

Barak, one under Prime Minister Sharon, of two different parties.

Tragically, in both cases, Israel's voluntary withdrawal was followed by the entrenchment in those two areas of organizations dedicated not simply to territorial change, but to Israel's obliteration, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza. And they have used those places from which Israel withdrew as bases for attacks. I understand the emotional reaction that says, "We'll never do that again." I think it would be wrong; I do not think it would be in Israel's best interest. That does not mean they should not be able to defend themselves, of course they should.

But the fundamental point is this: Yes, there are serious issues about how to pursue peace. Nowhere are they more openly debated than within Israel itself, and that is one of the great glories of its 60 years.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

ENERGY IN AMERICA

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that happens when you come to the well and you debate somebody, a lot of facts get distorted and they're really not very accurate. So tonight I would like to quote some accurate figures for my colleagues in their offices. And if I were talking to the people of America—I know I can't, but if I were talking to the people of America, I would ask them to listen to these figures as well.

We import 4.3 million barrels of oil a day, that's for gasoline, we import that much per day. We actually use 21.5 million barrels, but we have to import 4.3 million barrels of oil because we only produce about 17.2 million barrels of oil. So we're short 4.3 million barrels of oil a day.

We have an emergency stockpile, but that would only last a short period of time. In April of 2008, the U.S. Geological Survey announced that an estimated 3.65 billion barrels of oil and 1.85 trillion cubic feet of untapped natural gas exists in Montana and North Dakota. If we could go after those reserves, we could start reducing the price of gas at the pump and energy for people all across this country.

In the ANWR, it holds the single largest deposit of oil in the entire United States. It's 10.4 billion barrels of oil, and it's more than double the proven reserves in the entire State of Texas. And according to the Department of Interior, there is an estimated 8.5 billion barrels of known oil reserves and 29.3 trillion cubic feet of known

natural gas reserves along our coastlines, with 82 percent of the oil and 95 percent of the gas located in the Gulf of Mexico.

Now, a lot of my colleagues have said, well, my gosh, the oil companies can go ahead and drill off the coast on the Continental Shelf. Well, let me just talk about that for a minute. Only 3 percent of the Continental Shelf has been given to the oil companies in the way of permits, and those permits run 5 to 10 years. Now, during that period of time they have to decide, with seismic tests, whether or not there's oil down there. If they think there's some oil down there, they drill a test well. And if they drill the test well and it doesn't show enough oil to make a profit, then they don't go ahead with it.

So most of these things that they have there right now are not being explored because there is not enough oil to make a profit. Those permits are not allowing them to make a profit, so they're not building those derricks. Those oil derricks cost as much as \$2 billion. Now, if you're going to invest \$2 billion in an oil derrick, you want to make darn sure that there's oil down there. And only 3 percent of our Continental Shelf is being used, 97 percent is not being used. And we could explore for oil all along that coastline, but we aren't able to because of the rigorous position that this Congress has put the oil companies in. And I'm not saying that the oil companies are totally free of any blame. You know, they have made an awful lot of profit. And my colleagues want to tax them on the windfall profits that they have been getting. If that's what they want to do, that's fine, but that's not going to give us one more drop of oil. The only way we can get one more drop of oil is to drill for it.

The Department of Interior estimates that there are untapped resources of about 86 billion barrels in the Gulf of Mexico and 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the Gulf of Mexico.

As I said, on the Outer Continental Shelf they have 1.76 billion acres of untapped resources and not leased on the Continental Shelf. And since the 1980s, the United States has prohibited oil and gas drilling on most of the Outer Continental Shelf, except for a limited area in the western Gulf of Mexico.

We could be energy independent if we just looked at our own resources. Approximately 121 companies own the rights of the Continental Shelf, but they lease only 3 percent of the Continental Shelf. And about 15 percent of the U.S. natural gas production and 27 percent of our oil production comes from that area.

They invest billions of dollars to acquire and maintain their leases, and unless there is oil down there that they find from seismic tests or a test well, they're certainly not going to build a \$2 billion oil derrick unless they can make a profit.

I would just like to say to my colleagues, the problem is that we're buying oil from the rest of the world; we're importing oil from the rest of the world. We're dependent on them. And the appetite for energy is growing very, very rapidly: China wants more oil; Taiwan wants more oil; countries all across the world that are expanding want more oil. So we're in competition with them for oil. We could be energy independent and not have to lean on countries like Saudi Arabia or Venezuela, but we aren't doing it, we continue to import.

One of my colleagues tonight said, you know, we want to clean up the environment. Well, if we import gas and oil, you think that's not going into the atmosphere? Why should we import Saudi oil when we can get our own? If we want to clean up the environment, we can do that the same way.

Whether or not we import the oil or use our own oil, it makes no sense not to drill. We could bring down the price of gasoline and energy in this country very rapidly if we announced tomorrow that we were going to start drilling in the United States of America.

Let me talk about one other thing that is very important. In 1981, we had 324 oil refineries in this country; today we have 148. We haven't built a new refinery in 30 years. And that's one of the problems, you've got to get the oil to market. You've got to produce gasoline and other energy products from the oil, and you have to have refineries to do that. And we haven't built a new refinery in over 30 years. And we had the refineries that we did have cut by more than 50 percent.

This country ought to move toward clean energy, but in the process we should make sure that we use our reserves to create gasoline here in America and not have to import all that oil. We ought to be drilling. We could be energy independent if we really wanted to.

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AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, 150 years ago, the American Printing House of the Blind opened its doors in my home district of Louisville, Kentucky, to make educational materials accessing to blind students. That day in 1858 stands as a milestone, not just for the education of the vision impaired but for the improved education of our community as a whole and the history of learning in the United States of America.

Prior to the early 19th century, it was generally presumed that, with rare exceptions, people who were blind simply didn't have the capacity to learn. Through experimentation and repeated

success, it became clear that the blind were failing to learn, not for lack of intellectual capacity, but because information was not presented to them in a manner that they could perceive. Once information was presented in appropriate ways, primarily through touch and sound, blind students began to achieve.

In the 1830s, residential schools for the blind began to open across the U.S., and eventually almost every State established a school specifically designed to meet the needs of students who were blind and visually impaired. In those early years, each school produced the tactile educational materials that its own students needed. In 1842, Kentucky joined the ranks of these States when Louisville's Kentucky Institution For the Education of the Blind began making tactile materials for its students in a basement facility.

It didn't take long for schools producing these highly specialized materials to realize they were duplicating effort and wasting valuable resources. The idea of developing a national publishing house for accessible materials for people who were blind and visually impaired took hold. Since the facility in Louisville, Kentucky, was centrally located among the existing schools for the blind and had developed an effective distribution system utilizing the Ohio River, our community was selected as the site for the American Printing House of the Blind, which was chartered by the Kentucky legislature on January 23, 1858.

Because the expensive process of printing educational materials in raised letters for a small percentage of the population was not commercially viable, Federal funding was sought to assure a permanent source of revenue to support this important work. In 1879, the 45th Congress of the United States passed, and President Rutherford B. Hayes signed into law, the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind, designating APH as the official source of textbooks and other educational aids for legally blind students below college level.

Since that time, APH has provided adaptive and specially designed educational materials, including textbooks in Braille and large type, tangible teaching devices, educational tests, and special instructional aids and tools essential for the education of students who are blind and visually impaired. As identified needs require, APH utilizes outside expertise by establishing innovative partnerships with publishers of textbooks and testing materials, commercial manufacturers, universities and many other industries.

We in Congress have continued to appropriate funding for APH each year since 1879. As a result, this national, non-profit corporation now serves over 58,000 students into every U.S. State, providing the visually impaired the tools they need to they need to learn and excel.

In addition to textbooks and other academic materials, APH manufacturers and adapts daily living tools and materials. Talking computer software provides access to the wealth of information available via the Internet, and electronic mobility devices assist with safe travel from one place to another. APH has developed tools that help people with low vision learn to utilize the limited vision they have more efficiently, and new technologies are delivering reading materials electronically.

The technology and treatment are impressive, but here is what stands out. In the 1800s, a child born blind had no future. Losing one's sight ended independence and ambition. Today, that is not the case. Sight is no longer a prerequisite for leading a productive, independent and fulfilling life. And that is thanks in large part to APH. For tens of thousands of men and women without sight, APH has provided the keys to live, learn and thrive. People who are blind now work in our communities. Children who are blind pursue the same dreams as children with sight. And mothers who are blind read stories to their kids before putting them to bed.

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the American Printing House for the Blind, we also recognize the wisdom of the 45th Congress for their initial investment in educational opportunities for our Nation's blind and visually impaired students back in 1879, and I trust that my colleagues and those who follow will continue to support the successful precedent they set.

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

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

THE U.S.-COLOMBIA TRADE AGREEMENT

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

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I stand to once again raise my concern and, frankly, disappointment by the decision of the majority party in this House to turn its back on America's best friend in Latin America. Ladies and gentlemen, the oldest democracy in South America is the Republic of Colombia. Colombia is a thriving democracy, a nation of 42 million citizens, the second largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world. And in Latin America, everyone recognizes the Uribe Government, the democratically elected Government of Colombia, as America's most reliable partner and America's best friend. And this House, with the Democratic majority voting almost

unanimously, voted to turn its back on Colombia, America's best friend.

It is kind of interesting. Look at the progress that has been made in Colombia. President Uribe was elected by the people of Colombia to put an end to a longstanding civil war where narco-trafficking, leftist guerrillas, known as the FARC, ELN and right-wing narco-trafficking paramilitaries known as the Paras, all three of those terrorist groups have attacked the democratically elected government and destabilized the democratically elected government. And President Uribe was elected to put an end to that conflict. And he has made tremendous progress.

In fact, thousands upon thousands of paramilitaries have laid down their arms and agreed to honor the peace process and integrate back into society. Unfortunately, the FARC, which has ties to the government of Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, continues to fight. But the government of President Uribe has made tremendous progress pushing the FARC into the far reaches of the country. And today, villages that have never seen the presence of a national government, certainly not in decades, today enjoy the security provided by the government of President Uribe, tremendous progress.

In fact, violence has dropped so much, cities such as Medellin, which was once known as one of the most dangerous places on the planet, today is safer than the city of Baltimore. In fact, the murder rate of Baltimore is higher than Medellin, Colombia. So it is safer to walk the streets of Medellin than it is to walk the streets of Baltimore. And we want to commend the Uribe Government, the democratically elected Government of Colombia for the progress they have made.

We have an opportunity with the trade promotion agreement to further cement our ties with our best friend, an agreement that is good for American workers. It is good for American manufacturers. It is good for American farmers. Right now Colombian products enter the United States essentially duty-free. Their agricultural products and their manufactured goods come in without any tariffs. But U.S.-made products such as bulldozers that are made in the district I represent, if they are exported to Colombia, they face tariffs of 10 to 12 percent. Some of our agricultural commodities such as corn face tariffs of 45 percent.

Clearly, those tariff barriers, those taxes, make U.S. products less competitive with Argentine corn or Asian competition for construction equipment. And I would note since this trade promotion agreement was signed between the United States and Colombia, over \$1 billion U.S. in tariffs have been imposed upon American goods, manufactured goods and agricultural products that have been exported to Colombia. And we are waiting to ratify this agreement which would eliminate those tariffs and make U.S. products more competitive.