

ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of this House most disturbing developments in Russia. Anti-Semitism rears its ugly head in public statements blaming Russia's current problems on the "Yids"—statements not being made by neo-Nazi organizations or fringe groups, but rather by members of the Russian parliament.

In November and December of last year, two prominent Communist Party members of the Duma, Albert Makashob and Viktor Ilyukhin, blamed "the Yids" and president Yeltsin's "Jewish Entourage" for Russia's current problems. Duma Defense Committee Member Ilyukhin alleged that President Yeltsin had committed "genocide against the Russian people" with the help of Jewish advisors. Equally as disturbing is the fact that the chairman of the Communist Party did not rebuke his party members for their actions, rather, he made excuses for their remarks.

Sadly, Mr. Makashov continues on his rabid crusade. I have received reports that on February 22, while addressing a meeting of Cosacks in the southern Rostov region of Russia, Duma Deputy Makashov declared that an organization which he heads, the Movement in Support of the Army, was really the "Movement against the Yids," and called Jews "impudent and repulsive people."

In December of last year, CURT WELDON, myself and others met with our colleagues in the Duma and expressed our great dismay about the anti-Semitic statements. In fact, many members of the Duma, as well as President Yeltsin, have condemned Makashov and Ilyukhin. Unfortunately, many Members have simply made excuses. What kind of message does this send to the Russian people at such a critical time?

Mr. Speaker, these comments by leaders of the Russian people are despicable and must be condemned. I have joined with Chairman CHRIS SMITH and other members of the Helsinki Commission in introducing H. Con. Res. 37, which does exactly that, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, looking for scapegoats will not resolve Russia's current crisis. More importantly, the promotion of hatred, anti-Semitism and xenophobia will not further the development of a peaceful, just and prosperous society for the Russian people. Democracy is not built on racism.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BEACH BILL

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Beaches Environmental Assessment, Closure, and Health Act of 1999—also known as the BEACH bill.

The BEACH bill is straightforward. It seeks to establish uniform criteria for monitoring the quality of our coastal recreation waters, and to

require sufficient notification of the public when those waters pose a risk to human health. As my colleagues know, I have championed this legislation for years, continuing the efforts of our friend Bill Hughes.

In the 105th Congress, the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing on the BEACH bill. During that hearing, Gary Sirota of the Surfrider Foundation remarked that as a life-long surfer he is often asked "What will you do if you see a shark." Mr. Sirota said that he always replies "It's the ones you don't see that you have to worry about." This exchange provides an excellent analogy to the problem of contaminants in our coastal recreation waters. Families visiting the sand and surf cannot see toxic dangers that might be lurking in the water. And what they can't see can hurt them.

Beach-going is part of our national identity. For those of us who live in coastal states, a trip to "the Shore" is a yearly summer event. Almost every American can remember a family pilgrimage to the beach—escaping the oppressing heat with a swim in the ocean. Coastal tourism is also big business. Members from coastal districts may be surprised to know that beaches are the number one tourist destination in the United States, receiving more visitors than even our national parks and recreation areas. Every summer, over 180 million Americans spend \$74 million during visits to ocean, bay, and Great Lakes beaches.

Both novice and experienced beachgoers are familiar with jellyfish and understand the need to avoid their painful stings. Unfortunately, other hazards, such as disease-causing bacteria, cannot be so easily avoided. These microorganisms can carry gastroenteritis and dysentery, which may bring on symptoms including fever, vomiting, nausea, headache and stomachache. The consequences may be even more severe for children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems.

Currently, there is no national beach monitoring program and no uniform standards for beach closings and advisories. According to the National Resources Defense Council's July 1998 report "Testing the Waters," only eight states comprehensively monitor their beaches. Even though the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recommended water testing standards, the lion's share of our states do not monitor their beaches on a comprehensive basis. EPA's BEACH program, while a step in the right direction, does not actually require monitoring and notification. I commend EPA's efforts to address this important issue. In the past, the agency has supported the BEACH bill to give it the authority it needs to make testing and notification mandatory.

People have the right to know if the waters that they and their families swim in are safe. That is why I continue to champion the BEACH bill to establish uniform standards and procedures for beach water testing, monitoring, and public notification. When standards are not met, beaches should be closed and potential bathers should be adequately alerted. The sheer volume of visitors to our beaches dictates that our coastal recreation waters should be tested regularly, and that beachgoers should be notified of any potential health risks. Establishing uniform criteria for testing and notification is responsible economic and public policy.

The BEACH bill requires EPA to set minimum water quality standards to protect the public from disease-causing pathogens in coastal recreational waters and to establish procedures for monitoring coastal recreational waters. It requires states to alert the public whenever beach water quality standards are violated.

Mr. Speaker, the BEACH bill had bipartisan support in the 105th Congress, and I look forward to working again with my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to make the public protections provided by this bill a reality.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION ACT

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing the Medicare Preservation and Restoration Act, which will repeal the Medicare private contracting provision of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and clarify that private contracts are prohibited under Medicare for Medicare-covered services.

The legislation is simple. First, it requires that providers submit a Medicare claim whenever Medicare-covered services are provided to a beneficiary. Second, it requires that a provider, when treating a Medicare beneficiary, charge no more than Medicare's balance billing limits allow. My legislation will settle the issue of private contracting once and for all. It will explicitly prohibit providers from circumventing the Medicare system, preserve beneficiary billing protections, and restore the promise of quality and affordable health care for every American senior citizen. My legislation has been endorsed by the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare and the National Council of Senior Citizens. The Medicare Rights Center also has spoken out in opposition to Medicare private contracts.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is the only way we can continue to guarantee every senior citizen in America the right to affordable health care under Medicare. The private contracts allowed under the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 represent a dangerous first-step towards dismantling the Medicare program as a whole. They are ill-conceived and unnecessary. These contracts will allow doctors to disregard Medicare's most important protection—balanced billing limits. These limits guarantee that all seniors regardless of their income or their health status will have access to affordable health care. Private contracts destroy these protections and allow doctors the ability to decide patient-by-patient which senior will be forced to pay more than Medicare's set rates for needed medical care.

During debate on the budget bill in 1997, Senator JON KYL of Arizona included this private contracting provision to allow any doctor to treat Medicare patients outside of the program and bill the patient privately at any rate the doctor sets. During negotiations on the final package, the provision was altered to protect beneficiaries and to prevent physicians from moving back and forth between billing some patients privately and others through the