

Senator MCCAIN, Senator Cleland, Secretary O'Neill, Ambassador Wilson, General Shinseki, Richard Foster, Richard Clarke, Larry Lindsay—when will the character assassination, retribution, and intimidation end?

When will we say enough is enough?

The September 11 families—and our entire country—deserve better. Our democracy depends on it. And our Nation's future security depends on it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Who yields time?

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the minority has 30 minutes. I ask unanimous consent that our time be equally divided, with 7½ minutes going to Senator WYDEN, 7½ minutes to Senator SCHUMER, 7½ minutes to Senator DURBIN, and 7½ minutes to Senator STABENOW, in that order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I thank the Chair.

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

PERFECT STORM COMING

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, it is time for the Bush administration to end its campaign of inaction on gasoline price hikes. Tomorrow, OPEC will vote on whether there should be additional production cuts, and this very morning, the Saudi oil minister said OPEC should go ahead with its scheduled production cut in the month of April.

If they do, that is going to take 1 million barrels of oil off the market per day, when U.S. private oil supplies are already millions of barrels low and when U.S. gasoline prices are at record highs.

Folks on the west coast of the United States are getting clobbered by these gasoline price hikes. People in California pay considerably more than \$2 a gallon. Folks in my home State of Oregon are close behind, paying an average of more than \$1.80 in some of our towns.

There is a perfect storm coming with respect to these gasoline price hikes. The combination of the Bush administration filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve at the wrong time, the fact we have these refinery cutbacks on the west coast that seem as much to boost profit as anything else, the Federal Trade Commission turning a blind eye to anticompetitive profits, and the shenanigans of OPEC are the factors that are coming together to create what I think could be a perfect storm with gasoline prices of \$3 a gallon.

On the OPEC issue, less than a month ago the head of the Energy Information Agency told me OPEC would make up the difference for the oil the U.S. Energy Department is putting in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. I have to tell you, Mr. President, if you think

OPEC is going to be looking out for the American gasoline consumer, you have to think Colonel Sanders is looking out for the chickens. It simply does not add up.

For the life of me, I cannot understand the administration's insistence on continuing to swipe oil out of the private U.S. market and squirrel it away in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve at a time when the American consumer is getting clobbered each week at the gasoline station. The Bush administration needs to stop filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The administration is spending American tax dollars to buy oil at record high prices and put it in the reserve, and apparently they are saying they will not stop it. But, in fact, they did stop filling the reserve when it helped the oil companies. They stopped filling the reserve in December 2002 when the oil companies needed more supply for refineries.

It seems to me the message today is what the administration is willing to do for the big oil companies they ought to do for the American consumer, and particularly the ones I represent on the west coast of the United States.

There is no substitute for leadership when American families are hurting financially and getting shellacked by these gasoline price hikes. It is interesting to note that when the President was a candidate in 2000, he said the President ought to be using his bully pulpit to jawbone OPEC. This administration is not doing that.

Last week, they took credit for oil coming down about \$1 a barrel. The fact was, that was a day late and \$7 a barrel short because the price is still way above the OPEC price target level.

We come to the floor today to say when the American people are hurting, there needs to be Presidential leadership. These gas prices are hurting my constituents. They are devastating to businesses and to consumers on the west coast, and they are driving up prices for goods and transportation in this country.

We have a proposal. It is to stop filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, No. 1. No. 2, it is for the Federal Trade Commission to get off the dime and look at these anticompetitive practices. I have introduced legislation, S. 1737. If the Bush administration does not like that bill, I would like to hear their proposal. Let's hear what they are going to do to stand up for the west coast consumer.

It seems the administration is busy filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve with no regard for rising gas prices. They are busy with their campaign of inaction that seems to help nobody but the oil companies and will not direct the Federal Trade Commission to take steps now to protect the consumer. I think the American people deserve better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAMBLISS). Under the previous agree-

ment, the Senator from New York is recognized for 7½ minutes.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank the Chair.

RICE TESTIMONY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, honestly, I had come to the floor to submit a resolution on behalf of myself and 14 of my colleagues, including Senators KENNEDY, BYRD, LIEBERMAN, CLINTON, CORZINE, DODD, JOHNSON, HOLLINGS, REID from Nevada, LAUTENBERG, DORGAN, DURBIN, DASCHLE, and NELSON to ask the President to allow Condoleezza Rice to testify under oath and in public. I heard NBC News has announced she will do just that. So the resolution is moot. I will make a couple of points, though.

One is I suppose all of the protestation that this would violate separation of powers has gone by the wayside. We all knew that was just a smokescreen because this commission is not congressional, and the whole theory of separation of powers is congressional.

The bottom line is the real reason the administration did not want Condoleezza Rice to testify, that they did not want her out there speaking about this, is quite apparent and had nothing to do with separation of powers.

The second point I make is to compliment the Commission. The Commission has done an incredible job. I think when Tom Kean, the former Governor of New Jersey, a Republican, one known for integrity, said the only way she would testify was under oath—she has been on every talk show. She is on television 24/7. So she has plenty of time to go public and say what she wants, but not what the Commission will ask her under oath.

Her statements, her public statements contradicted some of Dick Clarke's. Dick Clarke's were given under oath. Dick Clarke's were given after considerable criticism and vituperation directed from the White House and the attack machine that we know about here in Washington, the Republican attack machine. He stood by his story. So we now all wait with bated breath to hear what Condoleezza Rice will say under oath.

Mr. President, people as diverse as Colin Powell, JOHN MCCAIN, CHUCK HAGEL—Republicans—have talked about Dick Clarke's character. I have known Dick Clarke for a long time. He is a principled man. He has been a registered Republican. Whenever he met me—and I met him under the Clinton administration—he said he was a Republican. His one passion was to make America safe.

When all the information he had and all the work he and his staff had done were ignored, he became more and more frustrated. Dick Clarke's book is not aimed at political retribution. Dick Clarke's book is aimed at the truth. Like everywhere else, the Scriptures are right: The truth will set us free.