

It would tell him that his arch-enemy, and Mr. Speaker, I consider it a badge of honor that the likes of Fidel Castro considers us his enemy, has capitulated.

And it would tell the rest of the world that we have abdicated our leadership role in the world.

Some in America say, "everybody else is doing it, so why not us"? "An embargo can't be effective if others won't join in."

Well, Mr. Speaker, copycatting the amoral, rudderless foreign policies of other nations is not leadership now, is it?

We should be exhorting, and using financial leverage, to induce other countries to join in.

That's what Helms-Burton was all about, and it is a scandal that this President won't enforce the law!

And some say, "The embargo is propping Castro up by giving him an enemy."

What a ridiculous, a historical view that is.

If the embargo helps Castro, then why does he want it lifted?

And how many times do we have to repeat the fact that when Castro first seized power, the U.S. offered him assistance? And yet he still turned on us, because he is and always has been a Communist. Communists consider America the enemy, embargo or no embargo.

And Mr. Speaker, I am tired of those who say this embargo is not working.

What is not working is engagement, the business as usual engagement that the rest of the world is conducting with Castro as we speak.

It is their trade and aid dollars that are propping up Castro.

Just as our trade and aid dollars are propping up the Communist thugs in Beijing, and Hanoi, and now North Korea.

Everywhere we look Mr. Speaker, engagement has failed to mellow Communist dictators.

It has failed to improve human rights, it has failed to create widespread business opportunities and it has failed to rein in their foreign policies.

This is in stark contrast to Ronald Reagan's hard-line, rollback policies that helped bring down the Iron Curtain in Europe.

This is the policy we need now toward Fidel Castro.

Only his removal from power can lead to true improvement in Cuba. Anything less is a charade, and we have lived through these charades before.

It is time for this administration to get serious about removing Fidel Castro from power. It is time to apply the Helms-Burton law with full vigor.

If some of our so-called friends want to prop up this dictator longer, it is time for us to tell them they can kiss the most lucrative consumer market in the world goodbye.

That will surely bring them around, as their foreign policies are so dollar-dependent.

And if not, then so be it.

Let history record America as the country that did the right thing vis-à-vis an awful dictator in the Caribbean to the bitter end.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will

appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MEXICO MAJOR SOURCE OF ILLICIT DRUGS

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

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor this afternoon to announce that chemical warfare has been declared upon the United States of America. Some of my colleagues may be wondering what I mean by this statement that chemical warfare has in fact been inflicted upon the United States, but let me tell them the rest of the story.

In the entire Gulf War with the United States, Iraq took 148 American lives in battle. Let me give Members some statistics from 1992 to 1994 in the loss of life in the chemical war that has been declared upon the United States of America. There have been drug deaths during that period of time of 38,882. If we had the most up-to-date statistics through last year, we are probably looking at 60,000 Americans who have lost their lives because of drugs entering this country.

I ask my colleagues where most of the drugs are coming into this country. What is the source of the chemical warfare that has been declared upon our Nation? I tell them today that it is Mexico. The DEA confirms it. Everyone who has testified before my National Security subcommittee that oversees our policy on the narcotics issue has confirmed it, that Mexico is the source of illegal chemicals, drugs, coming into this country.

Many of those thousands of lives that have been lost in this chemical war are young people. Listen to the quantities of narcotics that are coming in from Mexico, and this administration and this President recently certified Mexico as compliant with attempts to eradicate drugs. Do Members know the source of 50 to 70 percent of the cocaine transiting into the United States, into their community? It is Mexico. Do they know where 30 percent of the heroin entering the United States into their community is coming from? It is coming from Mexico. Do they know where 70 percent of the foreign-grown marijuana which is produced and transited to the United States is coming from? It is Mexico.

The certification law that we have on the books is a simple law. It says our State Department and our President must confirm that a country is cooperating to eliminate drug trafficking and drug production. In fact, Mexico is not doing that. They are being certified to get benefits from the United States. They get benefits for foreign aid, for financial assistance, for military assistance and trade benefits. This is a simple certification process which Mexico has not complied with.

What has been their response? Their response has been to launch a chemical

war on the children and the people of the United States. The loss of life, the loss of our children's futures, the loss of civility and civil conduct in our community has been disrupted.

We have 2 million Americans behind bars. Our people are sleeping at night behind bars. Our elderly are confined to their homes behind bars, because 70 percent of those who are committing crimes are there because of a drug-related offense or drug abuse.

I submit that 50 percent of the hard drugs, and these are not my statistics, this is the DEA, the FBI and other Federal agencies confirm that 50 percent of the hard drugs, these chemical weapons, are coming into the United States from Mexico.

I urge my colleagues, all of my colleagues, to join me with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) in cosponsoring House Joint Resolution 114. Let us end this chemical warfare that has been declared upon our Nation and upon our children. I ask my colleagues to join us and cosponsor House Joint Resolution 114 and let us make a difference in the lives of our children and in the lives of our community and stop the drug warfare on this country.

CHILD CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Women's History Month and would like to call special attention to the current status of child care in our country.

Today more parents work outside the home than ever before. More than 75 percent of mothers with children ages 6 through 17 are in the work force. More than 60 percent of mothers with children under the age of 6 are employed in addition. Changes in the welfare system set such strict work requirements, which means that parents must find jobs or leave public assistance.

Child care costs can be prohibitive. Consequently it was a reason why many mothers did not work. Currently full-day child care can cost between \$4,000 and \$10,000 per year. The expense of child care becomes even a greater issue of concern once we consider the fact that nearly half of the parents with young children earn \$35,000 a year or less. Even families with two working parents working full-time at minimum wage, the parents earn only about \$21,000 annually, and that is gross income.

The importance of quality child care cannot be ignored. Research shows that good child care programs can affect children's long-term success in school and their learning potential as adults. In addition, brain development research shows that an adverse environment in the first 3 years of life can compromise a child's brain function and overall development. With all of

this information, it is troubling that according to recent studies, the quality of child care is rated mediocre to poor.

In many cases, parents are able to use relatives. But such care is not always available or preferable. Often there are no relatives living close by, or nearby relatives are working or are unable to meet the demands of a caregiver for a young child.

In recent times, businesses have made efforts to help their employees find and pay for child care, but such help is still scarce. Businesses account for only 1 percent of the total child care expenditures.

In January, President Clinton announced a historic initiative to improve child care for America's working families. The initiative proposes \$21.7 billion over 5 years for child care to help working families pay for child care, build a good supply of after-school programs, improve safety and quality of care and promote early learning. This initiative is an important start to our providing new resources and building on existing State efforts to address child care trends.

Now it is up to my colleagues here in Congress to strengthen this proposal and enact a child care package that ensures quality, affordable child care for every family who needs it. Last month the First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, visited a child care center in my district. During her tour of the center, Mrs. Clinton was able to learn more about the relationship-centered child care model. This nationally acclaimed model of care employs the unique concept of small, family groups of children who are with the same teacher over time so that they grow with better reading, math, language and interpersonal skills.

I believe that relationship-centered child care has the potential to be the benchmark for child care in America. It is my hope that the model program will expand to include more of America's children and families.

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STOP PLAYING POLITICS WITH SENIORS' HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Lucille Harris lives in the First District of Georgia. She is 69 years old. For the past 3 years she has been somewhat worried about her health care, affectionately known as Medicare, because she knows that in April of 1995 the Medicare trustees said Medicare is going bankrupt and that Congress needed to act to preserve and protect it. We tried for many years to protect it and preserve it; but, unfortunately, politics got in the way.

Then, last year, we finally came up with a bipartisan solution which the House passed, the Senate passed and

the President signed into law. We did do some good Medicare reform. We gave our seniors a choice of plans. We cut fraud and abuse. We increased spending from \$5,000 to \$7,000 per person.

In addition to that, we said that States are required to cover people who have fallen through the cracks; to come up with something for people who were not Medicare-eligible, like the 51-year-old man from Vermont that I talked to last night; people who cannot get coverage through the standard health care market. The bill required that States come up with plans, each State, to protect these people.

The second thing that it did along that line is it said that we would set up a bipartisan Medicare committee; and the bipartisan committee, which is chaired by a Clinton-appointed Democrat Senator, would address the long-term solvency needs of Medicare as more and more baby boomers retire and use this coverage. We decided it was more important to protect Medicare for the next generation, not just the next election.

So, Mr. Speaker, having made this great and difficult bipartisan progress, why is it that the President has now ignored that legislation and his own commission? Why is he willing to risk Medicare because of election year politics? Why is it that if it is profitable to lower Medicare eligibility and it does not cost the system, why is it the private sector is not already providing that coverage?

Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the President is again playing politics with our seniors' very important health care plan. We need to protect and to preserve it. We do not need to play politics with it. Medicare deserves bipartisan support. People like Mrs. Harris and millions and millions of Americans, perhaps one's mother or father or grandparents, they deserve better.

Mr. President, do not monkey around with our seniors' health care. Let us continue to work on a bipartisan basis to protect Medicare. Let us see what the bipartisan commission with the President's chairman has to say before we go changing the plan and incurring unnecessary risks to our seniors' health care plan.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Speaker and not to the President.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. DELAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE AMERICA AFTER SCHOOL ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, experts estimate that nearly 5 million school-age children in the United States spend time without adult supervision during a typical week. Too many of these unsupervised children hang out on the street, exposed to drugs and crime, or sit at home with only the television set for company. I recently introduced the America After School Act, H.R. 3400, to expand high quality after-school programs for 5- to 15-year-old students to give these kids a safe place to go when the school day ends.

In 64% of families with children under 18, both parents work. A recent study showed that when children were unsupervised for long periods of time early in life, they were more likely to display poor behavior adjustment and academic performance as early as the sixth grade. Clearly, we no longer live in the time of Ward and June Cleaver. Young people today need productive, supervised activities for the periods when they are not in school.

In my district of Rochester, NY, Henry Lomb School #20 has an after school program that serves about 25 students. They could easily triple this number, based on their waiting list and space availability, if only they had enough funding to increase their staff to meet the one-to-ten staff-student requirement.

Meanwhile, Adlai Stevenson School #29 has an after school program that has enough funding to serve sixteen of its students. This is a great start. However, the school has four hundred students. This is another example of the great need to expand after school child care in this country.

Other schools in my district report the need for increased funding for transportation, staff, and supplies to provide supervision and constructive activities for school-age children when the school day ends. Because of the lack of funding, schools do not have the resources to provide after-school care for all students every day. They ration the care—two or three days per week for each student. However, a study in my district showed that school attendance was higher on days when students knew they had their after-school program at