

nuclear program, these policy objectives should not constitute pre-conditions for any diplomatic dialogue.

Establishing a diplomatic dialogue with the Government of Iran and deepening relationships with the Iranian people would help foster greater understanding between the people of Iran and the people of the United States and would enhance the stability the security of the Persian Gulf region. Doing so would reduce the threat of the proliferation or use of nuclear weapons in the region while advancing other U.S. foreign policy objectives in the region. The significance of establishing and sustaining diplomatic relations with Iran cannot be overemphasized. Avoidance and military intervention cannot be the means through which we resolve this looming crisis.

I am planning to introduce important legislation that will call for human rights and religious freedom in Iran. The Iranian people have continued to ask for democracy to reign free in their country and I intend to support the Iranian people in that endeavor. As you know, over the past few months, the people of Iran have been standing up to Iranian government. I am aware that at least 5000 acts of protest took place last year. I applaud your efforts to encourage those who have raised their voices against the extremists in Iran.

The United Nations has condemned Iran 54 times for its atrocious human rights record. Inhumane treatment of youths, women and workers by the government of Iran is further evidence of the regime's intolerance. Iranian women have shown they play a pivotal role in establishing democracy and ensuring human rights in Iran.

We all must work together for a stable and democratic Iraq. Today, there is undisputable evidence that Iran is the main contributor to the violence in Iraq which causes American casualties. The extremist government in Iran has acted to ensure the failure of Iraqi reconciliation. Iran is part of the problem in Iraq and does not wish to be part of the solution. But Iraq's tribal leaders are standing up to the Islamic extremism coming from Iran. I know that over 3 million Iraqi Shiites have signed a declaration this month rejecting Iran's meddling. They have also shown support for the Iranian opposition MEK living in Ashraf. I support their invaluable efforts for peace and stability in Iraq.

Although many disagree with the current status of this war in Iraq, all agree that we must collectively work to stop Iranian-style fundamentalism from taking root in Iraq. Let me here recognize your actions in support of democracy in Iraq as well as in Iran. With many continuing to suggest that military action in Iran is the best way to deal with our political discrepancies, it is now time to renew our efforts in strengthening our diplomatic policies in the Middle East. The same people who called for attacking Iraq now are raising the drumbeat for military action against Iran.

Despite the November 2007 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate concluding that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons program, the Bush administration is bolstering its case for war by labeling Iran one of the greatest threats to American security. Bombing Iran would bring disastrous consequences. The entire Middle East likely would descend into further violence putting the well-being of innumerable civilians at risk. U.S. standing in the world would plummet and oil prices would soar. A U.S. attack would only strengthen hardliners in Iran.

Supporting the efforts of the Iranian people who want democracy is especially important now that the UK government confirmed on June 24, that the MEK was no longer "Concerned in terrorism", and officially took the name of the organization off their black list. This is a great victory for the cause of democracy in Iran. In light of the recent developments, the United States must seriously consider the court's findings and also remove the limitations it has placed on the MEK.

The world community must strengthen the sanctions on the clerical regime. It must also immediately recognize and support the Iranian resistance as the democratic alternative to the regime in Iran.

Today, the mullahs are increasingly using oppression inside and terrorism outside of Iran as a foreign policy tool. The solution to the current crisis is often perceived to only have two solutions—war or appeasement. I disagree. There is a third option. The Third Option introduced by Mrs. Maryam Rajavi relies on the strength of the Iranian people and their organized resistance. This is the best and least costly alternative. Let us not continue to make the mistake of appeasing Iran. As a viable alternative, we must move to support the Iranian people and their resistance. Only you can bring about democratic change in Iran.

I have come to know the people of Iran and appreciate their thirst for freedom. My message to them is this: rest assured that it is attainable. I wish you the best in your struggle for peace, freedom and democracy.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA V. HELLER

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. Madam Speaker, today the Supreme Court made a strong move in support of individual gun rights in their decision in *District of Columbia v. Heller*.

Since 1975, the residents of Washington, D.C., have had their second amendment rights to bear arms stolen from them by the D.C. government. The second amendment to the U.S. Constitution declares that: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

Our Founding Fathers knew that without the second amendment, an oppressive government would eventually try to tear away our rights. They could not trust the government to always protect our rights, and so they wrote the second amendment. As James Madison later wrote: "Who are the best keepers of the people's liberties? The people themselves. The sacred trust can be nowhere so safe as in the hands most interested in preserving it."

The second amendment protects the fundamental, individual right of law-abiding citizens to own firearms for any lawful purpose. Further, any law infringing on this freedom, including a ban on self-defense and handgun ownership, is blatantly unconstitutional. Every study has shown that gun con-

trol is not effective in curbing crime. Rather, these types of restrictions only leave law-abiding citizens more susceptible to criminal attack. Other than law enforcement, only criminals have had handguns in the District of Columbia.

The Supreme Court took a strong step forward today to protect the individual gun rights of Americans, and I applaud them for doing so. As Justice Scalia stated, "The Second Amendment protects an individual right to possess a firearm unconnected with service in a militia, and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defense within the home."

Though the Supreme Court's decision does champion the individual right to bear arms, it also allows restrictions based on type, manner of carrying, purpose, sensitive location, and commercial sale of handguns.

Most alarmingly, the Court irrationally envisioned that their holding may completely detach the second amendment right from its purpose. Regarding the purpose of the right, United States General George Washington Stated, "A free people ought not only be armed and disciplined, but they should have sufficient arms and ammunition to maintain a status of independence from any who might attempt to abuse them, which would include their own government."

Recognizing an evolving standard that limits the right to weapons to only those "in common use at the time" and accepting prohibitions of "dangerous and unusual" weapons, the Court gives short shrift to the fact that modern laws, of the very sort it strikes down today, have prevented the common use of "sufficient arms and ammunition to maintain a status of independence from any who might attempt to abuse them, which would include their own government," as George Washington envisioned.

The ruling outrageously claims that, "the fact that modern developments have limited the degree of fit between the purpose and the protected right cannot change our interpretation of the right." The truth is that our second amendment right must fit the purpose, and this Court has separated the two. This Court wrongly leaves loopholes for prohibition of weapons that would be necessary for today's militia duty. Militia, at the time of our findings, included every male 18 years of age or older.

I am an avid hunter and outdoorsman and proud owner of numerous firearms. The National Rifle Association, Safari Club International, and Gun Owners of America are just some of the numerous sporting associations that I am a life Member of. A full-body-mounted African lion and Kodiak grizzly bear are just a few of my prized trophies that visitors see when they come to my D.C. office.

I strongly support the Constitution's second amendment right to bear arms and will defend the rights of law-abiding citizens to purchase, use, carry,

and keep firearms. I vigorously oppose all attempts to restrict the second amendment.

I believe that any law, whether at the local, State, or Federal level, which restricts or infringes upon law-abiding citizens' ability to own a firearm is unconstitutional and should be repealed.

The plain language of the Second Amendment clearly indicates that it was written to protect an individual's right to keep and bear arms. I believe, as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Adams, and other founding fathers believed, that the individual right to bear arms is a representation of freedom and independence and I will always defend that right from abusive regulations and licensing.

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

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

AMERICAN ENERGY SOLUTIONS FOR LOWER GAS PRICES

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I just wanted to start out by saying that I know that I can't talk directly to the American people, but I hope that if anyone is out there listening that they would listen to my comments that I make to you.

Madam Speaker, I guess about 2 weeks ago probably I started getting some phone calls about different petitions on the Internet and other places about the prospects of America becoming more energy independent, that we would not be dependent on foreign oil sources, and that we would be able to use our own natural resources to meet our energy needs.

And people began to ask if I had gone and signed them or had seen them. One was on americansolutions.com, which offered to increase domestic oil drilling. There was one about a gas holiday. There were several about developing alternative energy sources. But there were some interesting petitions against drilling by Democratic Senator Ms. BOXER, the Sierra Club and Greenpeace.

As I walked into a service station in my district, there was a petition on the counter, Madam Speaker, that said:

Sign here if you want to let your representatives know that you're for lowering gas prices. And I'm assuming that the proprietor of that station had it there to keep people from talking bad to him about the price that was on his pump.

But what I decided after looking at all these different petitions is that I would come up with a petition so the American people could understand where their representative was at. We know where our constituents are. I think on the American Solutions petition they are at like 1.7 million people. So we can kind of understand where the American people are at. They want us to be independent. They want us to increase our U.S. oil production.

So what I decided to do was come up with a petition, and what this petition says is: American energy solutions for lower gas prices. Bring onshore oil online; bring deepwater oil online; and bring new refineries online. Realize, we have not built a refinery in this country since the late 1970s.

□ 1900

And you may not realize this, because we're always talking about crude oil, but you might not realize that the United States imports 6.2 billion gallons of gas and 4.6 billion gallons of diesel every year. We import these from the United Kingdom, U.S. Virgin Islands, France, Canada, Netherlands, Norway—which, by the way, Norway is now the third largest exporter of crude oil, and back in 1965 they were energy dependent on foreign oil and they decided that they would open up to drilling in the North Sea. They are now the third largest exporter of crude oil. But we import refined gas from them—Germany, Russia, Italy, and of course the OPEC countries, which don't even really have that much refining capacity, Madam Speaker, but yet we buy refined gas from them.

So I got a petition, I've had it over here on the wall, Madam Speaker, for probably about 2 weeks now. There are 435 spaces for the Members, and then there are seven spaces for the delegates from the U.S. territories. And I'm happy to say that we've had 191 signatures. Now, this may be too simple for some people because all it says is, "I will vote to increase U.S. oil production to lower gas prices for Americans." And so we need your help, Madam Speaker. We need you to sign. I don't think you're on it, Madam Speaker.

But we've got a Web site, and it's our Web site at house.gov/westmoreland. And on there we have everybody that has signed, and we have everybody that we've talked to that said they would not sign. So we've got two columns, we've got a signers and a non-signers. And then also, just to let you know, we have notified every office here at least once, we will do it again next week. And some people said have, well, Congressman, they ask me how long have you been working on this? And I say,

well, about almost 2 weeks. Well, how come you only have 191 signatures? Well, Madam Speaker, I'd ask people that ask me that question, Sunday, when they're at church, try to talk to 450 people on a Sunday, it's almost hard to do, especially when you get in different conversations with folks. So if you want to understand, house.gov/westmoreland, Madam Speaker, that's where somebody would go if they wanted to see where their Congressman was at on this simple petition that basically just says, "I will vote to increase U.S. oil production to lower gas prices for Americans."

I would like to yield some time to my friend from Indiana.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Let me just say to my good friend, Congressman WESTMORELAND from Georgia, I am so happy that you are going to all this trouble to get all of our colleagues to sign this petition. And if you're at 191, you're not too far short of 218. And when you get 218, I will join with you to go to the Speaker and show her that we have 218 signatures—or you do—and that they ought to bring this to the floor for a vote because a majority of the House wants this done.

You know, we passed another week. A week has gone by since you and I, I think, last were on the floor. And everybody's going home for the 4th of July recess—they're going to be in parades, they're going to be on radio, they're going to have town meetings—and we haven't done anything about reducing the price of gasoline or moving toward energy independence. And so I, like you, if I were talking to the American people right now, I would say, when your Congressman or your Senator is in that parade, I want you to talk to them strongly and say, we want you to drill in America. We want you to move us toward energy independence. We've been talking about it since Jimmy Carter was President 30-something years ago, and we aren't doing anything. And that's why we're dependent on foreign oil and that's why gasoline prices are over \$4 because we aren't producing the oil here, we're sending it overseas.

We're sending over \$400 million a day to Saudi Arabia to pay for oil that we're using. We could use that money right here in America, and it would help create jobs and expand our economy. We're sending \$125 million a day to President Chavez in Venezuela, who's trying to move every country in this hemisphere toward communism and who is a good friend of the Castro brothers, Fidel and his brother Raul.

We have big problems here because we aren't drilling in America. And we need to have everybody in this country contact their Congressman and Senator and say, hey, listen, get with the program, it's time for us to move toward energy independence. We can't have this economy of ours suffer anymore.

I would like to enter into the RECORD, Madam Speaker, if I might, a