China is a country of 1.2 billion people. It is an emerging power. Whether we are engaged with them or not, they will be an emerging power. I want them to be one that we can peacefully coexist with, and trading with them is a critical first start to that effort.

Now, opponents of China typically start out their arguments by pointing out all of the bad things about China, and I will not disagree with any of those. On human rights, on labor rights, on protecting the environment, on their relationship with Taiwan, on basic Democratic freedoms, China has a long way to go. They have a horrible record across the board. And I will rise with all of my colleagues and say that as often as possible and urge China to improve.

But it is not as simple as saying, if China has done anything bad, therefore, we should not trade with them. The question is, how are we going to pull them forward? What course of action is going to improve human rights, is going to improve labor rights, is going to improve how China treats Taiwan? Isolation?

We tried isolation with Cuba for 40 years. Cuba is a tiny nation not 90 miles off of our coast, and our efforts at isolating them has not done one little bit to improve any of their record on democracy, human rights, or anything.

Do we really believe that we can isolate China and pull them forward, a nation of 1.2 billion people with its own power source? If we cut off China, we will be leaning towards a bipolar world that will do nothing to improve human rights.

That is why many human right organizations have said that engagement with China and entry of China into the WTO is critical to us having a better relationship with them and critical to improving human rights in China. We must show them what a capitalist democracy can do. If we do, their people will demand the basic freedoms that the rest of us enjoy. To the cut them off and to isolate them is to empower the hardliners in China who want to maintain the brutal dictatorship forever. We must engage with them and pull them forward.

Many also argue that because of China's attitude towards Taiwan we should not give them access to the WTO. Taiwan wants China in the WTO. They are the ones most affected by that. And they want it for a very logical reason. In essence, they would be trapped in a room with a bully with nobody around. They want as much company as possible. They want the bright light shined on China and their activities for their own protection.

We have many concerns in this area, but giving China PNTR status is going to do more to pull forward those concerns than anything else.

I strongly urge our body to support PNTR for China, not just because of the economic advantages, but because it is important to the future of the world.

VICE PRESIDENT GORE'S ENERGY POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, tonight marks the third installment in a series of special orders begun last summer that Members of the House have held on the record and views of Vice President AL GORE.

The Vice President is fond of attacking the work of the majority in the House. We conservatives believe it is important that Americans understand why AL GORE finds our record of cutting taxes, balancing the budget, eliminating wasteful spending, and restoring common sense environmental policies so contemptible.

We believe it is important that the American people know what their Vice President actually stands for. Today, we will examine Vice President GORE's energy policy.

American motorists and hard-working truck drivers in rural and urban areas, particularly those with lower incomes, are getting squeezed by soaring gas prices.

Unfortunately, the Vice President is not there to help. In fact, he is cheering the prices on. It would distress the American people to learn that the Vice President is pleased with this turn of events. After all, he has long advocated policies expressly intended to raise the price and decrease the availability of gasoline to the American people.

He thinks that we just plain use too much of it, the only way to get us to cut back is to raise the prices. Whether it happens through conservation or supply cutbacks, price controls, or tax increases, the end result is what matters. And not only gasoline but all sources of energy he thinks other people should not use are targeted. The Vice President has long advocated his disturbing energy policy, summed up as the less energy used the better.

Tonight we will highlight excerpts from his apocalyptic book Earth in the Balance and other statements the Vice President has made in the past.

Parenthetically, I note this book is being reissued. I am delighted to hear that. I recommend its reading by every informed American so that they will clearly understand what they are getting when they have AL GORE as the Vice President.

Since taking office in 1993 with President Clinton, Vice President GORE was essentially seated in environmental policy for the administration. The administration wasted little time in pursuing an agenda of strict controls on energy. Indeed, it was not more than a couple of months after taking office that a Btu tax was first proposed in 1993 that would force people to feed big government in direct proportion to the amount of energy they consume.

While even the Democrat-dominated Congress rejected that approach, a 4.3 cents per gallon surtax was successfully levied on gasoline. In fact, the Vice President cast the deciding tie-breaking vote in the upper body that allowed this commuter-punishing tax to be enacted. And it remains with us until this day.

Vice President GORE advocated this tax hike not so much to increase revenues for the Federal Government but really to help increase the price of gas and help keep Americans out of their cars. But the price of gasoline has increased so much recently as to dwarf those 4.3 cents per gallon.

It represents the best of all worlds for Vice President GORE. He has the higher gas prices, which he favors on policy grounds, but he did not have to pass such a massive tax increase in order to accomplish it.

To those complaining of high gas prices, Mr. GORE would say, too bad. It is for your own good. Buck up, take your own medicine. If you do not like it, then invent a more efficient engine, ride a bicycle, or take the bus.

Tonight we will talk about the foreign policy failure of this administration, which, by its own admission, was ''asleep at the wheel'' on this vital international issue. We will discuss how the administration deliberately increased our dependence on OPEC and other foreign sources of oil in the first place.

The United States actually has the potential to become much less dependent on foreign powers for oil, but to do so would conflict with the Vice President's utopian new-age vision beautifully laid out in this book Earth in the Balance.

Not only oil but other prominent energy sources have been attacked by the Clinton-Gore administration. The Vice President has urged Americans to find alternative energy sources as an answer to our current woes. Well, those have been tried before and they have failed despite heavy Federal subsidies.

As my colleagues can see here in this chart, this thin red line represents the alternative energy sources, which is just about one percent or so of the total energy consumption in the United States.

The Kyoto Emissions Treaty negotiated by the Vice President would have a devastating impact on American's lives. The upper body wisely refused to ratify it, but the Clinton-Gore administration is trying to implement it stealthily nonetheless. It would make the present situation with gasoline prices pale in comparison.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The gentleman performs an excellent service to his colleagues in holding this special order this evening to continue his quest for awareness by the American public of the lack of policy for long-term self-sufficiency for the United States and, worse than that, the implementation of a short-sighted policy that can hurt the American citizen in the short term and the long term.

It was interesting to hear the gentleman report that the energy policy, if we want to call it that, on the part of the administration calls for less consumption, less utilitarian use of energy, less.

Everyone knows that the prosperity we are enjoying now and the prosperity which we want to enlarge depends on innovative ways to use energy to propound the materiel by which we produce and by which we span the world in telecommunications, that we need more energy and, therefore, more consumption. And in order to do that, we cannot gain our goals by shrinking back on consumption, shrinking back on energy sources. But, rather, we must do exactly the reverse.

That is why I have introduced legislation which I commend to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY) which calls for the establishment of a blue ribbon commission, much like we had with the Social Security problems of 1977 and 1983, which came forth with solutions that are still on the books and which serve to save the Social Security system, but anyway, a blue ribbon commission to establish ways and means by which the United States of America can become self-sufficient at energy within 10 years.

□ 1930

Before everyone bursts into laughter at the impossibility of bringing about self-sufficiency within 10 years, I remind everyone that everyone laughed at President Kennedy when he felt that within 10 years we should be, from his time, on the Moon, and we were. I believe that we can develop a policy that will lead us to the promised land of self-sufficiency within 10 years. But then in order to do that, we have to reverse this administration's course, and that is what the gentleman is saying this evening, reverse it by allowing fullest consideration of the oil reserves in Alaska. That goes without saying. That has to be fully explored. And if the people of Alaska themselves are eager to develop their own resources for the benefit of our country, who are we to say in Washington, D.C. that the Alaskans do not know what they are asking? They know what the value is of their resources, with due consideration for the environment, the wildlife and all the other considerations. They know best about that. Yet they are the ones who are the primary forces behind the idea of considering full exploration of Alaskan oil.

Then we have our lower 48 resources which have to be fully developed. This commission that I envision would look at the way that we failed in the past with oil depletion allowances and with excess profit taxes and with disincentives rather than incentives for exploration of oil and to consider all the possibilities of how we can fully develop that oil and natural gas and all the other possibilities that abound in our own Nation.

We can become self-sufficient. We need more energy. We can do it. This would have another bonanza, I believe, with it. I think the gentleman will agree, if we think it through together, that if we embark on a program of self-sufficiency within 10 years, in the short term it will help us in another way. OPEC will get a signal, all the other oil-producing countries will get a signal that no longer are we going to be satisfied to bow at the knees of the OPEC countries and beg for more oil. They will get the signal that we are intent on becoming self-sufficient. What will that do? That will make them more temperate in the fluctuation of oil production and prices that they have been engaging in for all these years and that will help us in the short term and in the long term.

And then as we move gradually towards this self-sufficiency, we will see our prosperity expand to unknown limits. I believe that even the alternative forms of energy will find a proper place, solar and wind and the geothermal and other kinds of alternatives that we can space out for our country's use over the next 10 years and then thereafter be totally self-sufficient.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I could not agree more with the gentleman. I remember reading these figures. At the time of the Gulf War, we were only 36 percent dependent on foreign oil. Under the Clinton-Gore administration, we have now slipped over the line to the point where now we are 56 percent dependent on foreign oil, and the policies that they are providing to this country will make us even more dependent into the future. I think you just have to ask yourself, would a Teddy Roosevelt have let this happen? Would a great President or a great administration have put us at the mercy of these governments that control most of the world's oil supply? I think the answer is clearly no.

Mr. GEKAS. I will conclude by thanking the gentleman for the time that he has allotted me and to end by saying I as an American citizen am totally embarrassed and humiliated at the thought of having to beg the OPEC countries to produce more, to send us more, to sell us more of their energy product. It is humiliating. I think our whole Nation is humiliated by what has occurred. We have got to reverse this impact and become self-sufficient so that the OPEC countries eventually will come to beg us to sell us more oil, to beg us to buy more oil.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I thank the gentleman for his comments and participation this evening.

I ran across an interesting quote here. This is by our President, very recently as a matter of fact, March 7, speaking at the White House.

''Americans should not want them,'' referring to oil prices, ''to drop to $12 or $10 a barrel again, because that takes our mind off our business, which should be alternative fuels, energy conservation, reducing the impact of all this on global warming.''

We talked about alternative fuels. It would be great if we could increase the size of this. But despite heavy Federal subsidies, we have not made much progress.

Let me now observe that in his book I referred to, Earth in the Balance, the Vice President referred back to that book just about a year ago and is quoted in Time magazine on pages 65 through 67, April 26, 1999. If there were ever a doubt that maybe his views have changed somewhat in light of events that have transpired, that maybe he has reconsidered certain outlandish statements made in the book, well, it is apparent that that is not the case, because this is what he said:

''There's not a statement in that book that I don't endorse. The evidence has firmed up the positions I sketched there.''

I think there is some pretty interesting material in that book. Let me talk a little bit about the failure of the foreign policy of the Clinton-Gore administration, because indeed they have deliberately made us more beholden to the foreign oil-producing nations, particularly OPEC. As the Energy Secretary recently admitted, the administration was, quote-unquote, ''caught napping'' regarding the current crisis at the gas pump. OPEC should not have the unilateral power to dictate the price of gasoline that American motorists pay at the pump; but unfortunately this is exactly what is happening.

This really is a national security issue. We have put ourselves at the mercy of many regimes hostile to the United States. The weak, vacillating foreign policy of the Clinton administration has a great deal to do with this as we continue to tolerate the excesses of Saddam Hussein. In case of hostilities with any one of these oil-producing nations, we could have our oil supplies cut drastically with little recourse. The Clinton-Gore administration response was to beg OPEC to increase production, and so we went hat in hand asking them, please increase production. We need an administration that will strongly advocate U.S. interests and will produce policies that will take care of the national security of all Americans.

Let me just comment on this energy policy. Here are a few facts that have been assembled, alarming oil and gas facts. Since 1992, U.S. oil production is down 17 percent. Yet consumption is up 14 percent. In just 1 year under the Clinton-Gore administration, oil imports increased over 7 percent. As I mentioned, imports are now at 56 percent and growing rapidly. The Department of Energy predicts 65 percent foreign oil dependence by the year 2020. Indeed some project it will be higher than that. Sixty-five percent importing probably the most fundamental commodity to the interests of this Nation.

At current prices, the United States spends $300 million per day on imported oil, over $100 billion per year on foreign oil, one-third of the total trade deficit. Iraq is the fastest growing source of

U.S. oil imports. In 1990 we had 405,000 jobs in exploring and producing oil and gas. In 1999, that number of 405,000 had dwindled to 293,000, a 27 percent decline. In 1990 we had 657 working U.S. oil rigs. In the year 2000, 10 years later, we had 153 working oil rigs. Our fuel storage has shrunk.

New York lost 20 percent of heating oil storage because of governmental mandates contributing to shortages and price hikes. This year's Department of Energy budget has $1.2 billion for climate change activities but only $92 million for oil and gas research and development. It is clear that the priorities of this administration are not on decreasing dependence on foreign oil, for indeed just the opposite has happened during the nearly 8 years now of this administration. The administration indeed is quite adamant about blocking our attempts to gain energy self-sufficiency. I will just read this quote from the Vice President. He said in October of 1995, ''If they,'' meaning the Republican majority, ''satisfy us on 100 percent of everything else we ask for and they open ANWR in Alaska to drilling, President Clinton will veto the whole thing.''

Mr. GORE is an absolutist in opposition to drilling for new sources of American oil. During his tenure in office, as I mentioned, our demand has grown by 14 percent while our domestic oil production declined by 17 percent. Yet Mr. GORE supports government policies that take many areas of the United States with the greatest oil potential off the table. ANWR, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, is a 1½ million-acre arctic coastal plain in Alaska. In 1998, the U.S. Geological Survey estimated that up to 16 billion barrels lie underneath the soil in ANWR, enough to replace our oil imports from Saudi Arabia for 30 years. These reserves can be tapped into with essentially no environmental damage. The development area where the drilling would occur would be less than 1 percent of the whole Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, leaving almost no impact on the environment.

Just to note, at the existing Prudhoe Bay site, the North Slope, which currently provides an enormous amount of oil to the domestic market, wildlife has thrived despite the outrageous and extreme claims of so-called self-styled environmentalists, people with whom apparently the Vice President identifies, that we would do grave harm to the wildlife there. I have been there personally to see it. You would be very impressed with what is going on at Prudhoe Bay and the pipeline. Very, very impressive operation. It has not damaged the environment. If anything, it is looked upon as an asset, and the wildlife has flourished with the facilities that have been placed there.

The people of Alaska overwhelmingly support drilling in ANWR, but the Vice President does not; and as we can see made clear that he would recommend a veto and indeed that is exactly what happened. It was vetoed by the administration. The cost of oil and gas exploration in the U.S. is so expensive through our tax and environmental policies that our own companies would rather search for oil among armed terrorists in Colombia than here. Pushing industry outside the United States does not help the environment because what they do will occur in places where it is not as strictly regulated as in this country. Nevertheless, the production will occur.

Transferring businesses to nations that lack our stringent production standards invites mishaps. Requiring that more oil be shipped overseas increases the risk of tanker accidents. By importing oil, we also are exporting our wealth and jobs overseas. As I observed, the domestic energy industry has lost 112,000 jobs during this administration.

Let us talk about Kyoto. The Vice President wrote in his book, Earth in the Balance, something I think we should focus on for a minute.

□ 1945

''Minor shifts in policy, marginal adjustments in ongoing programs, moderate improvements in laws and regulations, rhetoric offered in lieu of genuine change; these are all forms of appeasement, designed to satisfy the public's desire to believe that sacrifice, struggle, and a wrenching transformation of society will not be necessary.''

Focus on that for a minute. What he is really saying is, in his view, a wrenching transformation of society will be necessary, and that we are fools to think that it will not be. A wrenching transformation of society. Let us see. Could that mean something on the scale of the forcing out of the rural areas into the cities, the peasants in Russia, the so-called collectivization that resulted in the deaths of so many millions. That was a wrenching transformation of society. Or could the period under Mao in China when so many millions were tortured and murdered there, would that be a wrenching transformation of society? That is what I think of when those terms are used. I really think we ought to ponder this belief of the Vice President.

Now, Kyoto, speaking of a wrenching transformation of society, because I believe this is on that magnitude. The disastrous Kyoto protocol was negotiated by the Clinton-Gore administration in 1997, and it would force just indeed such a wrenching transformation that the Vice President envisions in Earth in the Balance, his book written personally, he has reaffirmed by him. And he agrees even more now, or as much now, feels that the arguments have been strengthened in the intervening years since he first wrote it.

The Kyoto protocol requires the United States by the year 2012 to reduce emissions to the levels they were at in the 1980s. The economic recession of the late 1970s caused the United States to cut emissions by 2 percent. Complying with Kyoto would require 3 times the cutbacks experienced during those economic downturns. Those were not good times. We all remember them well, those of us who are old enough to remember. They were very trying times for the United States. It is indeed tragic and frankly, amazing, that someone who has risen to the office of Vice President would propose these sorts of Draconian alterations in our policy.

Happily, the upper body in the Congress voted unanimously to urge the President and the Vice President not to sign the U.S. on to any global warming treaty if it exempted developing countries or injured the American economy. Nevertheless, the resolution of the upper body was ignored and the treaty was negotiated and signed. This treaty basically allowed 132 out of the 168 countries attending the conference to opt out of the treaty on the grounds that they are still developing countries. Among these countries are some of the world's biggest polluters, including China, India, Brazil, and Mexico. So, out of the 168 countries that get to opt out, only 36, including the United States, are precluded by the provisions of the treaty from opting out.

Perhaps the Draconian sacrifices in our standard of living required by Kyoto would qualify us as a developing country. Taken together, developing countries will emit a majority of the world's greenhouse gas emissions by 2015. Yet, under Mr. GORE's treaty, none of those countries would have any obligation to reduce emissions or to obey the rules that govern the United States under the treaty. With so few countries actually agreeing to this protocol, it is highly doubtful that global warming will be reduced.

Happily, the upper body has refused to vote on and ratify the Kyoto treaty. But that has not stopped the Clinton-Gore administration from attempting to end-run the Constitution in implementing it anyway. This administration's 1999 budget included $6.3 billion, an increase to the EPA to draft strict new rules that would unilaterally enact portions of the Kyoto protocol. The cost to U.S. business workers and consumers of complying with the Vice President's Kyoto treaty could be staggering. In real terms, AL GORE committed Americans to reduce our fossil fuel emissions by 41 percent, compared to projections of what we need to maintain our economic growth.

Now, just focus on this for a minute. A 41 percent reduction in fossil fuel emissions would result in huge job losses. Up to 1.5 million workers would lose their jobs in energy intensity manufacturing industries like petroleum, refining, pulp and paper making, cement, steel, chemicals and aluminum, as these jobs move to developing nations not bound by the Kyoto restrictions.

What kind of a policy could that possibly be, to take these high-paying jobs

and send them to some developing Nation and out of the United States to be replaced, no doubt, by more service sector, lower-paying jobs.

Secondly, a 41 percent reduction in fossil fuel emissions would result in a huge increase in the cost of living. American families would pay 25 cents per gallon more due to this alone, this treaty, and $2,000 more annually, for necessary consumer goods, which will experience the trickle-down effect of having the fuel costs raised, and since all of these goods are moved in one way or another and the fuel is used, the average increase for Americans could be $2,000 a year.

Thirdly, due to this 41 percent reduction brought about by the Kyoto treaty, reduction in the fossil fuel emissions, it would greatly diminish U.S. trade competitiveness. Now, we constantly hear out of this administration how they are concerned about trade and they want to increase competitiveness. Well, Kyoto really sets us back. Since 132 countries are not subject to the treaty, the Kyoto treaty will make it much harder for U.S. businesses to compete internationally.

Now, let us get to this: what would it really take? Suppose somehow this were to become law, which the Vice President really wants it to become law and has done everything he could to try and bring that about. Well, it would require huge reductions in total U.S. consumption of fossil fuels: coal, oil, and natural gas. The only practical way to force these cuts would be through steep price increases. That is really what it is all about. That is why the Vice President is happy that the gas prices have gone up. It is long overdue. Economists, friends of the administration, we can read their quotes in the current news magazines, saying how our gasoline prices were way too low and this is a good thing to have them up there, that these economists, some of them, who obviously are very sympathetic to the unfriendly policies of the Clinton-Gore administration, they also decry the rise in SUVs. Americans love their sports utility vehicles. Well, this administration is not at all happy about that, and their friends are not at all happy about that, and they would like to see the price of gas rise so much that one cannot afford to drive those vehicles which they think are bad for the country.

Let me just observe in reference to this point that gas price hikes really are what would be compelled by the Clinton-Gore Kyoto treaty. In other places, where the countries have signed the treaty and which have put the treaty into force, unlike the United States; in Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan, they have all decided that the only way to reach the Kyoto limits is to raise taxes on fossil fuels. These countries, not coincidentally, in my judgment, are the ones that have had much slower economic growth than the United States over the past decade. What would we expect when the price of gas in Europe for years has been between $2 and $3 a gallon because of the high excise taxes that they have imposed.

Mr. Speaker, we do not want the Europeanization of our energy policy. Cheap energy has been a tremendous blessing, perhaps the single greatest blessing that we could name in terms of economics to the people of this great country. Now we have people in power that are determined to wreck that policy and to replace it with something that will really shrink our standard of living and will make it much more difficult to maintain the prosperity and rates of economic growth that we have had in the past.

Well, we have spent a few minutes tonight talking about the role of the Vice President and his views on energy policy. I am glad that we have had this opportunity, and I would like now to recognize my colleague from Florida (Mr. WELDON).

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I certainly commend the gentleman for bringing this Special Order to the floor this evening.

One of the things that I have noticed in my 5 years of experience here on Capitol Hill, having left my previous vocation as a physician and taken up the role of legislator for the people of my congressional district is the nature by which so many of the more outrageous blunders and outrageous statements that come from the Vice President are essentially ignored or passed over by the major media outlets in the United States, the electronic media and many of the printed media outlets, newspapers such as the Post, The New York Times.

One area that is very, very significant in my congressional district is the mismanagement by the Vice President of the space station program. The space station program is a program that was redesigned by the Clinton-Gore team in 1993, and in that process, they brought the Russians in as critical partners where we were now suddenly dependent upon the Russians for critical elements in space station construction. The Vice President was intimately involved with this program.

Over the years, subsequent to 1993 he had a series of meetings with the prime minister, Mr. Chernomyrdin at which various phases of space station progress were negotiated, along with other scientific enterprises that the United States was supposedly cooperating with the Russians on.

There were many people, including the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), the Republican Chairman of the Committee on Science, who warned at the time that this approach and this strategy that the administration is pursuing is risky, is dangerous, and could lead to significant delays in the space station program, significant cost overruns, tremendous amounts of additional costs and, indeed, could ultimately lead to the failure of the program in its very important mission.

Well, now here we are, 7 years later, and lo and behold, all of the warnings of the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) at that time have come to pass, and indeed, we have a situation where instead of saving $2 billion as was originally put forward by Clinton-Gore, the space station program is probably going to cost $4 billion over and above what it was originally projected to cost. We have gone from a savings of $2 billion to an overrun of $4 billion, a $6 billion swing.

What is equally egregious is the program is now 2 years behind schedule and indeed, it is uncertain as to whether or not it is ever going to be able to get back on track.

What is even more disappointing is that the Vice President's fingerprints were all over this, and he has yet to put forward his proposal to get this program back on track.

□ 2000

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to observe that the gentleman is absolutely right.

It is a funny thing. With the Clinton-Gore administration, the only time I have ever seen them interested in saving money is when it comes to cutting taxes. All of a sudden, they are the guardians of the Treasury. Every last dime they have to hang onto so none of it goes back to the taxpayer.

The gentleman just mentioned a $6 billion increase they had gone along with. Their regulatory policies are costing us billions and billions of dollars, the consumer and the country itself. They are constantly pushing for increasing the amounts of money in these appropriations bills. They are vetoing our bills because they do not spend enough money, but if it comes to hanging onto the dollar and protecting the taxpayer against himself by not letting him have a tax cut, they are very good about being parsimonious.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I want to follow that, regarding AL GORE's assertions that George W. Bush's tax cut policies are risky. He is fond of using this term. He used this term to describe the Republican tax cuts policies in the past.

The question I would ask the Vice President, which I believe people in the media should be asking him, is why is it risky when we want to give working men and women a portion of their money back, but it is not risky when AL GORE and Bill Clinton spend that money? Which gets to the heart of the issue that the gentleman is talking about. The only time they talk about saving money is when they are talking about not giving a tax cut.

Why, why, why is it so risky to give working men and women some of their hard-earned tax dollars back to spend on their priorities: their kids' college educations, braces for the kids, saving money for the first home, getting out

of an apartment? That is risky, but lo and behold, when they want to increase spending from Washington, when they want to keep that hard-earned money of those working families and spend it on what AL GORE thinks it should be spent on, then that is not risky.

The answer to that is very, very obvious. This is empty rhetoric used as ploy to avoid the thing they despise the most, which is taking power and influence out of Washington, out of the hands of elected politicians, and giving it back to people; giving the money that they earned back into their own pockets and pocketbooks.

I just applaud the gentleman for so many of the issues that he is bringing up.

I was listening to the gentleman's presentation earlier. He brought up the whole issue of ANWR. I am very, very glad that the gentleman brought that up as it relates to what is going on right now in this country with the high gasoline prices, high fuel oil prices that many, many Americans are having to wrestle with, and the impact on their budget.

We have millions and millions of barrels of additional oil available to us in Alaska. President Clinton and the Vice President are standing against exploiting those oil reserves for no rational reason whatsoever.

I went up there to the North Slope, and people like the Vice President talk about the North Slope as though it is this pristine, wonderful place that we have to protect, teeming with wildlife. It is the most barren, moonlike landscape that Members could ever imagine, and the most amazing thing is that the people who live there see absolutely no problem with tapping into these oil reserves.

The technology has gotten so good and so sophisticated that not only do we protect the environment but, as well, the environment is enhanced by the oil exploration efforts that are there.

When I was there, because of the initiatives pursued, they now have ponds that were lifeless that were rendered deeper because they needed the gravel, and now the ponds are filled with fish. Those fish-filled ponds are attracting more grizzly bears. The roads that they build to drive on in the oil exploration efforts raise the ground up sufficiently that various birds can nest along the edge of the road, so we have a proliferation of birds as a consequence.

Furthermore, the Holy Grail, the thing that they ballyhooed was going to get so disturbed, the caribou, it turns out that the herd is multiplying at a much more rapid rate. The size of the herd has increased dramatically because of the presence of the pipeline.

So every single excuse that they use, and what is, I think, the greatest outrage in this whole affair is here we are today, again, the poor working stiffs of America who have trouble making ends meet, who run out of checkbook funds before the month runs out because they are paying more money for gasoline and for fuel oil, their lives could be made better if we were able to tap into those additional oil reserves there in Alaska.

They are very close to the existing pipeline infrastructure. It entails putting in just a short segment of additional pipeline, and would allow us access to millions and millions of barrels of additional oil. The increased production would have the potential to lower the price of oil worldwide and significantly enhance the quality of life for every American, but yet the Clinton-Gore administration stands up and says, no, no, with these empty, irrational explanations for their opposition.

Frankly, I applaud the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE). This just further confirms in my mind that we are standing up for the needs of working men and women, and that we must continue to do so. It is very, very critical that we continue to speak on these issues. I am happy to yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, just before the gentleman got down, I was just saying the same thing about my trip to the North Slope, and the observations the gentleman made about ANWR and the pipeline are right on track.

But the Vice President apparently does not want to open up ANWR because that will take us away from this which he seeks, a wrenching transformation of society. I guess in his vision we are all supposed to suffer a little. Somehow that is for the common good.

That is not the policy that I endorse. Americans are suffering right now with the failed foreign policy and energy policy that has given us this bump-up in the gasoline prices. Long-term, Americans are going to suffer a lot more if we do not reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and opening up ANWR is the first and most vital step to do that; furthermore, in addition to that, reducing the ridiculously burdensome rules and regulations and restrictions that have been imposed on our people in the oil development industry that is forcing them to go to Colombia, where there are armed terrorists; to feel that that is a more favorable climate to do their drilling work than it is right here in the United States.

So the gentleman is absolutely right, things have been out of hand and they need to be changed.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. I want to underscore a very, very important point highlighted by that poster up there. It is very, very clearly spelled out in AL GORE's book, Earth in the Balance.

I would highly recommend every American purchase a copy of this book and read it. If they read this book, AL GORE wants the price of oil to go up. He wants it to go up dramatically. He would like the American consumer to pay substantially more for a gallon of gasoline. I would wager that the current price of $1.50 to $1.80 per gallon is not high enough for AL GORE, because he would like the price to be so high that people would stop driving and that people would start using mass transit. He would like to get them out of their cars.

That agenda is very, very clearly spelled out in that book in black and white. I would assert that if any Republican had ever written a book with the outrageous assertions that are put forth in that book, that that Republican candidate for president would be excoriated by the American news media; that every single outrageous statement in that book would be attacked and questioned. That candidate could not go anywhere in the Nation where a reporter would not come up to him and ask him, how could he make these outrageous assertions?

Let me just read what that says there: ''Minor shifts in policy, marginal adjustments in ongoing programs, moderate improvements in laws and regulations, rhetoric offered in lieu of genuine change, these are all forms of appeasement designed to satisfy the public's desire to believe that sacrifice, struggle, and a wrenching transformation of society will not be necessary.''

How outrageous a statement can we find? It is disparaging of public opinion. He says, ''designed to satisfy the public's desire,'' as though that is something we are not supposed to do; as though we are supposed to have some higher knowledge and calling and that we are somehow supposed to ignore them, the people who are literally our bosses, and that we are to do what we think is necessary or what he thinks is necessary, a wrenching transformation of society.

What is that wrenching transformation? He wants to get every single one of us out of our cars. He further goes on to claim that the internal combustion engine is one of the single greatest threats to the human race. How much more outrageous a statement could anyone ever have?

I thank the gentleman from California. He has all of the quotes up there. Within the context of the SEI, the Strategic Environmental Initiative, a plan of the Vice President's, it ought to be possible to establish a coordinated global program to accomplish the strategic goal of completely eliminating the internal combustion engine over, say, a 25-year period.

What will a Gore presidency mean? It will mean the implementation or an attempt to implement that program right there, spelled out in Earth in the Balance: to completely eliminate the internal combustion engine.

Let me just say that if there were a good replacement for the internal combustion engine that was totally pollution-free and was affordable, I think

every American would support that. Who would not want to be able to avoid gas stations? Who would not want to drive a car that does not spew fumes?

But the reality of physics, the reality of modern science today is the internal combustion engine is the only affordable way for people to get about, and God forbid we have a situation where politicians from Washington are trying to completely eliminate the internal combustion engine, let alone no one other than the President of the United States.

I just want to wholeheartedly congratulate the gentleman from California on bringing these issues to the forefront. These are the issues that we should be debating, what are the underlying philosophies and beliefs of the candidates.

I certainly thank the gentleman, and I would be more than delighted to do this again with the gentleman from California.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I thank the gentleman. We will be doing it again soon as we examine other aspects of the views and the record of Vice President AL GORE.

EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALDEN of Oregon). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I heard the previous speakers close out with the name of AL GORE. I understand they have been talking about the Vice President, who is the probable Democratic Party nominee for president.

I certainly would like to begin my statement with a hearty congratulations to Mr. GORE for proposing a $115 billion education reform program over the next 10 years, to allocate $115 billion over the next 10 years.

The details of Mr. GORE's proposal I do not particularly agree with. However, the perspective, the understanding of the need and the scope that we have to move on is welcome. I welcome Mr. GORE's vision, I welcome his commitment, and he is in line with where the American people want to go.

I think we are in an area where the people, the ordinary citizens, are out there ahead of the Members of Congress, ahead of the decision-makers even in the White House, ahead of the decision-makers in the local governments and in the State governments, because the polls repeatedly keep showing that the average American out there views education as the number one priority for governmental action. Education is the number one priority.

There was a time when education was in the top five, in fact, that has been the case over the last 5 years, but education was not number one. Reducing crime at one time was number one, saving social security at one time was number one, Medicare and shoring up the Medicare fund was number one at one time. But not now. Education consistently for the last 10 months has been in all of the polls, and I think the Republican polls are showing exactly what the Democratic polls are showing, that education is the number one concern of the American people.

So a candidate who proposes to come to grips with the problem in a time when we have considerable wealth in this Nation, at a time when we see the estimates for revenue, revenue, being so much greater than expenditures, and the projection after we take care of the surplus of social security and put that away just for social security, the projection is $1.9 trillion in surplus over a 10-year period. So surely it is appropriate that one could talk in terms of investing $115 billion of that $1.9 trillion surplus in education reform.

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I do not think that goes far enough. I think that $115 billion is about half of what we need. And the Congressional Black Caucus alternative budget that was on the floor as an alternative to the Republican budget a week ago, the Congressional Black Caucus budget recommended that we use 10 percent of the projected $1.9 trillion surplus, 10 percent should be used for education. Of that 10 percent, 5 should go to school construction and the other 5 percent should go to other kinds of improvements in education; reduction of class sizes by having more teachers, more training for teachers, education technology.

There is a whole range of things that needs to be done and should be done. And for the first time in the last 50 years, the revenues are there. The resources are there. Will we reinvest those resources in education and get a return on them, or will we invest them in trivial weapon systems that are redundant and not needed?

Will we do as the Republican majority has done, add $17 billion to the President's defense budget? The President already put in an increase for defense in his budget that was submitted to the Congress, and the Republicans have added $17 billion to that. Are we going to throw the money away in redundant weapon systems, or are we going to invest the money in education and the kinds of activities that are going to pay off, because there will be a return on those investments?

Now, I have had some comments made about some of the remarks that I have made during Special Orders, especially remarks made about school construction and the fact that I continually seem to be obsessed with one subject. I just want to confess that I have certainly spent a lot of time on this particular subject, on education, in general, but, more specifically, on school construction.

I am going to talk quite a bit about it again tonight, because, you know, in the American political process, the dialogue is invaluable. As a Member of the minority party here in the House of Representatives, all we have left, in many cases, is dialogue, the ability to talk and the opportunity to reach our allies out there in the general public. I have just said we have been reading polls now for the last 10 months, which show that the majority of the American people consider government assistance for education to be the highest priority.

If that is the case, then I have many allies. We have many allies, those of us who want to see more resources from the Federal Government put into education. I want to talk to our allies. I want to talk to all the school children out there who need help. There are 53 million children who go to public schools, and many of those public schools are in serious trouble.

Public schools in the inner cities are in very serious trouble in most of our big cities. Public schools in some of the suburbs also need a lot of help. Public schools in the rural areas are in many cases in the worst shape of all. Help is needed.

I repeat many things over and over again because it is important for us to try to understand this very unusual phenomenon. We have a situation where the people clearly have sent a message that they want to go one way and the overwhelming majority of the powerful decisionmakers in our government are going in a different direction.

The response of the public figures, the public decisionmakers, the response of the leaders, including those who are running for President, has been to talk about the issue of education incessantly. There is plenty of discussion. Among Members of Congress and the Senate and candidates for the presidency, governors and State legislators and city council people and mayors, there is an understanding that when you see the polls, you understand that people are primarily concerned about government assistance for education, your response should be to talk about it, the rhetoric is important; but do not take any significant action, play around with the game of education, make education a game.

Everybody is an expert on education. They want to talk about the phonics system versus the whole word system. They want to talk about the need for more discipline. They want to talk about teachers working harder and the need for certification. Most of the things they want to talk about have some validity, in terms of need.

We need to deal with all of those components. There are different components, and they should be addressed; but few of the decisionmakers, the public officials, want to talk about the need for more resources. They want to deal with the fact that we have Stone Age budgets in our schools. Everything else has taken off. The stock market has soared. It is three times the size it was 10 years ago.

The degrees are different when you start talking about wealth and money