

Moruroa to protest French nuclear testing. At the time, while the world turned a blind eye, the newly elected President of France, Jacques Chirac and the French government broke the world moratorium on nuclear testing and exploded 8 more nuclear bombs at the Pacific atolls of Moruroa and Fangataufa in Tahiti. Adding insult to injury, President Chirac stated that nuclear explosions would have no effect on the ecological environment.

History shows that for some 30 years, the French Government detonated approximately 218 nuclear devices at Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls in Tahiti. About 10,000 Tahitians are believed to have been severely exposed to nuclear radiation during French nuclear testing.

Our own U.S. government also contributed to this grim history of nuclear testing in the South Pacific. Indeed, one may argue that it was the U.S. nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands that set the precedent for France to follow suit and use the Pacific Islands as testing grounds for nuclear weapons. Between 1946 and 1958, the United States detonated 67 nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands including the first hydrogen bomb, or Bravo shot, which was 1,300 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Acknowledged as the greatest nuclear explosion ever detonated by the U.S., the Bravo shot decimated 6 islands and produced a mushroom cloud 25 miles in diameter. It has been said that if one were to calculate the net yield of the tests conducted in the Marshall Islands, it would be equivalent to the detonation of 1.7 Hiroshima nuclear bombs every day for 12 years.

Such was the magnitude of the devastation that threatened the Marshall Islands. In addition to the annihilation of the surrounding environment and ecological system, the U.S. nuclear testing program exposed the people of the Marshall Islands to severe health issues and genetic irregularities for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, at this critical point in our history when the global community is confronted with tough decisions concerning energy resources for future generations, it is important to remind ourselves of the lessons of the past.

I am inspired by President Obama's recent decision concerning the storage of nuclear waste in Yucca Mountain, Nevada. In cutting funding to the Yucca Mountain project, President Obama made good on a campaign promise. But more significantly, he reignites the debate on a controversial issue: how to move and store the Nation's radioactive wastes?

To understand the President's recent decision, I am reminded that as a U.S. Senator in 2007, he then wrote in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* that "states should not be fairly burdened with waste from other states." Moreover, "every state should be afforded the opportunity to chart a course that addresses its own interim waste storage in a manner that makes sense to that state."

From the above statement, one may infer that President Obama's decision to terminate funding to the Yucca Mountain project underlines the high risks and danger involved with the storage and transportation of nuclear wastes and nuclear materials.

Mr. Speaker, I believe a similar framework should apply to the international treatment of nuclear waste and nuclear materials. Each nation should be responsible for its own interim

waste storage and avoid shipments of nuclear waste and nuclear materials across oceans and territorial waters of other nations.

I support a moratorium on all international shipments of nuclear fuel and nuclear waste until the international community has in place an agreement to ensure the protection of our oceans and the environment, economy and population of coastal and small island states. Such an agreement should include prior notification and consultation of en-route states before shipment of all hazardous and radioactive materials, environmental impact assessments, a satisfactory liability mechanism and protection from terrorism attacks.

Until such system is in place, Europe, Japan and all nuclear states, should keep their nuclear materials and waste in their own backyard, and not endanger the lives of others.

[From USA Today, Mar. 17, 2009]

#### RESPONSIBILITY? YUCCA CHOICE SQUANDERS \$8B INVESTMENT

We usually applaud politicians who keep their campaign promises, but one we were hoping President Obama would forget was his pledge to end the 22-year effort to build a nuclear waste repository inside remote Yucca Mountain in Nevada.

Like it or not, the nation needs nuclear power as a carbon-free bridge to a future in which wind, solar and other options will power computers and TVs and charge plug-in hybrid cars. It makes sense to dispose of spent nuclear fuel in a single place instead of at more than 100 nuclear plants around the country, where it is now. Yucca was the presumed central location until the president's "new era of responsibility" budget would eliminate virtually all funding. Never mind that environmental objections to the project have long seemed strained and the logic for going forward strong.

Now the government has to find some other way to fulfill its contract with nuclear utilities to take the waste off their hands. Since 1983, the government has levied a fee on every kilowatt hour of nuclear-generated electricity—guess who's been paying that, ratepayers—to finance a national disposal site. The feds have collected about \$30 billion and spent almost \$8 billion on the Yucca Mountain site. So much for that investment.

During the presidential campaign, candidate Obama said he wanted no new nuclear plants until there was some place to store the waste, a stance that seems ominous now that he's killed off the only central disposal site. When we asked the Energy Department if that means no new nuclear plants until there's a successor to Yucca Mountain, we got a carefully hedged non-answer: "The president remains committed to resolving key issues including nuclear waste, non-proliferation and plant security."

Yucca's demise shouldn't be an excuse to delay new nuclear plants. Storing spent fuel at existing plant sites is a second-best solution, but it's a safe enough stopgap until the nation agrees on a permanent disposal site. Once spent fuel has cooled enough to move, it's typically stored outdoors in steel pods that weigh 100 tons or more, emitting little radiation and virtually impossible to destroy or steal.

The president and the nuclear industry now want a group of experts to convene to decide what to do next. An idea to revisit is reprocessing spent fuel, which President Carter banned out of security concerns that seem much less compelling 30 years later. Reprocessing allows fuel to be re-used and shrinks the ultimate amount of spent fuel—but what's left still has to go somewhere.

One potential site is in New Mexico, which in the past decade has quietly accepted more

than 7,000 shipments of radioactive material from the nation's nuclear weapons facilities and buried them in a salt bed almost half a mile below the desert in the southeastern part of the state. By law, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant can't accept spent fuel from nuclear power plants, but some state officials have agitated for a second facility there as a backup for Yucca. It might be an alternative worth pursuing.

Killing Yucca is a big political win for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and other Nevada lawmakers who've long opposed the storage site. But that victory empowers not-in-my-backyard politicians in every state to dig in their heels. And, whether it's waste dumps or wind farms or oil refineries or air routes, they do—the national interest be damned.

When Obama lifted the ban on stem cell research last week, his press secretary said the president made it clear that "politics should not drive science." Unfortunately, that's exactly what happened here.

#### YUCCA PLAN POSES 'GRAVE' RISK

(By Harry Reid and John Ensign)

We applaud President Obama's bold decision to scale back the budget for the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste dump. Permanently ending the project is right not just for our state but for our entire country.

The peril of storing 70,000 tons of the nation's toxic trash just an hour's drive from Las Vegas rightly worries Nevadans, and all Americans would face a grave threat from this bad idea.

The reasons for ending the taxpayer boondoggle are plentiful: supporting data that relies on flawed science; estimated costs of nearly \$100 billion; and the egregious error of burying waste that could, with American innovation, be less dangerous and even be turned into energy.

The Department of Energy's plan to store deadly nuclear waste at Yucca ignores even the most glaring facts, such as the major earthquake fault lines running across the storage site. Many Americans are unaware that DOE concedes that water will flow through the dump, eventually carrying radiation into Nevada's groundwater.

Yucca Mountain, simply put, is bad policy that is wrong for America.

America still needs a scientifically sound and responsible policy to deal with nuclear waste. More taxpayer money dumped into the Yucca Mountain project is more money wasted that could have been invested in securing waste on nuclear plant sites in dry casks, while researching new technologies such as reprocessing. There are solutions.

That is why we are working together and with our colleagues on bipartisan legislation to form a commission exploring alternative approaches. The Obama administration and the nuclear energy industry have expressed support for reviewing our nation's approach to nuclear waste so we will no longer be stuck with the current failed policy.

Forming such a commission would be only a first step away from Yucca Mountain. It's an important and necessary step, though. The effort will require input not only from our nation's foremost authorities on nuclear energy and nuclear waste, but also from policymakers, environmental experts and public health and safety advocates.

The time is now to put Yucca Mountain to rest and work together to deal with nuclear waste concerns while also protecting the health, safety and security of all Americans. We look forward to working with President Obama and all stakeholders in resolving our country's nuclear waste issues.

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 addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### CHARGING WOUNDED VETERANS FOR TREATMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, can you believe that President Obama wants to start charging wounded veterans for their treatment?

Our first Commander-in-Chief, George Washington, once said, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country."

Taking care of those who have sacrificed for our Nation is, I believe, our sacred duty. It is a national promise that goes back to Presidents Washington and Lincoln. President Obama actually acknowledged this during his campaign when, on the floor of the Senate on April 10, 2007, he said these are soldiers who fought in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Iraq. They made a commitment to their country when they chose to serve, and we must now keep our commitment to them.

I could not agree more with those words. But in the meantime, as we all know, he was elected. Yesterday, we learned that President Obama plans to move ahead, despite what he said on the floor of the Senate, and start to charge veterans private insurance for the treatment of combat-related injuries.

Let no one be mistaken that the President's plan breaches the moral responsibility the Commander-in-Chief owes to veterans wounded on the field of battle. It is a breach of our national promise, and we should not let this stand. The proposal is outrageous and beyond belief. The men and women he proposes to charge are those injured on the field of combat. These are people who sacrifice not only their sweat and tears, but their flesh and blood so the American dream can be protected.

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Mr. Speaker, what must the average American think? Just recently, the criminals at AIG received hundreds of millions of dollars in bonuses paid by the taxpayers. Is the President now seriously considering balancing a \$1.7 trillion deficit on the backs of veterans? To do so would be a great insult to anyone who ever wore the uniform of this great country.

#### LEADING THIS COUNTRY OUT OF THE ABYSS

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to read that President Bush made his first address since he left the Office of President yesterday in Canada. President Bush said that he loved his country more than he loved his party, and he wished President Obama success. I thought that was really telling. President Bush, while I differed with him on many policies and many of his initiatives, I always felt he was a good and decent person. And I think what he said showed that in many ways he is.

I wish that the people on the other side of the aisle, rather than coming here and constantly bringing up false information about our current President, wishing him ill will—which of course Rush Limbaugh has done, the leader of the other side, and others, like former Vice President Cheney, who came out for television on Saturday and had some statements that were very inappropriate for a former Vice President to make this quickly after he has left office. There is a certain time when Presidents and Vice Presidents should go back to their private lives, maybe practice shooting, and learning how to shoot in a proper direction and not jeopardize their friends, and do other things, but not necessarily take shots at the new President of the United States and not claim that the American public is less safe, which is not in any way true. As my colleague here from Kentucky has well spoke in a 5 minute recently, the other side of the story and the full side of the story showed history that we are safer.

But the bottom line is, President Bush said he wished our country well, his country came before party. And it gets tiring to be here and hear the other side take shots and shots and shots and hoping they can win in 2012 and take back this House in 2010 rather than working for the American public and the American government.

We are at a very critical time, caused by years of lack of regulation and deficit spending, wars that we didn't need to be into, loss of life and monies, and lack of regulation that Mr. Paulson was responsible for in giving AIG this money, and in many other ways, without regulations and restrictions on benefits. And President Obama has had to deal with that.

I support our President. And I am proud to be a Member of this Congress trying to lead this country out of the abyss of which it seemed to be heading at the end of this last term.

I am also proud to join in a few minutes with my fellow sophomore Majority Makers, Mr. KLEIN of Florida and Mr. YARMUTH of Kentucky. We're called the Majority Makers because we did take this Congress in 2006 back, but

it was after 12 years of Republican control in the House and Senate, 1994 to 2006, and a Republican administration that caused the deficit problems, caused the budget problems, caused the economic crisis. We plan to bring it out.

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

(Mr. MCHENRY 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 Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

(Mr. SHERMAN 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 Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FLAKE 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 Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TAYLOR 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. ROONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ROONEY 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. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey 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 Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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