

other day that I have seen the tracks made 50 years ago or more where Patton and his troops did war exercises in the desert. I was in that part of the desert a couple weeks ago. It was amazing to still see those tank tracks in the desert. They will be there probably for another 50 years, if not more.

More people each year understand how important it is to conserve our land and its rich resources. While this administration's environmental rollbacks are getting too numerous to count, they started with, of course, the infamous problem of arsenic in the water—saying there was no problem, regardless of how much arsenic was in the water.

While this administration's environmental rollbacks are too numerous to count, the one that stands out the most in my mind is the transportation of nuclear waste. The reason this has been so difficult for me to accept is the President came to Nevada on one occasion. He came to northern Nevada, the Lake Tahoe area, and would not take questions from the press during his campaign. He was afraid people would ask questions about nuclear waste. His position had been contrary to the interests of residents of Nevada. As the campaign rolled on and it was determined that Nevada electoral votes might become very important in the Presidential race, he sent people to Nevada on his behalf and explained: President Bush thinks nuclear waste is an important issue and he will not allow nuclear waste to come to Nevada unless there is sound science. Vice President CHENEY came when he was campaigning. President Bush issued a statement to that effect, unequivocally saying nuclear waste would not come to Nevada unless there was sound science. He came to Nevada only on one occasion during the campaign. But, since he came to Nevada, that science has gone downhill from the perspective of the nuclear power industry. In fact, there are 292 scientific investigative reports, according to the General Accounting Office, that have not been completed. In addition to that, the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board has stated that the science is poor. In addition to that, the Winston & Strawn law firm, which was giving legal advice to the Secretary of Energy for the sum of millions of dollars, was also getting millions of dollars from the Nuclear Energy Institute. If there were ever a direct conflict of interest, that was it, and the inspector general from the Department of Energy said so in written form.

So we have the General Accounting Office, inspector general of the Department of Energy, and the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board saying: Secretary Abraham, don't make this recommendation now. You don't have the facts at your disposal to show there is good science. In spite of that, Secretary Abraham went ahead and did this anyway, and it was confirmed 1 day later by President Bush.

The people of Nevada are extremely disappointed in how President Bush handled this issue. So this is only one indication of how the President has handled the environment.

We have to work together to protect our environment from threats for our children and for their children. All future generations deserve clean water to drink, safe air to breathe, and communities free of dangerous chemicals. That is for certain.

In Nevada, we have taken important steps to protect our Nation's threatened and endangered species, even though, I repeat, Nevada is a desert, mostly. We have been either third or fourth, sometimes fifth, among the States that have listings in that regard. But we have made progress.

Construction came to a halt in Las Vegas because of the desert tortoise, and we have had problems in some of our rivers because of threatened and endangered species, but we have met those challenges. We have met them, especially in the southern Nevada area, a rapidly growing Las Vegas area, in a very inventive—I would say not only inventive way, but a way that will be used in future endangered species actions.

This was difficult to obtain, but we were able to get this with Secretary Babbitt, and I am convinced Secretary Norton will follow the same routine that Secretary Babbitt established as relates to endangered species in the southern Nevada area.

We have done some things that are extremely important to preserve areas around Las Vegas, including the Red Rock National Recreation area. We have been able to do some good things for Lake Tahoe and Pyramid Lake. We have done things with the Lake Mead area.

So we have a lot to celebrate in Nevada about our environmental accomplishments. But they are not secure. We believe there are other actions that need to be taken. One of the things we have been able to do—and this Congress really needs to talk positively about—is the brownfields legislation. That was legislation I authored. We were able to report that out of the Environment and Public Works Committee where I served during my entire time in the Senate.

I have been chairman of that committee on two separate occasions. During the time I have been there, we have had the opportunity to help improve many of our bedrock environmental laws, including the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, Food Quality Protection Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act. But the Brownfields Revitalization and Environmental Restoration Act of 2001, to clean up contaminated sites in rural areas and inner cities, has been very important. It will create hundreds of thousands of jobs and create millions and millions in revenues—actually over \$2 billion in revenue—for local government.

This took a piece of the Superfund legislation and improved upon that. We could not totally rework the Superfund legislation as needed, but we were able to take a small piece of it and do things of which all cities in America were supportive. It was supported by the National League of Cities and the National Council of Mayors. As a result, we were able to pass this legislation.

It took a while to get it out of the House, but we were finally able to get it out. It took almost a year to get it out of the House.

We have made progress, in addition to that, toward reducing air pollution. That is what some of these general laws have done in years past. As I have indicated, with drinking water threats such as arsenic and others, we need to do better.

We have worked to protect our Nation's threatened and endangered species, bringing back American symbols such as the bald eagle. I was able to go to the west front of the Capitol about a month ago. We had a bald eagle fly in. We were able to see that beautiful bird. I had never been that close to an eagle—really this close—with those piercing eyes. Those eyes can see a fish in the water a mile away, I am told.

Mr. President, I know this administration has taken steps to erode some of these accomplishments about which I have spoken, and on nearly every front. On this Earth Day, I think we should recognize this administration has denied the reality of global warming by walking away from the international negotiating table on climate change. This administration has threatened to undermine a Clean Air Act program which would clean up pollution from our powerplants. This administration has proposed to cut funding for enforcement of our landmark environmental laws. This administration has opposed efforts to develop renewable energy and to make our vehicles more efficient. This administration has tried to exploit the National Wildlife Refuge at the request of the big oil companies.

Today the President is in the Adirondack Mountains or someplace in New York—I think that is where I heard in the news that he was—to celebrate Earth Day. I am glad the administration recognizes the importance of Earth Day. But I think we should look at some of the basic laws that are being underfunded and undermined by the policies of this administration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming, Mr. THOMAS, is recognized.

THE SENATE AGENDA

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I will speak in morning business. There are a couple of issues before us. First of all, I urge that we move back as soon as possible—I understand we will at 2 o'clock—to our energy bill. Certainly, there is nothing more important before

us now than the completion of that bill and being able to send it on to the President. Certainly, it is not going to have everything in it that everybody wanted. That is not a new idea. This is a bill that has been on the floor for 5 weeks. But it does have some good things in it. It has some basic energy policy materials that we have not had for a very long time. It has some of the things the President and Vice President had put forth. Unfortunately, some of those it does not.

I was and am a supporter of ANWR. I think that could be done as a multiple-use project. I certainly agree with protecting the environment, as the Senator from Nevada was talking about, but I am also a great promoter of multiple use. Since 50 percent of my State belongs to the Federal Government, we have to be very certain that we have a chance to use it. So I hope we move forward with that.

Upon its completion, I hope we take a look at trade promotion authority. There is probably nothing more important to us in terms of our economy and us being part of world trade. Billions of dollars move around this world every day. Yet for a number of years we have not authorized the President to go ahead with negotiations and to bring those negotiations back to the Congress, which is what this trade authority bill provides.

We had a meeting this morning, and a press conference, talking about the agricultural aspect of foreign trade. Some are concerned about certain crops. But the bottom line is about more than a third, nearly 40 percent, of our agricultural production goes overseas. Our market here only consumes about 60 percent of what we produce, and that leaves 40 percent that has to go somewhere else, to new markets. To do that, we need a trade bill. That is where I think we really ought to go.

TAX DAY

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, recently we had a day called Tax Day. I think most of us thought a lot about taxes. We talked a lot about the process of filling in our tax forms and paying our taxes. I do not know about everyone else, but I came out of that with the renewed notion that we certainly need to take a look at making taxes more simple and that we need to simplify the Tax Code. The problem is, of course, that we are moving just exactly in the opposite way. We spent 7 or 8 years talking about simplification of the Tax Code, and every year it becomes less so. I hope we can address making the Tax Code simpler. The purpose of the Tax Code is to raise money in a fair way.

The definition of a tax is a charge of money imposed by authority upon persons or property for public purposes. You have to have taxes. No one argues with that. But it is not a voluntary act. It is an imposition of authority upon people, and the imposition—in

many cases, because of the process—is unreasonable.

I am persuaded that the current Tax Code remains overly complicated, burdensome, and frustrating to the American taxpayer. I believe we find ourselves often more in the business of trying to manage behavior through taxes than we are of fairly raising money. If we have something we want done, and if someone wants to wear a red shirt and part their hair in the middle, we say: We will give you a tax deduction for doing that. All of that makes it much more complicated than in the past. It is now inefficient. It is inefficient in the allocation of financial resources for communities. Certainly, we are not able to supervise it and audit it very easily because it is so complicated.

I am proud to have supported President Bush's tax relief bill last year. We made some effort to reduce the burden of taxes. Certainly, that doesn't help in terms of the complication that goes into filling out tax forms.

One hundred and four million individuals and families will receive a tax reduction of about \$1,000 from that action. That is good. Nearly 43 million married couples will receive an average deduction of \$1,700. That is very good. Thirty-eight million filers with children will receive an average deduction of about \$1,460.

However, we certainly have not finished our work. Obviously, there needs to be an effort made to make permanent the inheritance tax, or the death tax. That has to be done. I think we need to simplify the Tax Code. We need to continue to do that. I know that is easy to say and much more difficult to do. We need incentives to make that happen.

But the other side of that is that taxpayers spend, according to a report, over 6 billion hours filling out IRS forms. The estimated cost of compliance is close to \$200 billion annually. That is a drain on resources. That should not happen.

I hope we can take a basic look at where we want to be in terms of this issue. It is too complicated, it is too expensive, and it is hopeless to figure out how much we owe. That shouldn't have to be the case. We have worked on it and talked about it at least for a number of years, but we have not done much.

Another important area in which we need to make substantive changes is health care. We talk about cost and who is going to pay for it. We need to give more thought to how to make substantive changes. The same is true with taxes. We ought to go back to the basics: Here is the amount of money that has to be raised. What is the fair way to do it? We need to do it in a simple way, and we need to sit down in a reasonable time and do it.

Some have said Paul O'Neill, Secretary of the Treasury, said the tax laws are abominably full of absurdities. He is exactly right about that. We have

about 17,000 pages in the code. Most of it, of course, comes from the Congress. Each day practically, we try to do something more with taxes to affect behavior.

I think it is time we take a clean look at that and say the purpose of Tax Day is to support the necessary functions of government. It should be simpler for people to comply, and we ought to start with that premise and do it.

I hope we can move forward to do that. I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California is recognized.

INTERVIEW WITH DENNIS ROSS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, in reviewing my press clips this morning, I saw an interview between Brit Hume on "FOX News Sunday" and Dennis Ross, President Clinton's Middle East envoy. Many of us have followed closely the negotiations at Camp David, and also at Taba, but never before have we really heard Dennis Ross comment on these negotiations.

For the first time this past Sunday, we did. I was really quite surprised by these comments. I thought they were of such significance that I ask unanimous consent to have the entire interview printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

TRANSCRIPT: DENNIS ROSS, FORMER U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE MIDDLE EAST

Following is a transcribed excerpt from FOX News Sunday, April 21, 2002.

BRIT HUME (host). Former Middle East envoy Dennis Ross has worked to achieve Middle East peace throughout President Clinton's final days in office. In the months following Clinton's failed peace summit at Camp David, U.S. negotiators continued behind-the-scenes peace talks with the Palestinians and Israelis up until January 2001, and that followed Clinton's presentation of ideas at the end of December 2000.

Dennis Ross joins us now with more details on all that, and Fred Barnes joins the questioning.

So, Dennis, talk to us a little bit, if you can—I might note that we're proud to be able to say that you're a Fox News contributing analyst.

DENNIS ROSS (Fmr. U.S. special envoy to the Middle East). Thank you.

HUME. Talk to us about the sequence of events. The Camp David talks, there was an offer. That was rejected. Talks continued. You come now to December, and the president has a new set of ideas. What unfolded?

ROSS. Let me give you the sequence, because I think it puts all this in perspective.

Number one, at Camp David we did not put a comprehensive set of ideas on the table. We put ideas on the table that would have affected the borders and would have affected Jerusalem.

Arafat could not accept any of that. In fact, during the 15 days there, he never himself raised a single idea. His negotiators did, to be fair to them, but he didn't. The only new idea he raised at Camp David was that the temple didn't exist in Jerusalem, it existed in Nablus.