

ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of this House most disturbing developments in Russia. Anti-Semitism rears its ugly head in public statements blaming Russia's current problems on the "Yids"—statements not being made by neo-Nazi organizations or fringe groups, but rather by members of the Russian parliament.

In November and December of last year, two prominent Communist Party members of the Duma, Albert Makashov and Viktor Ilyukhin, blamed "the Yids" and president Yeltsin's "Jewish Entourage" for Russia's current problems. Duma Defense Committee Member Ilyukhin alleged that President Yeltsin had committed "genocide against the Russian people" with the help of Jewish advisors. Equally as disturbing is the fact that the chairman of the Communist Party did not rebuke his party members for their actions, rather, he made excuses for their remarks.

Sadly, Mr. Makashov continues on his rabid crusade. I have received reports that on February 22, while addressing a meeting of Cosacks in the southern Rostov region of Russia, Duma Deputy Makashov declared that an organization which he heads, the Movement in Support of the Army, was really the "Movement against the Yids," and called Jews "impudent and repulsive people."

In December of last year, CURT WELDON, myself and others met with our colleagues in the Duma and expressed our great dismay about the anti-Semitic statements. In fact, many members of the Duma, as well as President Yeltsin, have condemned Makashov and Ilyukhin. Unfortunately, many Members have simply made excuses. What kind of message does this send to the Russian people at such a critical time?

Mr. Speaker, these comments by leaders of the Russian people are despicable and must be condemned. I have joined with Chairman CHRIS SMITH and other members of the Helsinki Commission in introducing H. Con. Res. 37, which does exactly that, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, looking for scapegoats will not resolve Russia's current crisis. More importantly, the promotion of hatred, anti-Semitism and xenophobia will not further the development of a peaceful, just and prosperous society for the Russian people. Democracy is not built on racism.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BEACH BILL

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Beaches Environmental Assessment, Closure, and Health Act of 1999—also known as the BEACH bill.

The BEACH bill is straightforward. It seeks to establish uniform criteria for monitoring the quality of our coastal recreation waters, and to

require sufficient notification of the public when those waters pose a risk to human health. As my colleagues know, I have championed this legislation for years, continuing the efforts of our friend Bill Hughes.

In the 105th Congress, the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing on the BEACH bill. During that hearing, Gary Sirota of the Surf Rider Foundation remarked that as a life-long surfer he is often asked "What will you do if you see a shark." Mr. Sirota said that he always replies "It's the ones you don't see that you have to worry about." This exchange provides an excellent analogy to the problem of contaminants in our coastal recreation waters. Families visiting the sand and surf cannot see toxic dangers that might be lurking in the water. And what they can't see can hurt them.

Beach-going is part of our national identity. For those of us who live in coastal states, a trip to "the Shore" is a yearly summer event. Almost every American can remember a family pilgrimage to the beach—escaping the oppressing heat with a swim in the ocean. Coastal tourism is also big business. Members from coastal districts may be surprised to know that beaches are the number one tourist destination in the United States, receiving more visitors than even our national parks and recreation areas. Every summer, over 180 million Americans spend \$74 million during visits to ocean, bay, and Great Lakes beaches.

Both novice and experienced beachgoers are familiar with jellyfish and understand the need to avoid their painful stings. Unfortunately, other hazards, such as disease-causing bacteria, cannot be so easily avoided. These microorganisms can carry gastroenteritis and dysentery, which may bring on symptoms including fever, vomiting, nausea, headache and stomachache. The consequences may be even more severe for children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems.

Currently, there is no national beach monitoring program and no uniform standards for beach closings and advisories. According to the National Resources Defense Council's July 1998 report "Testing the Waters," only eight states comprehensively monitor their beaches. Even though the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recommended water testing standards, the lion's share of our states do not monitor their beaches on a comprehensive basis. EPA's BEACH program, while a step in the right direction, does not actually require monitoring and notification. I commend EPA's efforts to address this important issue. In the past, the agency has supported the BEACH bill to give it the authority it needs to make testing and notification mandatory.

People have the right to know if the waters that they and their families swim in are safe. That is why I continue to champion the BEACH bill to establish uniform standards and procedures for beach water testing, monitoring, and public notification. When standards are not met, beaches should be closed and potential bathers should be adequately alerted. The sheer volume of visitors to our beaches dictates that our coastal recreation waters should be tested regularly, and that beachgoers should be notified of any potential health risks. Establishing uniform criteria for testing and notification is responsible economic and public policy.

The BEACH bill requires EPA to set minimum water quality standards to protect the public from disease-causing pathogens in coastal recreational waters and to establish procedures for monitoring coastal recreational waters. It requires states to alert the public whenever beach water quality standards are violated.

Mr. Speaker, the BEACH bill had bipartisan support in the 105th Congress, and I look forward to working again with my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to make the public protections provided by this bill a reality.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION ACT

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing the Medicare Preservation and Restoration Act, which will repeal the Medicare private contracting provision of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and clarify that private contracts are prohibited under Medicare for Medicare-covered services.

The legislation is simple. First, it requires that providers submit a Medicare claim whenever Medicare-covered services are provided to a beneficiary. Second, it requires that a provider, when treating a Medicare beneficiary, charge no more than Medicare's balance billing limits allow. My legislation will settle the issue of private contracting once and for all. It will explicitly prohibit providers from circumventing the Medicare system, preserve beneficiary billing protections, and restore the promise of quality and affordable health care for every American senior citizen. My legislation has been endorsed by the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare and the National Council of Senior Citizens. The Medicare Rights Center also has spoken out in opposition to Medicare private contracts.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is the only way we can continue to guarantee every senior citizen in America the right to affordable health care under Medicare. The private contracts allowed under the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 represent a dangerous first-step towards dismantling the Medicare program as a whole. They are ill-conceived and unnecessary. These contracts will allow doctors to disregard Medicare's most important protection—balanced billing limits. These limits guarantee that all seniors regardless of their income or their health status will have access to affordable health care. Private contracts destroy these protections and allow doctors the ability to decide patient-by-patient which senior will be forced to pay more than Medicare's set rates for needed medical care.

During debate on the budget bill in 1997, Senator JON KYL of Arizona included this private contracting provision to allow any doctor to treat Medicare patients outside of the program and bill the patient privately at any rate the doctor sets. During negotiations on the final package, the provision was altered to protect beneficiaries and to prevent physicians from moving back and forth between billing some patients privately and others through the

Medicare program. The final bill stated that if the doctor wanted to treat seniors under private contract, then the doctor had to forgo Medicare participation entirely for two years.

This two-year restriction was designed to protect the program against fraud, guard against a massive exit of physicians from the Medicare program, and ensure that doctors would not create a two-tiered Medicare system—one waiting room for private pay patients who are served first, and one for non-private Medicare beneficiaries who are served last. In the 105th Congress, attempts were made to remove this two-year limitation and give doctors the right to decide not only patient-by-patient, but procedure-by-procedure, which services will be billed through Medicare and which will be billed privately. Fortunately, we have been successful so far in thwarting these efforts, but the campaign of misinformation continues.

Many of you have probably seen the mailings certain interest groups have been sending to our senior constituents in an attempt to distort the facts about private contracts. These mailings are falsely scaring seniors and attempting to trick them into giving up Medicare's balanced billing protections.

Let's retain Medicare's balanced billing limits for all Medicare beneficiaries by eliminating these dangerous private contracts. These billing limits are the only way we can guarantee that all seniors receive the health care they need at reasonable and fair prices.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Medicare Preservation and Restoration Act—a sensible and responsible proposal which will guarantee Medicare for all elderly Americans.

REQUIRING A TWO-THIRDS VOTE
ON FAST TRACK

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States of America states: "Congress has the power to lay and collect . . . Duties and to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations." Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution of the United States of America states: "Treaties with foreign government shall be confirmed by a two-thirds majority of the Senate." However, over time, Congress has given away its Constitutional authority and responsibilities to the Executive Branch.

Take fast-track authority, for example. Fast-track proponents claim that this legislative authority is needed to expedite the negotiating process as well as consideration of the implementing legislation through the establishment of deadlines for various legislative stages, a prohibition on amendments, a limit on debate, and a requirement for an up-or-down vote. There are several myths and untruths associated with this argument, however.

The big myth is that the President needs fast track to negotiate trade agreements. The President already has the Constitutional power to conduct foreign affairs and negotiate international trade agreements. However, because Congress must approve any changes to U.S. law that result from trade agreements, fast track proponents purport that fast track is

needed to strengthen the President's stance during trade negotiations and expedite consideration of the implementing legislation. The truth is, the President needs fast track so he can ignore the opinions of the vast majority of Members of Congress.

Fast-track authority, in theory, protects Congress from the delegation of Constitutional authority through the notifications and consultations the President must provide to Congress prior to, and during, trade negotiations. In practice, however, Congress has handed over its Constitutional powers on a silver platter. The President has ignored the directives of large minorities in Congress regarding environmental protection, labor standards and American jobs, then bought the votes of a few with personal promises to gain the simple majority needed for passage.

The fact is, the archetype fast-track legislative authority was designed to give the President additional authority to negotiate customs classifications only. Experience has shown item-by-item consideration of the tariff schedule by Congress to be an arduous process, so the President was granted the ability to negotiate the small points. The bottom line is, the original fast-track was never intended to grant the President the broad authority over a vast array of nontariff issues he enjoys today.

Another myth claims that fast-track process is needed not only to negotiate, but to simply get the trade agreement through the legislative process. Converse to popular thought, however, the fast-track procedure has rarely been implemented. Over 200 trade agreements have been enacted without fast track authority while only five trade agreements have been enacted under this procedure.

Clearly, fast-track authority has digressed from the original intentions of Congress. The President now has broad authority, while Members' hands are tied. Consultations are with a privileged few and merely a formality for the body as a whole. I have introduced legislation to authenticate fast-track legislative authority.

The Trade Act of 1974 recognizes the fast track mechanism as an "exercise of the rule-making power of the House . . ." and maintains the "constitutional right of either House to change its rules at any time, in the same manner and to the same extent as any other rule of the House." In other words, the House may change its rules as it sees fit. The erosion of fast-track legislative intent is more than enough reason for the House to change its rules.

The Traficant resolution amends the rules of the House to require a two-thirds majority vote on any legislation that either authorizes the President to enter into a trade agreement that is implemented pursuant to fast-track procedures, or that implements a trade agreement pursuant to such procedures. By requiring a two-thirds vote rather than a simple majority, the President will no longer be able to ignore the concerns of the vast majority of Members during negotiations and sweeten the agreement later. Trade agreements will take a consensus of both the legislative and executive branches to negotiate—a constitutionally sound solution of which the Founding Fathers would be proud. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

TRIBUTE TO GEN. CHARLES
KRULAK

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to General Charles Krulak who is preparing for retirement from the Marine Corps. For the last four years General Krulak has been the commandant of the Marine Corps.

For 70 years, a member of the Krulak family has worn the eagle, globe and anchor. General Charles Krulak continued the tradition set by his father, when he graduated from the Naval Academy in 1964. General Krulak has spent a total of 35 years in the Corps which culminated on July 30, 1995 when he became the 31st commandant.

Mr. Speaker, General Krulak is a shining example of what is best about the Marine Corps. I agree with the former Secretary of Education, William Bennett, when he said, "The Marine Corps is the only institution in the nation that holds to its standards." General Charles Krulak epitomized the respect many of my colleagues here in Congress have for the men and women who serve our nation.

It has been both an honor and a pleasure to work alongside General Krulak in addressing the needs of our Nation's finest soldiers. I would like to thank him for his hard work and his dedication to the Corps in which he has proudly served. I would also like to wish him continued success and happiness in his retirement.

THE "AT HOME WITH ARTS."
PROGRAM

HON. STEVE R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a project in my home state of New Jersey that deserves recognition: the "At Home with the ARTS" program. This acronym stands for Alzheimer's Recognition Therapy Service (ARTS). A problem in our society today is the increased presence of Alzheimer's disease. Thanks to a three-year \$217,000 grant by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation of Princeton, the ARTS program has expanded to assist more families with the crippling effects of Alzheimer's Disease.

The "At Home with the ARTS" program serves two purposes. First, it helps to improve the quality of life for the individual with Alzheimer's, and secondly, it helps the caregiver cope with the effects of the disease. The program assigns a recreational therapist, who is trained in recreation, music, art, or activity therapy, to a patient with Alzheimer's. The therapist and the patient meet once a week for 12 weeks, during which time the therapist tries a variety of activities to see which is best at securing the patient's attention. The most challenging aspect of this program is finding what activity interests the patient.

This program has been successful in helping people such as Beverly Cohen of Teaneck, whose mother is suffering from Alzheimer's. Since her mother was hard of hearing and did not enjoy watching television, Ms.