It is time that this Congress turns into a Congress of action that wants to move forward—our being less dependent on foreign oil—and quit relying on our enemies in an unstable region to produce our oil, to produce our energy.

So I want to thank the two gentlemen for joining me tonight. I hope you will go to house.gov/westmoreland and see the people that have signed up and believe in the fact that we need to increase U.S. oil production to lower the gas prices for all Americans.

And Mr. PETERSON, you can close.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. If the Democrats win this debate and we don't produce energy—if we use these old statements of 68 million acres and 80 something percent is leased, that is not factual; 2.5 percent of the Outer Continental Shelf is leased, the good spots are not leased—then we are giving the future of this country away.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. And Madam Speaker, with that, I know you have enjoyed this, we yield back the balance of our time.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate having proceeded to reconsider the bill (H.R. 6124) ''An Act to provide for the continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2012, and for other purposes'', returned by the President of the United States with his objections, to the House of Representatives, in which it originated, and passed by the House of Representatives on reconsideration of the same, it was that the said bill pass, two-thirds of the Senators present having voted in the affirmative.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity. I want to immediately yield to my friend. There were a lot of facts thrown out here, and the folks who are paying attention here in the Chamber may want to hear the response.

I yield to my friend from Pennsylvania.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I appreciate it.

We are going to continue to tell the story of gas prices, what we've just heard. And to keep on the message and to pick up where it was left off with the previous speakers, we're talking about the 68 million acres, here's the key point—a couple of key points: One is, there's 4.8 million barrels of oil per day every day that would be available underneath those 68 million acres. That's the number, 4.8 million barrels per day every day. And we'll talk later about that in comparison to ANWR and other issues, but just to keep on the message. These are not 68 million acres that the Federal Government just said we're going to give you the deserts in Arizona and we're going to give you a bunch of areas that are not productive. These are 68 million acres that are currently leased to oil and gas companies.

Now, presumably the oil and gas companies would only choose to purchase a lease if there was some possibility that there was oil and gas underneath there. And as I've said, the estimated oil and gas—or oil, at least—that's under there is 4.8 million barrels per day. But that's the key point; these aren't just 68 million randomly chosen acres, these are 68 million acres that the oil and gas companies themselves chose to enter into a lease agreement so that they can drill for oil and gas. That's the key point. And they're not doing it.

As we talked about a few nights ago, there are a variety of reasons why they're not doing it. One of the reasons is that they're stockpiling these leases to put on their balance sheet, declare them as assets and raise up their profits and help their stock price. That's part of it. Part of it is that the geological work and the surveying and the construction takes a lot of time. And that's being done on some of these acres, 68 million acres. So we're going to get there, in some cases, but we're not there yet, which gets to what we're going to talk about later.

There really is a difference of opinion among the two groups that we are hearing tonight, but there is no difference of opinion that we have to do something about gas prices. Now, we're talking about long-term solutions. I would hope there's not going to be a difference of opinion on some of the short-term solutions. We're talking about the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, 70 billion barrels per day beginning 2 weeks from today. The manipulation that takes place in the market, the commodities market by these commodities traders, we're going to deal with that issue. There are short-term solutions.

But what is in this dispute tonight and what we're debating in a friendly way is the difference of opinion that we have about what we're going to be as a country 10 years from now and 20 years from now. Are we going to remain dependent on oil? And yes, we're talking in this case about domestic oil. About 65 percent of the oil we get in this country is from overseas. We import it from countries that do not have good will towards Americans in many cases.

So what happens if we drill in ANWR and the 20 percent that remains of the oil that's known in the Outer Continental Shelf where we're not allowed to drill? Eighty percent is already in areas where we are allowed to drill, so what happens if we allow and get to peak capacity 20 years from now? We might be down to 55 percent, we might be down to 52 percent. We're still going to have a majority of our oil that we import from other countries. We're going to feed the beast for the next 20 years and we're going to be in the same place then as we are now.

So is that where we want to be? We have a decision to make as a Nation on how to spend the next 10 to 20 years. How do we want to use all the resources of this Nation and all the brain power of this Nation? Do we want to focus it on continuing our dependence on oil, or do we want to focus it on alternative sources of energy? We're going to talk about that, but I know the gentleman wants to continue along this track, so I will yield back to him.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And one of the issues that was brought up today by the President that we want to discuss—and I very much appreciate you making the presentation as to the other side of the debate that our friends made over the last hour. But a couple of the points that were made on the other side is that, well, if we go offshore, you go into the Outer Continental Shelf region, it's deep water, it's going to cost $2 billion just to maybe get into the well. Well, when you look into the profits from 2007 for the oil companies, $123 billion in profits last year. So the reason they give that they have to increase the price is because it is expensive to get into some of this deep water; no one is disputing that fact.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Can I talk about the $2 billion figure?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Sure.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Because I don't want you to lose the train of thought on that one.

The $2 billion figure includes the surveying and the geological work to actually find the oil in the first place, which it's not just drilling, the $2 billion is from start to peak production.

The point of the 68 million acres is we already know there's oil there. We already know where it is. They purchased the lease specifically because there is oil known to be in those lands, and they're making a conscious decision not to drill there. So the $2 billion actually supports our argument. It doesn't hurt our argument, it supports it, that there is work that needs to be done in any new lands that we make available that we've already done in the current 68 million acres that are available. That's what that $2 billion does.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Much of this money has already been spent in the surveying and the geological work. So now you have, last year, $123 billion in profits. That's what you get the money for because you say it's expensive to get in there. So you're making all the profits and not necessarily going in to get the oil.

And then another comment earlier was made, well, it may take 7 years. Well, if you go to ANWR, you're not going to get a drop out for 10 years. And in 20 years—and I love how this ANWR has just become the silver bullet. If you go into ANWR today, or