

time, we have not committed to recapitalizing our fighter fleet of F-22s and F-35s in the number necessary to meet validated military requirements. It takes almost 20 years to develop, test and field a new advanced weapons system. If we take more "holidays from history" we leave our Nation and future generations at risk. This Nation has taken for granted our traditional air superiority. And General Moseley was right to have pointed out these vulnerabilities.

We never know in advance our next adversary. We must be prepared and strong for both asymmetric threats as well as resurgent adversarial nations, and General Moseley understood this very well.

The Air Force is still called upon around the clock to undertake combat missions, targeted air strikes, deliver troops and cargo and provide intelligence platforms.

Our ground forces have come to rely on the Air Force, mainly because, well, they're so competent. And that's no accident. General Moseley understood this because he was there actually commanding airmen in combat operations.

General Moseley recognized the national security implications posed by the growing cybersecurity threat. He did not just wring his hands. He took concrete actions to establish the Air Force Cyber Command Initiative. He oversaw the historic development of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in combat, and also instituted training to help instill a "warrior ethos" in the Air Force. He should be commended for that vision.

I am proud of General Moseley. His sense of responsibility to the Air Force's overall mission led him to voice legitimate with Congress on matters like serious deficiencies in aircraft modernization, even at the risk of his career. To me, this is real integrity. When we have hearings on the Armed Services Committee, what we're after is the real truth, unvarnished and unblinking. We're not looking for a sanitized version. General Moseley was an advocate for modernization, and this advocacy is something which, though he was absolutely correct in both fact and merit, earned him criticisms where he should have found support.

The Secretary of Defense cited a failure of leadership within the Air Force in regards to its nuclear mission. Those are indeed serious charges, but the Department of Defense shares the responsibility through the impact of both budget cuts and BRAC mandates. These cuts clearly de-funded and de-emphasized nuclear matters. Cuts that were not the Air Force's preferred choice have taken a toll, and those budgets cuts must be acknowledged and corrected by this and future secretaries if we are truly going to address shortfalls in nuclear surety matters. I know that first-hand, as even I have had to request funding additions to

cover documented shortfalls in the Minuteman III modernization program.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank General Michael Moseley, as well as Secretary Michael Wynne, for their dedicated public service to our Nation and our fighting men and women. From where I sit as a member of the Armed Services Committee, I believe that both these Air Force leaders can hold their heads high. I believe they are both men of great personal integrity, and I wish them well in their future endeavors.

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

(Mr. BURGESS 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 Florida (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

THE NEW MANHATTAN PROJECT FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, in 1961 President John F. Kennedy laid out a bold challenge, to put a man on the moon in less than 10 years. At the time, people called it unreasonable and absurd to put a man where no human had stepped before, using technology that hadn't even been developed yet, and to do it in less than 10 years seemed impossible.

But what we saw come out of that decade was a Nation that continued to defy the odds and achieve the seemingly impossible. When Neil Armstrong opened the door of Apollo 11 and set foot on the surface of the moon, he embodied the very essence of America, combining our hopes, our dreams and our determination. Americans rose to the challenge and changed the course of history.

Today we face a new challenge. The national average for a gallon of gasoline is now \$4.07. Gas prices have risen nearly 75 percent since the Democratic majority took control just a year and a half ago. And this isn't a coincidence.

The majority's policy since taking power has been to restrict domestic energy production and increase taxes and regulations on U.S. energy suppliers. Simple economics tells us that limiting the supply of oil will increase costs. At a time when families in my district and across the country are struggling every day to cope with skyrocketing prices and a slowing economy, this is outrageous and irresponsible.

We continue to get the bulk of our energy fossil fuels, and 60 percent of that comes from foreign nations that, in many cases, do not share our interests. This is not just an economic problem. It's a national security crisis that demands both short and long-term solutions. We must increase our oil supply in the short-term, but we must also launch a national effort to harness American innovation if we hope to succeed in the long-term.

Like the first Manhattan Project that was established to insure the security of our Nation during World War II, today our national security depends on our ability to produce reliable sources of energy to fuel our economy and our national defense, independent from other nations.

That's why I've introduced a bold new initiative that will put us on the path to energy independence. The New Manhattan Project for Energy Independence, H.R. 6260, challenges the United States to achieve 50 percent energy independence in 10 years, and 100 percent energy independence in 20 years tape, and establishes a commission to lay out a plan to get there. A lot of people had talked about it, but it was time to put forth a bill and do something about it. That's what H.R. 6260 does.

Additionally, the bill sets out seven major goals that will put our Nation on this path. The New Manhattan Project will bring together the best and brightest minds in our Nation and encourage American innovation by awarding major cash prizes to anyone who successfully reaches one of these goals.

Specifically, Americans will be challenged to develop ways to double CAFE standards to 70 miles per hour, while making these vehicles affordable to consumers; improve home and energy efficiency by 50 percent on a wide scale, develop a solar power plant that costs no more than a coal-consuming power plant; make the production and use of biofuels cost-competitive with standard gasoline fuel; safely and cheaply store carbon emissions from coal-powered plants; safely store neutralized nuclear waste; and lastly, to produce sustainable electricity from a nuclear fusion reaction.

The processes to reach these goals are neither simple nor cheap, and many Americans may think them impossible. To make it possible for the inventor, researcher or company that achieves any of these goals, my proposal would provide significant cash prizes to the first person who reaches each of these goals. And to assist those who have promising ideas in these areas to help our country achieve energy independence, \$10 billion will be set aside for grants to fund promising lines of research. In total, this bill would supply the same level of resources on the same scale as the original Manhattan Project, which is a total of \$24 billion.

It is, in fact, possible that even after the major investments proposed in this bill, we may not be 100 percent energy

independent. But even if one of these goals is achieved, the impact would literally transform the energy sector. And if every one of these ambitious goals is reached, our country would be free from our addiction to foreign oil, and we will have guaranteed our economic and national security tape for future generations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Ms. FALLIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FALLIN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PETITION TO LOWER GASOLINE PRICES

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight to address you and the other Members of this body. And I wanted to bring to the attention, Mr. Speaker, the fact that I guess several weeks ago we had calls from constituents and seeing constituents at town hall meetings and other places. They had asked me if I had been on-line or on the Internet to sign some of the petitions that different people had up to bring down the price of gas. They were tired of going to the pump and paying \$4 a gallon for the gas.

They had heard the promises from the Majority of the 110th Congress made back when they were running for office, that they had a commonsense plan to bring down the cost of skyrocketing gas which, at the time, was about \$2.20. It's now about \$4.08. So they were mystified as much as I was about what this secret plan was. And so they were going on-line and signing these Internet petitions asking us to let us know, Members of this body, that they were demanding that gas prices come down, and by doing that, to drill here and to drill now.

One of those Internet sites, and there's many, but one is American Solutions. And I understand today, from reading an article, that over a million Americans have gone to that site and said, you know what? Let's drill here, let's drill now, and let's lower gas prices.

And so I was thinking to myself because I had gone into a service station to fill up with the \$4 a gallon gas in my pickup truck, and there was a petition laying on the counter that said, you know, we want our gas prices brought down. Sign this petition.

And I thought, you know, not only is this an Internet, but people that are working at these service stations and I'm sure other places are having these petitions saying, you know, we need our energy costs brought down.

And Mr. Speaker, I said, you know, the American people need to know how

their Members of Congress feel. We're hearing from them on all of these different petitions how they feel. They need to know how their representative feels.

So I came up with a petition. And basically, this petition says, American energy solutions for lower gas prices. And it brings onshore oil on-line. It brings deep water oil on-line. And it brings new refineries on-line. And that's pretty simple. That's about as simple as you can get in this body.

Everything we vote on here is so convoluted that many of the Members don't understand what they're voting on, Mr. Speaker. And a majority of the American people do not know. Some of these bills are three and four and 500 pages. And it's hard to consume all that information and understand what is going on. So a lot of Members can have an excuse to vote for or against it because, as Mr. OBEY said today on the floor, they make these bills to get 218 votes. So they take these bills and put as many sweeteners in it as they need to get to 218. So many Members can say, well, it was a bad piece of legislation, but because they put X, Y, or Z in it, I voted for it.

I wanted to keep this petition as simple as possible. And so basically, what the petition says, I will vote to increase U.S. oil production, to lower gas prices for Americans. How much simpler can you get?

Mr. Speaker, you can't imagine some of the answers from the Members of this body for not wanting to sign this. They're unbelievable. I don't know how they're going to explain it to their constituents, but their constituents have an opportunity to see, and we update this, Mr. Speaker, on our Web site, which is house.gov/westmoreland, W-E-S-T-M-O-R-E-E-L-A-N-D. We update it after every series of votes, so it will be updated probably in about 30 or 45 minutes. It will be updated and you can go to that Web site. And we had 32,000 hits on that Web site last night, for people wanting to go and see how their congressman felt about it.

Now, we've had about 160 Congressmen that have signed this so far, so we're probably about 58 short of getting to 218, which is what you need to pass this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all Americans to go to that and to find out how the Members of this House feel about lowering gas prices in this country.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their comments to the Chair.

□ 2100

GAO'S GOOD DECISION FOR WARFIGHTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 18, 2007, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, we come to the floor this evening to discuss this good news that we read yesterday for our warfighters doing great jobs for the U.S. Air Force and for the taxpayers who are providing the equipment for the Air Force and for a lot of working families in the United States. And that was the decision by the General Accountability Office to essentially allow the protests against the previous proposed decision by the United States Air Force to send a contract for the construction of 80 tankers which refuel our Air Force planes essentially overseas to a combination that is largely European by the Airbus Company.

And we are extremely gratified and vindicated that the General Accountability Office has found that in seven very fundamental ways, the decision by the Air Force to send this American tanker using American taxpayer dollars for American warriors essentially overseas, and they have found that this was a decision that violated some general principles of procurement in issuing contracts using taxpayer dollars. In a very forceful and powerful and unambiguous decision, the General Accountability Office, we call it the GAO up here, concluded that this purported decision to send this contract away was a bad decision, bottom line. And this decision must be reviewed and we hope ultimately reversed.

So we've come to the floor tonight to talk about why that decision was appropriate, why it is welcome, and why we hope the Air Force will move forward working with the bidders on this contract to really reach a decision that's going to be in the best interest of the country as a whole, including our warfighters and our taxpayers and our working families.

And just if I can by way just as a matter of background, this is a contract for eventually 179 what are called KC-X aircraft. The first tranche would be 80 aircraft. These are the tankers that refuel our airplanes, and they are obviously the backbone of our Air Force. Without tankers, we don't have an Air Force. This is perhaps the most critical of the one type of airplane we have because this type of airplane has to be right for the job, competent, survivable, cost-effective, or we don't have an Air Force that requires this refueling capacity.

Now, the contractor that we'll talk about tonight, the Boeing Company, has been essentially the exclusive suppliers of these tankers for the United States Air Force for five decades and with incredible success. The KC-135 has been an enormously successful airplane, and the Boeing family of workers that have provided it have been proud to provide that background. And they were, of course, a bidder to provide the Boeing 767 as the platform, a very well-respected workhorse airplane that is converted for tanker purposes.