

Earlier this week, USA Today reported on a new military study showing that troop morale is at an all-time low, thanks to the punishing emotional and psychological strain of multiple deployments and intense combat. The percentage of Army soldiers reporting acute stress has nearly tripled since the year 2005. Even if the war ended tomorrow, Madam Speaker, the anxiety and trauma plaguing so many of our troops won't go away anytime soon, if ever; but it's time to let the physical and mental health healing begin. It's time to stop sending our best and our bravest into this grinder.

We have asked enough of them. Madam Speaker, I can think of no better way to support our troops than to bring them home immediately.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 16. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to celebrate the birthday of King Kamehameha.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 94-304, as amended by Public Law 99-7, the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senators as members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki) during the One Hundred Twelfth Congress:

The Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE).

The Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS).

The Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

GAS PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. HURT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HURT. Madam Speaker, all across Virginia's Fifth District, people are suffering from skyrocketing fuel prices. As I have heard from families and small businesses and farmers who are seeing a negative impact on their bottom lines, we need to take action now if we are going to address this serious problem of skyrocketing fuel prices.

Instead of supporting policies that will help bring down the cost of gas, the Obama administration continues to actively block and delay domestic energy production, causing more pain at the pump, increasing our dependence on foreign oil, and destroying jobs. We only have to look at our soaring energy costs to see the consequences of these failed policies. Gas prices have doubled under the President's watch and are now hovering around \$4 per gallon in

Virginia; and as these rising prices continue to directly affect all central and southside Virginians and threaten our economic recovery, I believe we should take action now to address this crisis.

Last week, the House passed a bill that would expand American energy production and create jobs by reopening the oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico and off the coast of Virginia that has been delayed or canceled by the Obama administration. It is estimated that offshore energy development in Virginia, which has bipartisan support, could lead to the production of more than half a billion barrels of oil and 2.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and create nearly 2,000 jobs for our State. At a time like this, there is no reason to leave these resources untouched when it will help provide relief to all Americans.

This week, we are continuing our work to maximize American energy production by considering two bills that will end the White House's de facto moratorium on new American offshore energy production in a safe, responsible, and transparent manner. By reversing the administration's anti-energy policies and tapping into these resources to maximize our domestic energy supply, we will take a significant step towards lowering gas prices, reducing our dependence on foreign oil, and creating thousands of jobs for the Commonwealth and our Nation.

□ 1010

I urge support of H.R. 1229 and H.R. 1231 and hope that the Senate and the administration will join us in our efforts to move towards achieving true energy independence by approving all three energy bills the House of Representatives has considered thus far.

DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF NEW NUCLEAR REACTOR TECHNOLOGIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation I introduced to encourage the development of a vital component to the next generation of nuclear reactors that will provide clean, domestic energy solutions for all Americans.

The Department of Energy initiated the Nuclear Power 2010 Program in February 2002 as a joint public-private program to develop advanced reactor technologies and encourage the private sector to build new nuclear power plants in the United States. My legislation, the Nuclear Power 2021 Act, applies the Nuclear Power 2010 model to small modular reactors. Under the bill, the Department of Energy would be able to enter into public-private partnerships to design and license two small modular reactors by the year 2021.

As my colleagues may know, today's traditional larger reactors range from

1,000 to 1,700 megawatts and cost between \$5 billion and \$10 billion to construct. In contrast, small modular reactors generate 10 to 300 megawatts and cost about \$750 million to construct. These small reactors offer several advantages to large reactors in certain situations, including shorter construction times, increased safety controls, and electricity generation. While large reactors are built on a future generation site, a process that can take up to 5 years, smaller reactors can be manufactured in modular pieces in factories and transported by rail or truck, cutting construction times in half. Small reactors can also be completely manufactured and fueled in a factory. They can be sealed and shipped to the site for power generation, and after use, they can be shipped back to the factory for defueling, minimizing the potential spread of nuclear material.

Additionally, small modular reactors produce a small nuclear reaction which generates less heat, making them easier to shut down in the event of a malfunction. Another advantage of small modular reactors is that, unlike large reactors, they can generate power in any location. While large reactors require millions of gallons of water per day for cooling and must be located near large water sources, small reactors can be water-cooled or air-cooled. This technology could open up new parts of the country to nuclear development, such as the arid West and locations that cannot support larger capacity generation, such as isolated rural areas or regions with smaller grids.

Unfortunately, development and deployment of new nuclear reactor technologies can currently take upwards of two decades. Time and resources are limited for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to develop the institutional capacity to license new reactor designs, and traditional public-private partnerships are often insufficient to mitigate the business risk of bringing small modular reactors to market. This is why I believe this legislation is crucial for developing this all-American technology that could help us lead the world in electricity innovation and generation. I encourage my colleagues to join me in making America more energy independent, creating good-paying American jobs, and working toward the future of clean energy generation by cosponsoring the Nuclear Power 2021 Act.

HARVESTING AMERICAN ENERGY RESOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Madam Speaker, I am glad to be able to take the floor after the Member from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) talking about energy because it's something that's on everybody's mind today. He is talking

about nuclear energy, and he concluded with the remarks, What can we do to find American-made energy solutions? What can we do to find American energy independence? What can we do to provide good-paying American jobs? Folks, those things are all intertwined. There is not a product that we produce in this country that does not have an energy component to it. We have to have that access to energy in order to have access to jobs. That's why I'm so proud that in the tail end of last week and the beginning of this week, that's what we're focused on here on the House floor. What can we do to find those domestic energy solutions?

There aren't going to be as many folks here, Madam Speaker, as I look around the gallery, who might have been alive in the 1970s. Madam Speaker, I think you and I were here then. We remember some of those gas lines. Would you believe that we bring less American oil to market today than we did in 1970? Would you believe it's almost half?

We have been blessed in this country with domestic energy resources the likes of which no other country on the planet can claim. And yet we seem to be doing everything that we can to keep those resources in the ground and, instead, send precious American dollars overseas, often to folks who don't like us and would like to see our demise.

Folks, energy independence isn't just a tag line. It's not just about \$4 prices at the pump. It's about national security. It's about, what is our vision for the future of this country? Is it a vision of dependency upon our enemies overseas? Or is it a vision of independence where we're bringing American resources out of the ground with American workers, creating American capital?

It's not just, Drill, drill, drill. I'm a big believer in drill here, drill now. But that's not because we're not sensitive to what's happening in a changing energy environment across this planet. Would you believe, for example, that in this country, we use less energy per capita today, fewer Btus today, than we did just 5 years ago, than we did 10 years ago, than we did 20 years ago, than we did 30 years ago. To say that we need energy independence, to say that national security depends on getting our resources out of the ground is not to say that conservation isn't a part of the model as well. It is. We're doing it, we're doing it successfully, and we should continue to do it, but we have to get our resources out of the ground.

Would you believe that as a percentage of the energy that we use in this country, that petroleum is in decline? Each and every year, we use less oil per capita than we used the year before, but that doesn't mean that we don't still need to get American oil out of the ground. In fact, we are importing more oil today than we did just 10 years ago, than we did just 20 years

ago. We have the resources here. We know of more oil that's in the ground in America today than we have ever known of before, and yet we choose to send our dollars overseas to import that energy instead.

There are three bills we're working on here, Madam Speaker, and you know them well. H.R. 1229, the Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act. Can you believe, Madam Speaker, that in a time of record-high gas prices that we have the second-largest shallow water drilling operation in the country going out of business for lack of work? For lack of work. Oil prices are headed back towards historic highs, and American drillers are going out of business for lack of work. And it's not just the company, Madam Speaker; it is each and every one of the American men and women who work on those drill rigs who are out of work because we can't get permits issued out of Washington, D.C. Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act.

H.R. 1231, Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act. We have these resources. We have this national security need. We have men and women who want to go to work to solve that need, and we won't let the permits out of Washington, D.C. Washington, D.C. has not been the solution here. Washington, D.C. has been the problem.

Folks, if what you want to say is, We're going to pass a bill on this floor that's going to ban automobiles, and we just won't use any more gasoline, fair enough. If what you want to say is, We're going to pass a bill on this floor that's going to ban plastic and say, we're just not going to produce any more, fair enough. If you are going to pass a bill that says, We're not going to produce any more fertilizer in this country, who needs it, fair enough. But until you do—and I would vote “no” on each one of those proposals—but until you do, we need American oil, and we need to get it out of the ground, and we need to get it out of the ground now.

Madam Speaker, I am tremendously grateful for the leadership you have shown in bringing these bills to the floor, and I thank you for the time.

RESILIENCE OF THE CITY OF MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I represent the Tennessee Ninth Congressional District, which is Memphis. Memphis has been in the news quite a bit these past few weeks, and partly it's been for a bad reason: a flood, the greatest flood since 1937 on the Mississippi River. There has been a massive flow of water across lands and into our downtown and other areas, and it's affected a lot of people. I have toured the damage. There are at least 1,500 people whose homes have been lost. They are in shelters. They have lost possessions.

□ 1020

But the city of Memphis is coming together with a lot of volunteerism to help those people, and the Federal Government, through FEMA and the Corps of Engineers, is doing all it can to protect property and protect people and offer them shelter and food. And because it's a disaster area, we'll be helping them get back on their feet once again. It's a tragedy for those people and a tragedy for a lot of other people up and down the river.

But the fact is the city of Memphis is open and open for business, and most of the city of Memphis is not affected by the flood. Contrary to what you might see on the news, the entire city is not underwater. The business sections, most of the city, are totally dry, and people are going to work, flying Federal Express planes all over the world to deliver packages. International Paper and all the businesses that are there are fully operational.

Our Memphis Grizzlies are still alive and playing tonight in the NBA Western finals, and the people of Memphis are filling the FedEx Forum when they play and cheering them on and bringing the city together in the spirit that Memphians have come together for years.

The city of Memphis has had problems over the years. A yellow fever epidemic in the 1870s almost destroyed the city, but it didn't. The city came back and came back even stronger.

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King on the 4th of April, 1968, was an awful moment in our city history and one we had to overcome. But the city did. And on that site, the Lorraine Motel, has been built a great civil rights museum, the National Civil Rights Museum, like a phoenix from the ashes telling the story of the civil rights movement and the movement out of slavery and out of Jim Crow into an era where an African American could and has been elected President of these United States.

The city of Memphis and the people have an indomitable spirit. They have come back from problems in the past and will continue to do so.

Yesterday, the city of Memphis received great news when President Obama announced that of all the schools that applied in this Nation in the Race to the Top program to be recognized and to be honored by his presence as the commencement speaker for graduation, that Booker T. Washington High School, a high school created in the 1800s, a Jim Crow school, an African American school in the 1800s, which has done spectacularly well in academics, increased their graduation rate from the fifties into the 81st percentile, best in the State on algebra scores and other scores, and great improvement and shown innovation, was chosen as the school in the country to have the President come to their graduation. He will speak at the Booker T. Washington High School graduation next Monday in Memphis. It will be his