

you talk about the market. It is a buyer's market out there. The International Energy Agency warns of a massively oversupplied balance sheet. The Energy Information Administration shares that assessment in its latest monthly outlook, noting that production continues to exceed consumption across the globe. Of course, now as we are seeing the outcome from the negotiations with Iran, they are going to be in a position soon to put their oil out onto the world market.

Oil prices are sitting right now around \$50 a barrel. Think about it. Not all of the oil that is in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve was perhaps bought high, but think about it. Selling it now is the very definition of selling low.

We are at \$50 a barrel right now. The sales that are envisioned in this highway bill would shortchange taxpayers in terms of emergency protection because you are eroding the fund, but think about the proper stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Effectively, we bought high and we are going to sell low.

Second, drawing down barrels from the SPR would put the Federal Government in a position of direct competition with domestic producers. That may be temporarily defensible during a severe interruption, but let's remember where we are right now. The midcontinent is already awash in crude. Our outdated ban on oil exports, which should be fully repealed and fully repealed soon in my view, has not been repealed yet. It is sitting there in place, and what it is doing is keeping oil that is trapped in the United States, threatening productions and jobs at the same time.

What you are talking about with this proposal to sell off the oil from SPR is you are going to sell it first very low and then you are going to put it into a market that is already oversupplied.

I was in the Gulf of Mexico this weekend at a place called Port Fourchon, where truly you think about the part of the country that is supporting an oil and gas industry, robust, ready to go to work, but what we saw there were supply vessels that were sidelined and drill ships that were waiting. You tell those hard-working men and women there who aren't working as hard as they would like that perhaps somehow it is a good idea that they should be taking money from our savings account—taking the oil from our savings account and dumping that into the market.

Third, our Nation's energy security cannot depend on commercial stocks alone. They rise and fall based on market expectations, not on the strategic environment, and are not tethered to our Nation's energy security. Since the passage of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act in 1975, there was a bipartisan consensus that maintained that it is the Federal Government, not private industry, that will ensure that our obligations are met. Clearly, not

much has changed in that calculation, certainly in my mind.

Fourth, threats to global security continue to abound and they seem to worsen. As Iran, ISIS, and other threats destabilize the Middle East, some 17 million barrels per day still flow through the Strait of Hormuz. The Suez Canal and its accompanying pipeline carry just under 5 million barrels per day, despite a budding insurgency that fired a rocket at an Egyptian Navy vessel earlier this month. Instability in Venezuela, which produces about 2½ million barrels per day, would also directly impact the major American refining center in the Gulf of Mexico.

You have all of this volatility and instability, and this is the time again that we are going to take our insurance policy and we are going to erode it? We are going to make us less energy secure? It makes no sense.

By way of comparison, the drawdown rate of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is about 4.4 million barrels a day, probably a little bit less. But, seriously, any number of disruptions could arise and make those barrels very precious. Secretary Moniz gave a speech about a month ago, and he stated that the distribution rate is probably much lower than our drawdown capacity of 4.4. The distribution rate is compromised because of some of the issues we talked about earlier, which are changes in midstream, infrastructure, and congestions in the system. When you talk about our ability to respond, we are limited.

If Congress is going to sell any oil from the SPR—and I am not suggesting this is a good idea—one of the things we must do is we should agree that any proceeds would first be used to pay for upgrading the reserve itself, pay for the modernization, help to ensure it has the ability to do that which we have tasked it to do.

It needs significant modifications to preserve its long-term viability and to ensure that it can truly move the oil in the event of an emergency, whether it is a natural disaster or whether it is a terrorist threat or war. But it would be a travesty if we were to dramatically reduce the size of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve while we continue to ignore its maintenance and its operational needs.

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve must be modernized for the 21st century. Its size, its geographic disposition, the quality of the oil it stores—right now it is about one-third to two-thirds distribution between sweet and sour crude—the desirability and understanding is we need to move more into a refined product storage or holding instead of the crude. These are all issues that merit further attention, but we need to have a deliberative process. We need the review that the Department of Energy is conducting. We need the review that committees such as ours will advance and consider. What we do not need is a spur-of-the-moment deal that

would sacrifice our energy security and perhaps much more.

I know this conversation will continue about how we move a highway bill forward. Count me as one who wants to ensure that we are doing right by our highway systems. Our infrastructure is key, but we also have key energy infrastructure. Part of that key infrastructure lies with the security asset, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve that we have. Let's focus on that word "strategic" before we move too quickly and in a manner that is shortsighted and will jeopardize our security and our inability to respond.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO MARTA ADAMS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Marta Adams, who is retiring from her position as chief deputy attorney general for Nevada. For more than 27 years, Marta has been serving Nevada; and though many Nevadans may not know Marta, she has been working diligently to keep them safe.

Soon after Marta graduated from the University of Wyoming College of Law in 1977, she began practicing law in the Silver State. She quickly gained experience in environmental law, and her knowledge about the West and its natural resources have contributed greatly to her successful legal career.

Marta's persistence and commitment while representing the Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects in opposing the Yucca Mountain project was instrumental in our State's legal fight against efforts to force nuclear waste on Nevada. Since 2008, Marta has worked as chief deputy attorney general and maintained a strong voice for Nevada on all issues pertaining to Yucca Mountain.

On behalf of Nevada, I thank Marta for her decades of dedicated public service and wish her the best in her well-earned retirement.

CAMERON AND DELEVAN, ILLINOIS, TORNADOES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, for the third time this year, Illinois communities are assessing damage and cleaning up after tornadoes. One twister struck the town of Cameron, in Warren County, on Thursday evening. Moments later, another struck the town of Delevan, in Tazewell County. The tornadoes were accompanied by storms with heavy rain and flooding.

The National Weather Service says both tornadoes were category EF-2. That means that the winds blew up to

130 miles per hour. Homes in both small towns suffered severe damage. Several homes had roofs torn off, while others were completely flattened. The tornado that hit Delevan touched down without warning because tornado sirens lost power a few seconds after they began to sound.

Debris from homes and farms was scattered across the community. Many roads in the community were impassable due to down trees and power lines. Emergency responders wasted no time going house to house in both communities. I spoke with Warren County sheriff Martin Edwards on Friday afternoon. Thankfully, there were no fatalities or serious injuries reported.

The communities are busy cleaning up today and utility companies are working to get gas and electricity back on. Over the weekend, Sparky's Smokeshack set up a smoker on the edge of Cameron. The popular rib joint served up free meals to anyone who needed them. American Red Cross volunteers also are providing food and water. As is so often the case when a disaster like this strikes, first responders and friends and family members are helping people whose homes and businesses were damaged. I thank the first responders and all of the members of these communities for their work.

The Illinois delegation and I stand ready to help in any way we can, particularly if the Governor requests Federal assistance. I have no doubt that the people in Cameron and Delevan will rebuild. Our thoughts are with the many people today who lost homes and other property.

GUATEMALA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, with the Congress focused on the U.S.-Iran nuclear agreement, it is not surprising that recent developments in Guatemala have not received the attention they deserve, either here or in the international press. I want to speak briefly about this as it should interest all Senators, particularly at a time when the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras are seeking significant U.S. funding to support the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle of Central America.

The Cold War history of U.S. involvement in Guatemala is not one we can be overly proud of. The role of the United Fruit Company, the CIA, Guatemala's landholding elite, and others in orchestrating the removal of democratically elected President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman in 1954, the training and equipping of the Guatemalan military that carried out a scorched earth campaign against a rebel insurgency and the rural indigenous population in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, and policies favoring the financial and political elite who perpetuated the racism, social and economic inequities, corruption, violence, and impunity that persist to this day, are all part of that collective experience.

One of the vestiges of that period is the continuing harassment, vilification, death threats, and even malicious prosecutions of human rights defenders and other social activists. It is regrettable that Guatemala's authorities have failed to condemn or take effective steps to stop this pattern and practice of threats and abuse of the justice system.

Yet while the 1996 Peace Accords that finally ended 36 years of armed conflict were, for the most part, not implemented, since then the United States has sought to help address the causes of poverty, inequality, and injustice in Guatemala. We have funded child nutrition and public health programs, bilingual education for indigenous children, efforts to reform and professionalize the police, prevent violence against women, strengthen the institutional capacity of the Public Ministry, locate and identify the remains of thousands of people who disappeared during the war and ended up in mass graves, support reparations for victims of the Chixoy massacres, protect biodiversity and preserve pre-Columbian archeological sites in Peten. The results of these efforts have been mixed, but they do signify a positive trend in our relations with Guatemala in recent years for which the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Inter-American Foundation, the Inter-American Development Bank, and others deserve credit.

President Perez Molina also deserves credit for supporting the agreement to finance the Chixoy reparations plan, which some in his own government opposed. It is now essential that the agreement is implemented so the communities who suffered losses are compensated.

The United States has also been a strong supporter of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, otherwise known as CICIG, which, in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General, has played an indispensable role in investigations and prosecutions of cases of corruption, organized crime, and clandestine groups, as well as crimes against humanity and other human rights atrocities dating to the civil war. I commend the way CICIG Commissioner Ivan Velasquez and Attorney General Thelma Aldana are working together to address these issues.

Each year since CICIG's inception in 2007, as either chairman or ranking member of the appropriations subcommittee that funds U.S. foreign aid programs and as a former prosecutor and chairman or ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, I have included a U.S. contribution to CICIG. I have also twice supported the extension of CICIG when it was nearing the end of its mandate. Most recently, when President Otto Perez Molina indicated that he did not intend to renew CICIG's mandate, I argued that the weakness of Guatemala's justice sys-

tem and the continuing high levels of corruption and impunity were compelling reasons to extend CICIG. I was gratified that earlier this year its mandate was extended until 2017.

While Guatemala's justice system remains fragile, the partnership between CICIG and the Public Ministry has played a critical role in advancing the cause of justice in Guatemala. But Guatemala's problems are not unique. Honduras and El Salvador suffer from many of the same conditions—weak justice systems that lack credibility, rampant corruption, threats and assassinations of human rights defenders, journalists, and even prosecutors, and a history of impunity. I hope those governments look to CICIG as a model for how they could benefit from the technical expertise and independence of the international community to help address these deeply rooted problems.

Simultaneous with President Perez Molina's decision to extend CICIG's mandate, the need for CICIG became even more apparent. As a result of its investigations, high-ranking officials in the Perez Molina government, including Vice President Roxana Baldetti and one of her top aides, as well as the President's chief of staff and other senior officials, have either resigned or been arrested due to allegations of bribery and other corruption related to customs and social security. In addition, a leading Vice Presidential candidate of the Lider Party has been implicated. This may only be the tip of the iceberg, as it is common knowledge that corruption is widespread in Guatemala.

Such scandals involving powerful public figures are by no means unprecedented, as other Guatemalan officials—including a former President and Minister of Interior—have been implicated in such crimes and became fugitives from justice. But unlike in the past, these latest scandals have galvanized a diverse spectrum of civil society to join in peaceful public demonstrations over a period of several months calling for an end to corruption and impunity and for the resignation of the President who would be replaced by a transition government in accordance with Guatemala's Constitution.

The timing of these protests is significant, as Presidential elections are scheduled for September 6 and speculation is rife as to whether or not President Perez Molina will serve out his term.

The United States has a strong interest in democracy and justice in Guatemala, as well as a better life for the millions of Guatemala's citizens, particularly indigenous and other historically marginalized groups, who live in poverty. Many, with only a few years of formal education and no reliable source of income, including victims of ethnic discrimination, gangs and violent crime, have risked life and limb in search of opportunities in the United States. It is our hope that the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity, with complementary and balanced investments