USEC Inc. ''must contemplate the termination of enrichment operations at one plant'' and that the next meeting of the Board is scheduled for today.

I am writing to urge that you and the other members of the Board vote not to initiate a plant closing at today's Board meeting. It is deeply disturbing that the USEC Board is even considering the precipitous step of initiating a plant closing less than two years after USEC privatization. Before any closing, every possible alternative should be pursued. The Board should give full consideration to the impact of its actions on effected communities and USEC's employees.

Sincerely,

GART GENSLER.

[DOE News, June 21, 2000]

STATEMENT OF SECRETARY BILL RICHARDSON ON USEC DECISION TO CLOSE PORTSMOUTH

''I am extremely disappointed by the United States Enrichment Corporation's (USEC) decision today to close the uranium enrichment plant at Portsmouth. First and foremost, I am very concerned about the effect this closure will have on USEC workers. Many of these men and women spent their entire working lives helping our nation win the Cold War. They deserve better treatment than they are getting from USEC.

''The decision is just the latest in a series of short-sighted decisions aimed at bolstering the corporation's near-term standing on Wall Street. The decision announced today leaves unanswered fundamental questions affecting the employees, the Corporation's future and USEC's ability to carry out important national security obligations to the United States.

''This decision was not inevitable. When USEC was privatized in 1998, it inherited a healthy business with a bright future. A series of decisions by the corporation's present management have weakened the Corporation and the domestic uranium industry and, coupled with a faltering long-term business strategy, have led to this unfortunate outcome that will result in several hundred Ohioans being put out of work.

''We have opposed layoffs from the start. Earlier this year, when USEC announced it would be downsizing at Paducah and Portsmouth, I urged USEC to provide early retirement and other benefits to help these workers, but the company refused. Now they're leaving even more workers up in the air by announcing closure of this plant, without any credible indication of their commitment or ability to deploy a replacement enrichment technology, necessary for long-term viability. The Energy Department has worked hard to increase funding for its cleanup activities at these sites and for workers displaced from USEC's downsizing to move to the cleanup.

''The administration is committed to doing all it can to mitigate the effects of this action on the workers and the community. We will be reviewing all our options in the days ahead and intend to vigorously pursue every possible means to mitigate the impacts of USEC's management failures on the workers at Portsmouth. I will also recommend fundamental changes in the future relationship between the U.S. government and USEC, including serious consideration of replacing USEC as executive agent for the Russia deal.''

THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY,
Washington, DC, June 21, 2000.

Mr. WILLIAM TIMBERS,
Chairman and CEO, United States Enrichment Corporation, Bethesda, MD.

DEAR MR. TIMBERS: I am in receipt of a copy of your response of June 20 to my recent letter concerning the HEU agreement, the impacts of the proposed commercial SWU deal on domestic production, your ability to sustain the Treasury agreement, and USEC's need for a future enrichment technology.

While I have yet to receive a formal reply to my letter, I must assume that the copy I received from the press constitutes your views on these matters. As such, I would like to comment on some of your key points.

The privatization of USEC in July 1998 was premised on USEC's judgment that the HEU Agreement was an asset to USEC, that it would keep two plants open until 2005, and that it would develop a future enrichment technology. USEC was provided many assets to this end. Your letter, in contrast, now reports that you consider the HEU Agreement to be a burden, that you have long contemplated closing a plant, and that you require substantial federal assistance for a different enrichment technology.

I am pleased that you share our views about the national security importance of the HEU Agreement. I am confused, however, by the assertion in your letter that the important nonproliferation objective of the HEU agreement ''. . . has succeeded at the expense of USEC.'' Last December, USEC made a decision to continue as sole executive agent for the Russian HEU agreement. Presumably this reflected your business judgment that continuing on as the executive agent was in the best business interests of your company and USEC stockholders. Actions speak louder than words.

DOE remains concerned about the impacts of the proposed commercial SWU deal on our domestic industry. As you know, the HEU Agreement was put together to balance carefully national security and energy security objectives, a balance that could be upset by the proposed commercial SWU side deal. While DOE supports the effort to move toward a new pricing mechanism with Russia for the HEU Agreement, given the potential impacts, we continue to maintain that the commercial SWU proposal deserves serious and thoughtful review.

Also, I must make clear that we do not agree with your characterization of the commercial SWU proposal as conforming to guidance from the subcommittee of the EOC on commercial SWU levels that affect the domestic industry. Further, we were surprised by your characterization of the domestic impact of the proposed commercial SWU deal as ''modest,'' since USEC recently filed objections to the introduction of even smaller amounts of SWU from another foreign country, based specifically on concerns about its impacts on the domestic market.

In my view, your meeting with me last January in no way provided a justification for early plant closure. In addition to the potential energy security impacts of such an action, I remain deeply concerned about its regional employment and economic impacts. The same management decisions that led you to notify Treasury of USEC's downgraded credit rating, and your lack of follow through on the very commitments that engendered broad support for USEC privatization in the first place, could ultimately mean ongoing efforts on USEC's part to receive open-ended federal assistance without reciprocity on significant public policy concerns.

On the development of enrichment technology, I would note that DOE has never been provided an analysis supporting the discontinuation of AVLIS, in which, as a government-owned corporation, USEC spent several hundred million dollars of public money. DOE is now being asked to start down a new path of public investment but has yet to receive a comprehensive proposal from USEC, let alone a strategic plan on its proposed path forward for centrifuge technology development.

While we do not know how you specifically intend to proceed on technology development, this is what we do know: USEC wants DOE to invest outright $50 million in centrifuge technology development; USEC wants $1.2 billion in federal loan guarantees for building a centrifuge facility; USEC wants use of DOE's GCEP facility (which would save USEC $300 million but cost DOE $150 million), and; USEC wants a gas centrifuge CRADA with DOE (which I note our organizations have been negotiating for at least two months).

USEC's list of ''wants'' from the federal government is a long one and is not backed up by a reasoned plan to justify such a significant investment of the public's money. Surely you must acknowledge that if DOE and other agencies in the federal government are going to invest substantial public funds in a private enterprise, we are owed more than piecemeal requests for federal assistance.

Many of the questions I asked in my original letter to you remain unanswered or were answered as indirectly as the avenue through which I received your response. I hope to receive more enlightening answers to my concerns and ask that the views I expressed in this letter will be shared with your board members immediately.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

BILL RICHARDSON.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REVISIONS TO ALLOCATION FOR HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KASICH. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Sec. 314 of the Congressional Budget Act, I hereby submit for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD revisions to the allocations for the House Committee on Appropriations printed in House Report 106–683.

Floor action on H.R. 4635, the bill making fiscal year 2001 appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies, removed the emergency designation from $300,000,000 in budget authority contained in the House-reported bill. Outlays flowing from the budget authority totaled $13,000,000. Accordingly, the allocations to the House Committee on Appropriations are reduced to $601,180,000,000 in budget authority and $625,735,000,000 in outlays. Budgetary aggregates become $1,529,385,000,000 in budget authority and $1,494,956,000,000 in outlays.

INDIA IS VICTIM OF PAKISTANI-EXPORTED TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of disappointment and concern that I rise tonight to respond to a misguided initiative that some of my colleagues in this House are involved with. Several Members of Congress have attached their names to a letter to President Clinton that makes some outrageous and false charges about recent events in India. I believe these claims cannot go unchallenged.

The letter repeats the malicious claims that the massacre of 36 Sikh villagers in Chittsinghpora, in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, was the work of Indian security forces. That massacre occurred on March 20, at the beginning of President Clinton's historic trip to India. I had the opportunity to take part in the President's trip, and this tragic and shocking massacre did cast a shadow over the trip. It left a deep sense of sadness among all of us in the American delegation and among all the people of India that we encountered. President Clinton condemned the attack in the strongest terms.

Less than a week after the attack, Indian investigating agencies in Jammu and Kashmir made an arrest in the case, apprehending one Yakub Wagey, a terrorist belonging to the Hizbul-Mujahideen. Mr. Wagey, a resident of Chittsinghpora, revealed that the massacre was the work of a group of 16 to 17 terrorists, including six militants of Hizbul-Mujahideen and 11 to 12 foreign mercenaries owing allegiance to Lashkar-e-Toiba, the LeT. Both of these terrorist organizations are on the long list of terrorist organizations that receive support from Pakistan.

This terrible incident was the first large-scale attack against the Sikh community in Jammu and Kashmir, but it is consistent with the ongoing terrorist campaign that has claimed the lives of thousands of peaceful civilians in that state. This terrorist campaign has repeatedly and convincingly been linked to elements operating within Pakistan, often with the direct or indirect support of Pakistan's government.

As I discussed in this Chamber earlier this week, the Pakistani-supported terrorist campaign has ethically cleansed Jammu and Kashmir of its indigenous Hindu community, the Kashmiri Pandits.

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The terrorists have also sought to clear out members of other Muslim sects or those Muslims who cooperate with the lawful Indian authorities of the state. And now with this incident, the ethic cleansing campaign has turned on the Sikhs.

It is no coincidence that this massacre took place during President Clinton's visit to South Asia. I believe that these terrorist groups and their supporters in Pakistan wanted an incident that would draw attention to the Kashmir issue. Pakistan has been seeking to internationalize this conflict for years. What better time to perpetrate a high-profile atrocity like this then when the President of the United States is in the region with all the attendant diplomatic and media attention that such a visit brings with it.

What makes the claim that India was behind the massacre all the more absurd, I mean this is why it is absurd. At a time when India was before the world stage, what possible motive would there be for such an ugly incident to detract from all the positive publicity India was seeking to generate. It does not make any sense.

Mr. Speaker, this allegation really makes no sense at all when we look at the record of the two South Asian neighbors, India and Pakistan. India is a secular, pluralistic democracy that seeks to promote civil and human rights for all of its many ethnic, linguistic and religious communities. Pakistan is a military dictatorship that has a long record of fomenting instability and violence in Kashmir while denying human and civil rights at home.

One of the motives behind trying to link India to the attack against the Sikh villagers in Kashmir is to try to generate separatist sentiment against India's Sikh community. Indeed, I understand that an organization based here in this country that seeks to promote the Sikh separatist cause has lent its support to the letter circulating on Capitol Hill.

The reality is that, in India's State of Punjab, where the Sikhs constitute a majority, Mr. Prakash Singh Badal, who happens to be a Sikh, has been elected as Chief Minister of the State. The predominantly Sikh Akali Dal Party holds a majority in the State's legislature. The State government has set up the Human Rights Commission whose primary purpose is to investigate claims of human rights abuses by government security forces, just as India has done on the national level.

The democratically-elected Sikh political leaders in Punjab are not buying the claims of Indian Government responsibility for the atrocity that took place in Kashmir this past March.

Mr. Speaker, finally I want to say, India's Democratically-elected leaders will admit that there have been abuses by security forces. There is also violence between various religious and ethnic communities which is not officially condoned. In both cases, India has sought to crack down on these kinds of acts in an honest and effective way that makes it a model among the nations of Asia.

The call by some of my colleagues to declare India a terrorist nation is completely unreasonable. Indeed, following from the President's recent trip, cooperation against terrorism is one of the major areas of U.S.-India bilateral cooperation.

The idea of cutting off aid to India, an approach that has repeatedly been tried and failed here in the House, is even more absurd, seeking to send a message by cutting vital nutrition and health care.

TRIBUTE TO DR. WALTER D. ''WALLY'' WILKERSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TOOMEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to pay tribute to one of my constituents, a very special man, Dr. Walter Wilkerson, Jr., who, on June 24 of this year, will be stepping down as Chairman of the Texas Board of Health.

Dr. Wilkerson was appointed to the Texas Board on June 7, 1995; and shortly after that, on September 1, Texas Governor George W. Bush named him chairman. We are fortunate in Texas that, although his term as chairman is ending, he will continue to serve on the Board of Health.

As chairman, Dr. Eriksson took on the health care needs of every single Texan, building an awareness that public health is for everyone, every day, and everywhere. He has been a listener who steered his board and agency to consensus on almost every difficult issue that came before it.

Furthermore, under his tenure, the Texas Board of Health has had a strong relationship with the Texas Medical Association, made significant strides in developing a partnership with local health directors and local health policymakers. He has made a significant effort to maintain an open and respectful dialog with the business communities. And all of Dr. Wilkerson's efforts have been designed at building a cooperative environment for the betterment of the health of every Texan.

At the beginning of his tenure on the Board, he retired from private practice in Conroe, Texas, to be joined in 1958 after graduating from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in 1955. In 1951, Dr. Wilkerson received his Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University, which I am proud to represent.

While a practicing physician in Conroe, though he sought no honors, Dr. Wilkerson was named Outstanding Citizen of Montgomery County in 1974 and in 1991 was the Texas Family Physician of the Year and named by the Texas Academy of Family Physicians.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Wilkerson is a man of integrity and dedication; and Texas is a much better place because he agreed to answer the Governor's call and provide us leadership. I am honored to call him my friend.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY IS OUT OF CONTROL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to call attention to the fact