

Shall we leave it in California? Shall we leave it in South Carolina?

The President mentions the importance of nonproliferation goals that a central repository will meet and that the nonproliferation for these shipments of foreign spent fuel is a good one. We do not want terrorists or rogue governments coming into possession of these weapons, but let's look at reality.

For example, when the program started in 1996, we were faced with transporting spent fuel from a reactor in Bogota, Colombia. The spent fuel was moved from the reactor, loaded into a shipping cask, placed into a semitractor trailer truck for shipment, and then what did we do? We went to the Russians.

We chartered a Russian Antonov AN-124 airplane large enough to carry tanks and helicopters and drove the semi aboard the plane and flew the shipment to the seaport city of Cartagena and placed it on a freighter. It then joined spent fuel already loaded from Chile. It was delivered to the Charleston weapons center where it was loaded on railcars to Savannah River.

This was the Department of Energy acting to pull out all stops, sparing no expense to complete this important shipment. Administration policy then is to take nuclear fuel from foreign nations flying, shipping, and trucking all over the world and storing it at military facilities, and even building interim storage sites in the United States, but this administration will not address the waste generated by the domestic nuclear power industry; it will not reconcile a policy to address this in a responsible manner. It would rather leave it at the 40 States in 80 sites. That is what this administration proposes to do. It is unconscionable at a time when we are looking to the nuclear energy for roughly 20 percent of the power generated in the United States, and this administration does not accept its responsibility. That is why I urge all my colleagues to look at this realistically: Do we want the waste concentrated where it is in temporary storage, or do we want it in a permanent repository where we have already expended some \$7 billion to place it?

I believe my time has expired or is about to expire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has a minute and a half left.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. In a minute and a half, I note the Senator from California showed a beautiful picture of Death Valley. I will show you a beautiful picture of the proposed location of the repository out at Yucca Mountain.

This is it. It is not very pretty. We have had 800 nuclear weapons tests in the last 50 years. That is the area we are talking about.

Some suggest, why are we talking about this when we have other more important things to do? This is an obligation of this Congress. The House has

acted. It is up to the Senate to act now and move this legislation over the President's veto.

This is important. This costs the taxpayers money. We have an obligation. Furthermore, this is the pending business of the Senate at this time because the House voted. It went down to the President. The President vetoed it. It is the standing order of business before this body. So it is most appropriate that we resolve this matter today.

I encourage my colleagues this afternoon to vote to override the President's veto.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. BRYAN. In my 12 years in the Senate, I have to say this is the most unfocused debate we have had on this issue. We are not here today to debate whether or not nuclear power is good or bad for the Nation. We are not here today to debate whether interim storage is an appropriate response. We are not here to debate whether or not France has no pollution, as some have suggested, because they have nuclear reactors. I must say, parenthetically, I am not aware that France propels its automotive fleet through nuclear power. But perhaps we can discuss that at some other date.

Very simply, what we are here to talk about is a piece of legislation which the President of the United States has courageously vetoed that would alter the health and safety standards for the Nation. That is the issue. Every American—regardless of his or her politics—should be proud of the President's position.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have taunted our colleagues who support the position that my colleague from Nevada and I have been advocating, as well as the distinguished Senators from California and New Mexico today, saying: What are you going to tell your constituents when you return home? The answer that every Member can give, with a straight face, in responding to that question is: Look, I voted to uphold the health and safety standards of the Nation. I was not prepared for any industry, even though I might support nuclear power, to reduce the health and safety standards for millions of people in this country. I will not do it for nuclear power. I will not do it for anything else. I will not be beholden to a special interest. I am voting in the best interests of my constituents and the Nation in upholding public health and safety.

That is the answer. That is the most powerful response that can be given.

May I inquire how much time I have left.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Twelve seconds.

Mr. BRYAN. Twelve seconds.

I yield the remainder of my time.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30

p.m. having arrived, the Senate will be in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:33 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:16 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. INHOFE).

#### NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2000—VETO—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 2:15 p.m. having arrived, there will now be 30 minutes under the control of the Senators from Nevada, Mr. REID and Mr. BRYAN, and 30 minutes under the control of the Senator from Alaska, Mr. MURKOWSKI.

Who seeks time?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I yield 6 minutes to my good friend, the Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I have been around this place a long time and a lot of things have happened that I can't quite understand, one of them being the veto of this measure by the President of the United States. If you stop and think, you see that it is purely political. For that reason, I hope this Senate will not hesitate to vote to override the veto of S. 1287, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000.

The President's decision to veto this vital legislation is just further evidence that the Clinton administration has no energy policy, except the appeasement of the doctrinaire environmentalists.

Because of the President's purely political veto, the United States will continue to have spent fuel assemblies piling up at all nuclear generation facilities throughout the United States—including five facilities in North Carolina.

The taxpayers of my state alone have paid more than \$700 million into the Nuclear Waste Disposal Fund justifiably expecting that the spent fuel assemblies would be transported to Yucca Mountain, Nevada, for permanent storage.

But no, it was not to happen, according to the environmentalists, and therefore according to the President of the United States, who immediately got his pen out and vetoed it.

A portion of the monthly electric bill payments of North Carolinians and other states goes into this fund, but while the Administration plays its political veto game, North Carolina's utility companies have been forced to construct holding pools or dry cask storage facilities to store this used material. This has caused additional expense for the utilities and higher prices for their customers.

Why did Mr. Clinton veto this legislation? Clearly it was to appease the self-proclaimed environmentalists, who so piously proclaim their concern about the air Americans breathe. We are all concerned about that.

Mr. President, it has long been self-evident that these so-called self-proclaimed environmentalists are opposed