately embrace conservation emergency efforts for the year 2005 and for this winter. The years of malignant neglect have suddenly caught up with all of us, and we need to conserve energy for this winter. I believe we need to pass an Emergency Energy Conservation Act of 2005. I have promoted a number of proposals on the floor of the Senate, as have several of my colleagues. On the House side, the story is the same. There are many good ideas available to this Congress that will encourage conservation. But we do not have time to wait. We need to act now, before the cold days of winter are upon us.

Finally, we need to continue to put the spotlight on the possibilities and opportunities of renewable energy. Today, the nation of Brazil produces about half of its energy supply from renewable energy. They have truly embraced and achieved a goal of energy independence. If Brazil and other countries that are less prosperous, Third World countries, can in fact achieve energy independence by looking at renewable fuels, why can't we in the United States do the same? I believe we can. More production of renewable fuels combined with more development of wind, solar, biomass, and other renewable resources will move the United States closer to energy independence. At the same time, renewable energy production will directly benefit those agricultural and rural communities hardest hit by high energy prices. Harvesting renewable energy from our Nation's farmlands and wide open spaces is perhaps the most important opportunity to come to rural America in the last 50 years.

A group called the Energy Future Coalition, composed of leading conservatives and leading progressives—from across the political spectrum—is working toward harvesting 25 percent of America's energy demands by the year 2025. I believe we can do even better than that, and there are experts within the Department of Energy who believe that we can do that.

There is a lot of work ahead of us as we deal with what I believe is one of the two most important domestic issues that face America and that is energy and how we get to energy independence. It ought to be at the fore-

front of the work of this Senate and this Congress.

In conclusion, this country has an Energy bill and it is a good first step. However, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 does not do enough to prepare America for the future. The events of the last several months prove that. We can do better with a more comprehensive long-term energy policy that hammers home on two simple points: energy efficiency and developing renewable resources. America can do better. America deserves better. America can do better with true deeds that move us to energy independence, with deeds that transcend the rhetoric of Washington and the stalemate of Washington for the last 30 years.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

#### A REAL WAR

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today because, as I travel around Oklahoma, one of the things I find is a lack of recognition of the war we are in, why we are there, what the problems are associated with it. Every one of us has a heavy heart for the fact that we now have troops committed and dying and sacrificing every day in the war on terrorism.

As I thought about what to say to my constituents in Oklahoma but also to the American people, I found that I could not say it as well as retired MG Vernon Chong of the U.S. Air Force. I wish to read, for a few moments, a commentary he has written, dated October 1, 2005. If you would indulge me to read that, I think it will give us some enlightenment to where we are. He says:

To get out of a difficulty, one usually must go through it. Our country is now facing the most serious threat to its existence, as we know it, that we have faced in your lifetime and mine (which includes WWII).

The deadly seriousness is greatly compounded by the fact that there are very few of us who think we can possibly lose this war, and even fewer who realize what losing really means.

First, let's examine a few basics. When did the threat to us start? Many will say September 11, 2001. The answer, as far as the United States is concerned, is 1979—22 years prior to September 2001—with the following attacks on us:

Iran Embassy Hostages, 1979; Beirut, Lebanon, Embassy, 1983; Beirut, Lebanon, Marine Barracks, 1983; Lockerbie, Scotland, Pan-Am flight to New York, 1988; First New York World Trade Center attack, 1993; Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, Khobar Towers Military complex, 1996; Nairobi, Kenya, U.S. Embassy, 1998; Dares Salaam, Tanzania, U.S. Embassy, 1998; Aden, Yeman, USS Cole, 2000; New York, World Trade Center, 2001; Pentagon, 2001; and Shanksville, Pennsylvania, Plane Crash, 2001

Why were we attacked: Envy of our position, our success, and our freedoms. The attacks happened during the administration of Presidents Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, and Bush. We cannot fault either the Republicans or Democrats, as there were no provocations by any of the Presidents or their immediate predecessors, Presidents Ford or Carter.