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House of Representatives

The House met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. GRANGER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 11, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KAY GRANGER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) for 5 minutes.

IN RECOGNITION OF LIFE AND SERVICE OF ABNER WOODRUFF SIBAL

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of the life and service of Abner Woodruff Sibal, former U.S. Representative from the Fourth District of Connecticut, the district I now represent.

Abner Sibal died this past January at age 78, leaving behind a large family and an honorable legacy. He would be celebrating his 79th birthday today. Mr. Sibal was a member of this body from 1961 to 1965 in the 87th and 88th Congresses. While here, he served on the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee and its Subcommittee on Transportation and Aeronautics.

Mr. Sibal was born in Ridgewood, New York, and grew up in Connecticut. He graduated from Norwalk High School in 1938 and Wesleyan University in 1943, entered the U.S. Army after graduation from college, and served in both the European and Pacific theaters during World War II.

When Mr. Sibal was discharged as a first lieutenant in September 1946, he went on to St. John's Law School, where he received his law degree in 1949. Abner Sibal was admitted to the Connecticut bar in 1949 and the Federal bar in 1965. He led an impressive career both before and after his time as a public servant.

From 1951 to 1955, he served as a prosecuting attorney in the city of Norwalk. Mr. Sibal served as a member of the Connecticut State senate from 1956 to 1960. He sat as a member of the Corporation Counsel of Norwalk from 1959 to 1960. He rose to the position of Republican minority leader for the last 2 years of his State senate tenure.

His hard work and leadership earned him the position of chairman of the Connecticut Commission on Corporate Law in 1959.

In addition, he was a delegate to each Connecticut Republican State Convention from 1952 through 1968 and a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1964.

After his years in Congress, Mr. Sibal practiced law in Washington before being appointed general counsel of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission by Gerald Ford in 1975. In 1979, he resumed his private law practice, joining the firm of Farmer, Wells, McGuinn & Sibal.

On a personal note, I was entering high school when Mr. Sibal became the Congressman of my Connecticut district. It was during this time I started to really become politically aware. I was learning about Congress and who my elected officials were.

Abner Sibal stands out in my mind as having been a leader I respected, admired, and wanted to emulate. Abner Woodruff Sibal is remembered as an honorable man, a hard working public servant, and an able legislator.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE FOR MORE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, national security is a powerful concept; and in the name of national security, we have done extraordinary things, perhaps none more momentous than the victory during World War II and the huge mobilization that it required.

At times we use national security to cover up things perhaps we should not do, some tragic mistakes abroad, not being truthful with the American public. Here at home, we have occasionally used national security to rationalize good things we probably should have done anyway. Our interstate highway system was done in the name, in part, of national defense, or the student defense loans in the 1960s and 1970s, or research that led to the Internet.

Today there is no greater threat to our national security worldwide than is posed by pollution, poverty, disease, and the unrest and misery that they produce.

We have serious environmental problems here at home that are the terrible hidden legacy of 60 years of our defense activities, among them, in my own Pacific Northwest, the terrible pollution at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, or

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.
Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

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Rocky Flats in Colorado, chemical weapons, toxic waste.

One of the most powerful ways to protect the environment and make community livable is for the Federal Government to lead by example, whether it is maybe requiring a post office to obey local land use laws and zoning codes and planning regulations, or have the GSA lead by example, being an exemplary landlord in our communities around the country, or maybe having the Federal Flood Insurance program reformed so it does not subsidize people living in places where God has repeatedly shown that he does not want them.

But the biggest, richest, and most visible opportunity to lead by example is to be found in the Department of Defense, whether, as I mentioned on this floor before, dealing with model ways to environmentally sensitively dismantle ships, or look at the opportunities posed by base closings around the country.

Our population is going to double in the course of this century. There are many great examples of over the long haul how, done right, base closings can help save the taxpayers' money and revitalize communities, not devastate them.

Army facilities nationwide are rich in historic buildings, structures, and districts. These historic properties potentially represent a significant and valuable heritage not just for the Army but for the Nation and particularly for the community in which they are located.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has helped develop a methodology for this and has helped launch more than 1,500 commercial districts around the country to be revitalized. There is a tremendous potential for them to work with us nationally with military projects.

Look at Fort Ord, with 28,000 acres, the largest military base closed in the country. It is now the campus for California State University at Monterey Bay. More than 1,100 new jobs have been created already. Seven thousand acres have been turned over to the Bureau of Land Management to be preserved as open space.

Unfortunately, since the base was closed in 1993, the housing has not yet been returned to the community for reuse due to burdensome bureaucratic requirements and, even though some progress has been made in the course of this last year, not before much damage has been caused to the vacant housing and loss to the community.

We could speak further about the opportunities before embarking upon new projects. I think it is important for the military to deal with the legacy of the problems we have now.

One such legacy of military operations is the threat left by bombs and shells that did not go off when fired for testing and training. Commonly we are talking about 5 or 10 percent. It is estimated it is going to cost $15 billion to remove this unexploded ordnance in the United States alone. At the rate of $150 million that we are spending a year now, it is going to take over 100 years to deal with this problem.

The budget for environmental security in the Department of Defense is $4 billion out of a total budget of $305 billion. It is time for us to take a step back to make sure that, if we can in the name of politics give the military money it cannot afford for projects that it does not need or want, then in the name of environment and livable communities, we can pay the bill and do it right.

This is a special opportunity for the Department of Defense and Congress. We should not take shortcuts with the environment in the name of national security. Instead, the Department of Defense should lead by example for more livable communities.

GENE TECHNOLOGY HAS COME OF AGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, gene technology has come of age. It is referred to under different names: genetic engineering, gene splicing, bioengineering, recombinant DNA. No matter the name used to describe it, this technology represents the latest tool in a continuum of techniques researchers have developed and adopted over the centuries.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Basic Research of the Committee on Science, we have spent the last 14 months studying this new biotechnology of genetically modifying products. We will be releasing probably the most inclusive and detailed report this coming Thursday at 2:30 at a press conference in Room 2320, the Committee on Science room. It is a summation of the findings of a series of three hearings held during the first session of the 106th Congress by our Subcommittee on Basic Research entitled, ''Plant Genome Science: From the Lab to the Field to the Market.'' Additionally we have talked to and counciled with many other world experts on this subject.

What is truly powerful about this technology is that it allows individual, well-characterized genes to be transferred from one organism to another, thus increasing the genetic diversity available to improve important commercial crop plants as well as pharmaceuticals.

The potential benefits to mankind are limited only by the resourcefulness of our scientists. Biotechnology has been used safely for many years to develop new and useful products used in a variety of industry.

More than a thousand products have now been approved for marketing, and many more are being developed. These products include dozens of therapeutics, including human insulin for diabetics, growth factors used in bone marrow transplants, products for treating heart attacks, hundreds of diagnostic tests for AIDS and hepatitis, and other infectious agents, enzymes used in food production, such as those used for the production of cheese and other products.

And this is just the beginning. In agriculture, new plant varieties created with these techniques will offer foods with better taste, more nutrition, longer shelf life, and farmers will be able to grow these improved varieties more efficiently, leading to lower costs for consumers and greater environmental protection.

Soybeans that produce high oleic oil containing less saturated fat and less processing; cotton plants that fight pests or produce naturally colored cotton, reducing the need for chemical dies; bananas that deliver vaccines to fight enteric diseases are just a few examples of what is in store.

While millions of lives all over the world have been protected and enriched by biotechnology, its application to agriculture has been coming under attack by well-financed activist groups. The controversy they have generated revolves around probably three basic questions as I have defined them: one, are agricultural biotechnology and classical breeding methods conceptually the same? Two, are these products safe to eat? And three, are they safe for the environment?

The testimony and other material made available to the subcommittee as we have met with leading scientists throughout the world lead me to conclude that the answer to all three questions is a resounding yes.

In fact, modern biotechnology is so precise and so much more is known about the changes being made that plants produced using this technology may even be safer than traditionally bred plants.

This report contains background information on the development and oversight of plant genetics and agricultural biotechnology, a summary of the subcommittee hearings, and my findings and recommendations based on these hearings. I hope that it will be of use to all of the scientists and researchers in America as we examine this important issue of biotechnology.

The human genome effort and the plant genome effort with the arabidopsis thaliana is being completed well ahead of schedule and will have a tremendous impact on our lives and the lives of people all over the world. We need to move ahead, but we need to make sure that scientific facts and not rumors and scare tactics are the basis of information to the general public. Politically motivated misinformation can slow down the advancement of a science that has so much potential for mankind.