

essentially said we are spending too much on security and should not let an over-exaggerated threat of terrorism "drive us crazy," into bankruptcy, trying to defend against every conceivable threat. He went on to say: "We do have limits and we do have choices to make. We don't want to break the very systems we're trying to protect. We don't want to destroy our way of life trying to save it. We don't want to undercut our economy trying to protect our economy, and we don't want to destroy our civil liberties and our freedoms in order to make ourselves safer."

Secretary Chertoff was exactly right. I believe that most Members of Congress will vote for almost anything if the word "security" is attached to it so that they will not be blamed if something bad happens later. We should do some things to protect against terrorism, but we should not go overboard if we still believe in things like freedom and liberty.

Actually, most security spending is more about money for government contractors and increased funding for government agencies than it is about any serious threat. Just 3 weeks after 9/11, when security requests for money were already pouring in, the Wall Street Journal hit the nail on the head in an editorial:

"We'd like to suggest a new post-September 11 rule for Congress: Any bill with the word 'security' in it should get double the public scrutiny and maybe four times the normal wait lest all kinds of bad legislation become law under the phony guise of fighting terrorism."

□ 1830

The Wall Street Journal was exactly right. Unfortunately, Congress has not followed this good advice. But it is just as relevant today as it was when it first written.

Bruce Fein was a high ranking Justice Department official during the Reagan administration. He says the Federal Government has, "inflated the international terrorism danger in order to aggrandize executive power." This is true, in part. Most agencies and departments do exaggerate the threats or problems they are confronting to get more power. But they primarily do so to keep getting increased appropriations.

Certainly, we need to take realistic steps to fight terrorism. But if we gave the Department of Homeland Security the entire Federal budget, we still could not make everyone totally safe. In a cost benefit analysis, you fairly quickly reach a point in the terrorism threat where more spending is almost totally wasted. People are hundreds of times more likely to be killed in a wreck or die from a heart attack or cancer. We need to spend more on the greatest threats. Also, we need to make sure we do not lose our liberty in a search for an illusive security.

Bruce Fein wrote that if the, "war against international terrorism is not

confronted with corresponding skepticism, the Nation will have crossed the Rubicon into an endless war, a condition that Madison lamented would be the end of freedom."

Madam Speaker, to sum up, a few people are getting rich at the expense of many by claiming that they are trying to increase our security. We don't need to make our already bloated Big Brother government even bigger just because some company or some bureaucrat callously uses the word "security" just to get more money and power.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

THE ACRE PROGRAM

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

Mr. FLAKE. Madam Speaker, Congress recently approved the farm bill and it's now on its way to a Presidential veto. Any farm bill that increases the size and scope of government, lacks real reform, continues to provide for wasteful agricultural subsidies, and even allows millionaires to continue to receive these subsidies, deserves the veto that it's going to get. It also uses a lot of budget gimmicks to get under the level that would allow it to pass in the first place. So I am glad that the President has decided to veto the bill. We should sustain it.

There's another big reason to sustain a Presidential veto of the farm bill. It's recently come to light, and we only know this because we got the final draft of the bill I believe on the day or just the day before that we voted on it so very few of us were able to actually look through it and to see what was in it. One of the programs in it is called the Average Crop Revenue Election, or ACRE program. This will allow farmers starting in 2009 the option of taking a 20 percent reduction in direct payments and other farm supports in return for a Federal guarantee on their revenue.

Now as we talked about during the debate on the farm bill, farmers can receive direct payments that don't relate to the price of commodities at all. They simply receive payments based on acreage that they had way back when.

These payments total about \$5 billion a year. They should be done away with completely. But they are now seen as an entitlement. We tried and failed to remove those direct payments from the bill. Those are received, as I mentioned, by millionaires. In fact, a couple, a farm couple, husband and wife in farm and nonfarm income, can make as much as \$2.5 million and still receive direct payments in this legislation.

If that wasn't enough, this new ACRE program will allow farmers to actually claim subsidies at a level far higher than they used to under the old bill. Under the farm bill, 2002, which was bloated in itself, once crops dropped below a certain price, then some subsidies would kick in. But apparently those prices were too low for this new bill. And so under this new program, at a far higher threshold, new subsidies will kick in.

The Department of Agriculture estimates that if the price of corn drops, for example, to \$3.25 per bushel, the program, this new ACRE program that is new to this bill would dole out nearly \$10 billion just to corn farmers. If the price of wheat drops to \$4.50 a bushel, wheat farmers would be eligible for \$2.5 million in assistance. Again, this is assistance above and beyond what we have done in the past, or what the bill calls for, anyway.

This is new money that taxpayers are exposed to. This is a lot of exposure. It's indecent exposure for the taxpayers. If soybeans, for example, drop to about \$7 per bushel, that is another \$7 billion in assistance that will be going out to farmers. Now CBO's estimate of this program showed a net savings, but that was largely due to being forced to use outdated projections associated with the 2007 baseline.

The bottom line is we have skyrocketing corn, wheat, soybean prices. When we base a new subsidy program off these high level prices, then we are going to kick in a lot more readily than we would have otherwise, and we are going to be paying out a lot more. The taxpayers will be on the hook for a lot more.

These estimates, I think had they been available, had more people been aware of this new subsidy program, I think we would have had a lot more votes against the farm bill. It provides Members with a good reason, even if they voted for the farm bill last week, to sustain the President's veto and say let's go back to the drawing board. We simply cannot, cannot expose the taxpayers to this much subsidy.

Way back when, part of what is driving corn prices so high, for example, are the ethanol subsidies that we are providing. We have been told for decades these were just to prime the pump. Once we get it started, get this program started, we won't need to subsidize ethanol any more. Yet, here again the bill we passed last week subsidizes ethanol heavily. It also imposes tariffs on imported ethanol.

Now I believe that some people are worried that those ethanol subsidies,

because we are learning how much they're increasing the cost of food and how much degradation of the environment is actually being caused by ethanol, that those ethanol subsidies might be going away. This is a way to guarantee money still being paid, regardless of ethanol subsidies, because the cry will be, Well, if we get rid of ethanol subsidies, the price of corn will drop and the taxpayers will be paying anyway if the price drops under this new subsidy program. So this is a way to simply ensure that we are paying subsidies, regardless. We shouldn't be doing so.

We know that the farm bill, the old farm bill that we just replaced, the new farm bill, it pays out unnecessary subsidies, it distorts the free market, it forces farmers to plant where they shouldn't plant and not plant where they should, and it also distorts our international trade obligations and makes it less likely that we can open new markets.

I would urge us, Madam Speaker, to sustain the President's veto of this farm bill.

ENERGY PRODUCTION IN OUR COUNTRY

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

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Energy is the lifeblood of the American economy. Our economic prosperity is closely tied to the availability of reliable and affordable supplies of energy. Unfortunately, U.S. energy production has grown only 13 percent, while energy consumption has grown by 30 percent since 1973.

Instead of traveling to spend time with loved ones, record gas prices will keep many Americans home this Memorial Day. Gas prices are now over \$1.46 higher nationally than when Speaker PELOSI took over, and will shortly be over \$4 a gallon. These high prices are forcing many to choose between taking a vacation or paying bills.

It should come as no shock to anyone that AAA predicts that the percentage of Americans traveling more than 50 miles from home over this holiday weekend will fall by nearly 1 percent from last year. That one percent represents hundreds of thousands of families.

Skyrocketing gas prices and a risky dependence on fuel supplied by volatile foreign nations highlight our need for an American energy policy that emphasizes production and decreases our reliance upon Middle Eastern oil.

Many here in Congress bemoan America's addiction to foreign oil, yet they refuse to allow access to American oil and gas supplies that are necessary to cure this addiction. America has been blessed with abundant natural resources and we should not be hesitant to tap into them, especially at a

time when energy prices are soaring so high and are climbing higher.

The Outer Continental Shelf is estimated to contain 19 billion barrels of oil and 84 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Alaska's ANWR is estimated to contain between 5.7 and 16 billion barrels of oil. What do these two areas share in common? They are both off limits to any development. At the same time, China is fixing to tap into our natural gas resources off the coast of Florida by 45 to 50 miles, and we can't do it ourselves. Not even 100 or 200 miles off shore.

Developing American oil and gas on these lands will help bring the price down and help break the stranglehold on energy that hostile countries in the Middle East enjoy. This can be done in an environmentally sound manner and should be implemented immediately.

What is the opposition's solution to this national emergency? How about raising the Federal tax on gasoline by 50 cents a gallon, on top of an already existing Federal tax of 18.4 cents per gallon and increasing the tax on diesel fuel by 24.4 cents per gallon. Gasoline is not taxed too little. It is taxed too much. With economic disruptions caused by the current high price of gasoline, Congress should vigorously oppose any efforts to increase fuel taxes and instead reduce or eliminate the already existing Federal fuel taxes.

Environmental groups haven't allowed a new oil refinery to be built in the United States in decades. It does little good to increase our use of domestic supplies of oil if we do not have the refinery capacity to quickly convert our crude oil into a usable form. Members on both sides of the aisle need to stand up to these fringe groups and implement policies that encourage construction of new refineries in the United States.

Many Americans are feeling the financial hardship this Memorial weekend of record high gasoline prices and will choose not to travel. Our energy problems were not created overnight, and will not be solved overnight. Congress just act swiftly to address this growing energy crisis. America's energy policy must make us stronger and less reliant on countries hostile to freedom.

Passing any so-called "energy" bill that fails to produce even one single kilowatt of new energy, or produce a gallon of gas, is not the solution. We must pass legislation that will allow for responsible use of our known American supplies of energy that reduce excessive and burdensome environmental policies and encourage the development of alternative forms of energy, such as nuclear power, that has proven to be incredibly safe and a successful source of energy.

I stand ready to do so, and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

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

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

ENERGY POLICY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CANNON. I would like to speak this evening about energy policy in America, and the sources of energy, and I expect to be joined here in this discussion with several other Members of Congress. ADRIAN SMITH from Nebraska is going to be speaking to us, and I will yield to him very shortly about the Alaskan National Wildlife Reserve; JOHN PETERSON will be with us about natural gas and the need to develop that resource; ROB BISHOP will join us I think shortly to talk about what it means in the human costs to not have the resources that we need. We expect to be joined by PHIL GINGREY of Georgia and perhaps JOHN SHIMKUS of Illinois as well.

□ 1845

Let me begin by just saying that the U.S. policy to use corn for ethanol and drive up the prices of grain worldwide and to not develop the resources that we have so richly in America are not morally neutral. They are profoundly wrong. So I hope that after some discussion about these issues tonight, our colleagues in Congress will begin to understand what the resources are and how we can use them.

Now I would like to yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH), and when he is finished talking about the ANWR issue, I would like to put that in perspective by talking about what other resources we have and how that fits. But drilling in ANWR is profoundly important. If we had done that some years ago, we would absolutely not have prices over \$100 a barrel for oil.

I yield to Mr. SMITH.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Thank you to the gentleman from Utah for yielding me time so that we can have a bit of a conversation on energy. I truly believe that our country is lacking a balanced policy. I think that our country is lacking a commonsense policy, which certainly leaves consumers out of the mix for what they need with food, with fuel for their vehicles, energy to heat their homes, energy to run a small business. The list goes on and on.