barrels of oil. In addition to that, he signed an order putting 80 percent of that Continental Shelf off limits for oil exploration and drilling. That is billions more barrels.

The price of gasoline could be much, much lower. If the American people like high gas prices, they should write the White House and thank them, because that is where the responsibility or that is where the fault lies for the high gas prices that we have in this country today.

I know there are some people who want higher prices. I know some of the environmental extremists want the gas price to go to $3 or $4 a gallon because then people would drive less and there would be less pollution. Some people really believe that would be a good thing.

But I can tell my colleagues it would put the final nail in the coffin of the small towns and rural areas if we let these gas pries go to those kinds of levels.

Some people say, well, that is what they are paying over in Europe. But the Europeans and all the others pay the same oil prices that we do, they just add all kinds of taxes.

So we should drill and explore for much more oil in this country, try and become much less dependent on foreign oil, and we could easily bring down the price of gas in this country. But this administration will not do it because they are too controlled by these environmental extremists who almost always are real wealthy people, so they are not hurt by high gas prices as much as the poor and lower income and the working people of this country.

SUPREME COURT DECISION ON SCHOOL PRAYER

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, let me mention one other unrelated thing that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) got into, and that is the Supreme Court decision on school prayer that was issued a couple of days ago.

In 1952, the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of Zorach v. Clauson said there is ''no constitutional requirement which makes it necessary for government to be hostile to religion and throw its weight against efforts to widen the effective scope of religious influence.''

I remember, about 3 years ago, William Raspberry, the great columnist for the Washington Post, wrote a column, and he asked a question. He said, ''Is it not just possible that antireligious bias masquerading as religious neutrality has cost us far more than we have been willing to admit?''

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And that is a good question, tonight, Mr. Speaker. Is it not just possible that anti-religious bias, masquerading as religious neutrality, has cost us far more than we have been willing to acknowledge?

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) pointed out this Congress opens every session with prayer, and yet we will not allow this to be done at school events. There was a very poor decision by the Supreme Court a couple of days ago, and I think our Founding Fathers would be shocked if they knew the extent to which people are going to in this country to keep people from saying voluntary prayers.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TOOMEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, on April 12, I led an hour of debate on the topic of prescription drug coverage for senior citizens. I read three letters from around the state from seniors who shared their personal stories. On the 12th, I made a commitment to continue to read a different letter every week until the House enacts reform. This week I will read a letter from Crystal Pearl Beaudry of Marquette, Michigan.

Text of the letter: ''Mrs. STABENOW, We are an elderly couple—78 and 76 years ''young,'' and we sure do complain about the costs of [prescription] drugs.

Our pension is only $1,200 [per month] and [by] the time we pay [for] our rent and food, eye glasses and dental work, ect., then try to pay for our drugs—which rise every time we need a refill—there is not much left!

It seem that every time we have a doctor appointment, they either add a new prescription or change it . . .

Also, at [my husband's] place of employment, if you retired before the age of 62, you lost $200 a month. He was ''laid off'' at 61 and a half. So again, we lost more income. It doesn't seem fair for the elderly! We have worked all of our lives and end up this way and this is our beloved U.S.A.?

Below is a list of drugs:

[price is per month]

Novasac	$37.99
Prilosec	106.00
Allegra	33.29
Nitro	7.00
Premarin	22.97
Toprol	33.29
Indur	43.94
Mysoloq	18.99
Premarin Cream	40.99
Lipitor	49.99
Synlar	9.14
Aclovate	15.89
Total cost	419.48

Plus—coated aspirin—Vitamin C, Vitamin E, calcium pills, multivitamins, etc.

We hope that you can succeed in your campaign. Sincerely, Crystal Pearl Beaudry.

Seniors want and deserve a voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit that is genuinely available to any senior who wants or needs it. That is why I will continue to read a letter from Michigan seniors until the House enacts real prescription drug legislation.

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

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

LACK OF SECURITY OF NUCLEAR SECRETS AT LOS ALAMOS MUST BE ADDRESSED BY CONGRESS

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, I wanted to address something that has been in the paper a pretty good bit lately, the Los Alamos nuclear secrets that have apparently been missing. The reason I want to do this, Mr. Speaker, is because I am very concerned about it, and I just want to sort of retrace the steps.

If my colleagues will remember, during the Clinton administration it became apparent that this gentleman named Wen Ho Lee was stealing secrets, very important nuclear secrets from the Los Alamos lab. Because of a number of, I would say, bureaucratic hesitations, he was not investigated for a long time. They finally did investigate him and they found out that, I think he had over a thousand illegal entries on his computer. At that time Congress, in a bipartisan fashion, moved together to try to give the Department of Energy the resources that they need to improve security at Los Alamos.

Well, after a long exercise and a lot more funds had been expended, 1 year ago, on May 26, 1999, the Secretary of Energy made this statement to the United States: ''I can assure the American people that their nuclear secrets are now safe.'' A very explicit thing, and it was the right thing for the head person to be saying. And we have felt like, okay, we went through this very bad period, but we have addressed it.

Now we find out that two computer disks, which contained information on how to disarm nuclear bombs and how to build nuclear bombs, were last seen back in January. Now, that was verified April 7. Then on May 7 it was apparent that they were missing. So we go from this period of maybe January, maybe April to May 7 finding out that these two vital computer disks on very, very sensitive nuclear secrets are missing. But the Secretary of Energy was not informed for 24 more days. As I understand it, he is supposed to be notified within 8 hours. He was not told from the period of May 7 until June 1, and yet nobody has been fired because of that. There is no protocol.

Apparently, it is easier to get nuclear secrets than it is to take a tape out of Blockbuster Video. If my colleagues do not believe me, I challenge them, I challenge anybody within the sound of my voice, to go to Blockbuster Video, there is one in everyone's neighborhood, to see if they can get a tape out. I am certain they will not be able to. Yet our sensitive nuclear secrets, I understand from a hearing, are left unattended for as long as 2 hours a day while the attendant in this vault goes to lunch.

Now, if my colleagues feel comfortable with Barney Fife guarding our

nuclear secrets, then this is a great system. But if other Members are like me and the majority of Americans, then they are very, very concerned. What are we thinking? How do we lose nuclear secrets? They show up magically behind a Xerox machine, a Xerox machine that has already been searched twice? And everybody is supposed to feel good about the fact that they did not leave the building?

Maybe there was not espionage. We do not know that yet. But what we do know is there is total incompetence, and we as Congress cannot have much confidence in the way our nuclear secrets are being guarded. I think it is incumbent on this Congress to put pressure on the Department of Energy and the Secretary of Energy to make some very, very drastic changes to get this addressed, because we simply cannot misplace nuclear secrets.

Just think about the time frame: from as long as April 7 to May 7 they were unaccounted for; and then from May 7 to June 1 no one even told the Secretary of Energy they were gone. Yet not one person has been fired because of that. This is an outrage. This is scary.

This is not partisan rhetoric. I am glad to say a number of Democrats, including the ranking member of the committee, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), has said the Keystone Kops are guarding our nuclear secrets. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) has passed a letter which has been signed by 50 Democrats saying fire the University of California, who is involved in the security of that. I probably would have signed that letter, given the opportunity.

So I am glad to see that this is not getting trapped into some situation where it is Republican versus Democrats, because when it comes to the security of the United States of America, it does not matter what party we are a member of; it only matters that our shores are secure and safe. So I just wanted to bring that up, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. MCKINNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

ON USEC DECISION TO CLOSE PORTSMOUTH

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, a very sad and tragic thing happened today, and I think the American people need to know about it. But before I explain that in detail, I would like to give a little history regarding this occurrence.

From the mid-1950s, there have been two facilities in this country that have produced enriched uranium, first of all for our nuclear arsenal and, more recently, for fuel for our nuclear power plants. Approximately 23 percent of our Nation's electricity is generated through nuclear power, and most of the fuel that generates that electricity is produced in these two domestic plants.

A couple of years ago, this Congress and the administration unwisely decided to privatize this vital industry. At the time of privatization, the private company was obligated to continue to operate these two facilities through the year 2004. Today, this privatized company and their irresponsible and parasitic leadership and their board of directors decided to close one of those two facilities. I would like to share with my colleagues why that is so unwise and so unacceptable.

We know what happens to our country when we are overly dependent upon foreign sources for energy. We see that in the high gas prices that we are all experiencing today. What will it be when 23 percent of the electricity in this country is dependent upon foreign sources?

To their credit, the Department of Energy sent an emergency letter to the director of the United States Enrichment Corporation and the members of the board of directors today explicitly asking them not to take this action. I would read from the letter from Under Secretary Gary Gensler. He said, ''I am writing to urge you and the other members of the board not to vote to initiate a plant closing at today's board meeting.''

In addition to this letter, Secretary Richardson sent a very strongly worded letter to this CEO and to the members of the board asking that they not proceed. Unbelievably, unbelievably, this industry, which was privatized less than 2 years ago, and has very definite public policy purposes and obligations, decided to thumb their nose at the Department of Treasury and the Department of Energy, the governor of Ohio, multiple Members of this House, and Ohio's two Senators and they proceeded to vote to close this vital facility.

USEC's announcement that it will seek to close this facility is unwise, unwarranted and unacceptable; and I serve notice that I will fight this plant closure with every fiber of my being. The thousands of working families in my part of Ohio who depend on this industry for their livelihood deserve better from this government and from this corporation. For generations these brave men and women have sacrificed for our national security, and now they are being abandoned by a USEC management that is driven more by short-term profit and self- preservation than by common sense.

USEC appears to be dead set on decimating America's ability to produce the fuel that supplies 23 percent of our Nation's electricity. There is a clear solution to this problem, however. I will introduce legislation in this Congress to direct the Federal Government to buy back USEC and to continue operating both the Portsmouth, Ohio, and Paducah, Kentucky, plants.

I am also calling for an Inspector General investigation into this decision and into USEC's privatization. It is becoming more and more apparent that national security, energy security, and thousands of hardworking southern Ohioans are suffering as a result of the decisions of this corporation. I cannot overstate my anger at this decision or my ironclad commitment to protect our workers and to make sure that all responsible parties are held accountable.

Earlier today, after USEC made this announcement, Secretary Richardson responded, and I read from his response. He says, ''I am extremely disappointed by the United States Enrichment Corporation's decision to close the uranium enrichment plant in Portsmouth, Ohio. First and foremost, I am very concerned about the effect of this closure on the workers. They deserve better treatment than they are getting from USEC.''

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious matter. I call it to attention of this House, and I am submitting for the RECORD additional documents relating to this topic.

[News Release from Congressman Ted Strickland, June 21, 2000]

STRICKLAND STATEMENT ON URANIUM PLANT CLOSURE

WASHINGTON, D.C.—USEC's announcement that it will seek to close the Portsmouth Uranium Enrichment Plant is unwise, unwarranted and unacceptable. I will fight this plant closure with every fiber of my being. The thousands of working families in our part of Ohio who depend on this industry for their livelihood deserve much better. For generations these brave, hard-working men and women have sacrificed for our national security. Now they are being abandoned by a USEC management that is driven more by short term profit and self-preservation than by common sense. USEC appears to be dead set on decimating America's ability to produce the fuel that supplies 23 percent of our nation's electricity. There is a clear solution to this problem: I will introduce legislation in Congress to direct the Federal Government to buy back USEC and continue operating both the Portsmouth and Paducah plants. I will also call for an Inspector General investigation into this decision and USEC's privatization. It is becoming more and more apparent that this is simply a case of insider enrichment for USEC's management—enrichment at the expense of national security, energy security and thousands of hard-working southern Ohioans. I cannot overstate my anger at this decision or my ironclad commitment to protect our workers and make sure that all responsible are held accountable.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY,
Washington, DC, June 21, 2000.

Mr. JAMES R. MELLOR,
Chairman of the Board, USEC, Inc., Bethesda, MD.

Mr. WILLIAM H. TIMBERS,
President and Chief Executive Officer, USEC Inc., Bethesda, MD.

DEAR MESSRS. MELLOR AND TIMBERS: I have received Mr. Timbers' letter dated Friday, June 16, 2000, in which he wrote to inform Treasury that the Board of Directors, of