

OPPOSE HR 6, THE ENERGY
POLICY ACT OF 2005

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, in 2001 the newly elected President George W. Bush visited St. Paul to announce his vision of energy independence to the American people. Unfortunately, the President's vision of limitless domestic petroleum exploration, natural resource exploitation and consumption are becoming a reality. Today, tragically, House Republicans expand the Bush agenda of tax cuts for the energy industry, dependence on foreign oil and destruction of our environment.

With only two percent of world oil reserves, the U.S. will never be able to produce enough petroleum to be self-sufficient. America needs a comprehensive energy policy that prioritizes incentives for efficiency, conservation, alternative energy sources. Our nation needs to invest in the development of the next generation fuel sources like fuel cells, hydrogen power and home grown Minnesota fuels like ethanol. A major commitment and investment in these advancements has the potential to create a revolutionary transformation of the global economy, liberate our nation from our addiction to oil from Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, and start the environmental healing that will keep our planet alive.

Unfortunately, H.R. 6 fails to even attempt to meet these goals and in fact undermines them. Instead, the Republican energy bill spends 93 percent of the \$8.1 billion in tax incentives it provides to oil and coal companies. The same companies that are already making huge profits from the skyrocketing gas prices our families are paying to heat our homes and put gas in our cars. The President doesn't even believe these companies need incentives. At a recent speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, President Bush said, "I will tell you with \$55 oil, we don't need incentives for oil and gas companies to explore. There are plenty of incentives. What we need is to put a strategy in place that will help this country over time become less dependent."

This Republican bill wastes enormous amounts of taxpayer money and it contributes to the destruction of our environment. It tramples the 'polluter pays' principle and forces the American people to pick up the \$29 billion cost to clean up the mess created by MTBE—the mess that is contaminating the drinking water of tens of millions of Americans. It's an outrageous abuse of power to let these MTBE polluters off the hook and force a billion dollar unfunded mandate onto our counties and cities.

There were amendments that would have improved this bill, which I voted for, but they were defeated by Republican majorities. These amendments intended to protect our environment and our families while providing for responsible policies to advance a sustainable energy future for our nation.

It is with great disappointment that my colleagues and I who have visited the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge were unable to stop the majority party's obsession with destroying this pristine wilderness by allowing oil drilling. I

also supported an amendment to stop MTBE producers from passing the \$29 billion cost of cleaning up their pollution to the U.S. taxpayer. I also voted for an amendment to increase fuel-efficiency standards for our cars and trucks, saving billions of barrels of oil and improving our nation's air quality.

Each of these amendments failed because policy makers with a vision of a sustainable U.S. energy policy lost out to special interests determined to create larger corporate profits, but only after they receive the billions of dollars of corporate welfare benefits this Republican bill provides them.

Our nation cannot sustain its addiction to petroleum consumption. Incentives for efficiency, conservation and alternative energy sources combined with responsible leadership from the White House and Congress are all required if the U.S. is to lead the world in energy self sufficiency, rather than leading the world in energy dependency.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CRACKDOWN IN CUBA

SPEECH OF

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 81, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the two-year anniversary of the human rights crackdown in Cuba.

The people of Cuba have suffered under the authoritarian dictatorship of Fidel Castro for more than 45 years. Rather than allowing Cubans to thrive and live prosperous lives, the Castro regime has instead created a legacy of suppression, harm and failure. Cubans are ready for freedom, but their government does not want them to have even a taste.

Freedom-loving countries widely recognize that human rights violations against innocent Cubans are a sign Castro is afraid. Whether it is fear that Cubans will love freedom more than socialism, fear that a faltering economy will lead to more unrest, or fear of political opposition, it is clear Castro's government is a regime of fear. Rather than securing rights for the good of the people, Fidel Castro has imprisoned those who have spoken against human rights violations and other injustices within Cuba.

I hope with the passage of this resolution we will again unite our voices with those who dream of a free Cuba and join with those whose voices have been silenced by a repressive government.

In March 2003 Castro arrested 75 people who were bold enough to speak out against harmful policies of the government. Men and women whose occupations included librarians, union organizers and civic leaders were charged with innocuous crimes and sentenced to long prison terms. While a few of those arrested have been conditionally released, most of these voices of freedom remain behind bars.

Ignoring international condemnation for its actions, the Cuban government continues down its path of suppression.

However, as history has shown, when one group of voices are silenced, other voices will fill the void and cry out. The yearning for freedom within the human spirit can be suppressed, but it cannot be extinguished.

One Cuban group speaking on behalf of Castro's political prisoners are the mothers, daughters, wives and sisters of those arrested more than two years ago. Every Sunday for the past two years, a band of 30 women, called the Women in White, attend mass at Santa Rita Catholic Church before proceeding down a sidewalk on a silent protest. Even after intimidation from Castro's thugs, this little band of women are determined to peacefully expose the injustice of what is happening to their relatives. I hope the Women in White, along with thousands of other Cubans, will have the strength to continue fighting for the right to live in freedom.

I urge my colleagues to join me today in voting for H. Con. Res. 81 and send a strong message that the American people stand in solidarity with all freedom-loving Cubans.

HONORING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF QUEEN BEATRIX OF THE NETHERLANDS ON APRIL 30, 2005

HON. PETER HOEKSTRA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of her coronation as Queen on April 30, 1980. Beloved by the people of the Netherlands, millions of Dutch citizens filled the streets of their cities to celebrate the event on April 30, 2005.

Since Queen Beatrix was installed in the Council of State and assumed the royal prerogative on her 18th birthday, she has accomplished a tremendous amount of good for the Netherlands. After completing college, she turned her attention to social welfare and the needs of disabled people. She became Patron of the National Fund for the Prevention of Poliomyelitis, which was later renamed the Princess Beatrix Fund in recognition of her work and contributions. She has assumed an active role in the formation of new governments in the Netherlands. Her dignity, grace and guiding presence underpin her importance as a unifying leader in her country.

The Netherlands has long been an important ally of the United States. From 1625 when the colony of New Amsterdam was first founded by the Dutch, the immigrants exemplified the ideals of tolerance, inclusion and the notion that hard work and study lead to success—important American values that endure today.

On April 19, 1982, the Netherlands and the United States celebrated the 200th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. As Queen Beatrix stated at that celebration, "There are few countries whose relations down the centuries have been so genuinely cordial and mutually beneficial as those between your great country, Mr. President, and my own." We thank Her Majesty for her devotion to fostering that relationship and join her country in celebrating her long service to her Nation. Her enduring leadership continues to

provide the strength and openness fundamental to helping lead the world against the tyrannies of oppression.

The Congress of the United States thanks Queen Beatrix and wishes her continued success.

UNITED STATES EXECUTIVE ACTION ON DARFUR: MORE IS NEEDED

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker I rise today to discuss the ongoing crisis in Darfur. As many as 400,000 have died throughout the course of this crisis, and more than 10,000 continue to die each month. While the death and suffering continues, action on the part of the Administration has, in recent months, been subdued at best. A May 3, Op-Ed in the New York Times, entitled "Day 113 of the President's Silence", points out that the Administration's silence on the issue has been noticeable. This new stance is extremely perplexing considering the Administration's heavy engagement on the issue previously.

Part of that engagement involved early pressure on the Sudanese leadership to agree to a Darfur cease fire. The United States also had the distinction of being the first and only major world power to label the offenses of the Sudanese government in Darfur as genocide. The Administration was also generally supportive of the Comprehensive Peace in Sudan Act passed in late 2004, which admonished the Sudanese government for its actions in Darfur, provided humanitarian assistance for the region, and reiterated United States sanctions on Sudan.

The United States has also provided large amounts of assistance to the Darfur region, totaling some \$615 million since 2003 (\$357.6 million in FY 2005 alone). The 2005 Emergency Supplemental agreed to on Tuesday included \$50 million to strengthen the African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur, as well as \$40 million in general humanitarian aid.

Despite the financial assistance, the Administration has been quiet on the political front recently. In fact they have seemingly backed away from referring to the crisis in Darfur as genocide, and have down played the casualty count in the region. As the New York Times Op-Ed asserts, Sudan's recent cooperation with the United States on intelligence matters, may be placating the Administration's stance towards the regime regarding Darfur.

In the most recent indication of its new stance on Darfur, the Administration came out in opposition to the Darfur Accountability Act introduced by Senator CORZINE. Among other things the act called for wide-ranging sanctions against the Sudanese government, the establishment of a special presidential envoy for Darfur, and a military no-fly zone for the region. The bill also sought to provide for the protection of Darfurians civilians by strengthening the African Union force in Darfur through a broadened Chapter 7 UN mandate and deployment of a supplemental UN force.

The bill was attached to the Emergency Supplemental which passed the Senate in late April, and was awaiting approval in conference

committee. If accepted the bill would have represented a major step forward in bringing peace and security to the people of Darfur. However, the Administration made clear its opposition to the bill, and it was subsequently deleted from the final Emergency Supplemental Conference Report agreed to this week. With the Darfur Accountability Act off the table, what will the Administration do now regarding Darfur?

Financial assistance is not enough—there needs to be real political action. Though the Darfur Accountability Act was not passed, most of its provisions called for action at the Executive level. Thus, the Administration still has an opportunity to become effectively engaged on the Darfur issue. Most of the solutions to the Darfur crisis will entail a multi-lateral effort, so the President must become more involved in eliciting a response from the international community.

Though several UN Security Council resolutions have been passed to date, the UN has yet to agree on a comprehensive Security Council resolution which would cease the transgressions of the Sudanese government and its Janjaweed militia, and provide adequate protection for Darfurians civilians. The African Union will not be able to handle the situation in Darfur on their own. They need the troops, mandate, and logistical resources to effectively protect civilians dispersed across an area the size of Texas.

The Administration can bring this about; they need only increase their engagement. To that end the US must provide more leadership in the United Nations, especially the Security Council, to get a comprehensive resolution passed. It also needs to be especially forceful with China and Russia, who have been a major hindrance to achieving progress on the Darfur issue. The Administration must also sustain pressure on the Sudanese regime. We can not turn a blind eye to their transgressions in Darfur, simply because they are now cooperative with us on intelligence matters. Not only is that short-sighted, it is morally wrong.

In the cases of the Holocaust and Rwanda, inaction on the part of the international community allowed the mass murder of millions of innocent people. Now we find ourselves on the brink of a similarly momentous error. Once again, politics and national interests are delaying the type of action needed to make a significant impact on the Darfur Crisis.

During the observation of the Auschwitz anniversary in February 2005, Dr Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, wisely commented that "We can't bring the dead back to life, but we can fight for the sanctity of life." It is my hope that we take up the fight to which Rabbi Sacks refers: Unlike the Holocaust and Rwanda, the final story of Darfur has yet to be written. We still have the chance, however faint, to prevent the triumph of evil. Mr. President, we must do more for Darfur. If we choose not to act, history will forever echo our failure, and our consciences will forever hold our shame.

[From the New York Times, May 3, 2005]

DAY 113 OF THE PRESIDENT'S SILENCE

(By Nicholas D. Kristof)

Finally, finally, finally, President Bush is showing a little muscle on the issue of genocide in Darfur. Is the muscle being used to stop the genocide of hundreds of thousands of villagers? No, tragically, it's to stop Congress from taking action.

Incredibly, the Bush administration is fighting to kill the Darfur Accountability Act, which would be the most forceful step the U.S. has taken so far against the genocide. The bill, passed by the Senate, calls for such steps as freezing assets of the genocide's leaders and imposing an internationally backed no-fly zone to stop Sudan's Army from strafing villages.

The White House was roused from its stupor of indifference on Darfur to send a letter, a copy of which I have in my hand, to Congressional leaders, instructing them to delete provisions about Darfur from the legislation.

Mr. Bush might reflect on a saying of President Kennedy: "The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in a period of moral crisis maintain their neutrality."

Aside from the effort to block Congressional action, there are other signs that the administration is trying to backtrack on Darfur. The first sign came when Condoleezza Rice gave an interview to The Washington Post in which she deflected questions about Darfur and low-balled the number of African Union troops needed there.

Then, in Sudan, Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick pointedly refused to repeat the administration's past judgment that the killings amount to genocide. Mr. Zoellick also cited an absurdly low estimate of Darfur's total death toll: 60,000 to 160,000. Every other serious estimate is many times as high. The latest, from the Coalition for International Justice, is nearly 400,000, and rising by 500 a day.

This is not a partisan issue, for Republicans and the Christian right led the way in blowing the whistle on the slaughter in Darfur. As a result, long before Democrats had staggered to their feet on the issue, Mr. Bush was telephoning Sudan's leader and pressing for a ceasefire there.

Later, Mr. Bush forthrightly called the slaughter genocide, and he has continued to back the crucial step of a larger African Union force to provide security. Just the baby steps Mr. Bush has taken have probably saved hundreds of thousands of lives.

So why is Mr. Bush so reluctant to do a bit more and save perhaps several hundred thousand more lives? I sense that there are three reasons.

First, Mr. Bush doesn't see any neat solution, and he's mindful that his father went into Somalia for humanitarian reasons and ended up with a mess.

Second, Mr. Bush is very proud—justly—that he helped secure peace in a separate war between northern and southern Sudan. That peace is very fragile, and he is concerned that pressuring Sudan on Darfur might disrupt that peace while doing little more than emboldening the Darfur rebels (some of them cutthroats who aren't negotiating seriously).

Third, Sudan's leaders have increased their cooperation with the C.I.A. As The Los Angeles Times reported, the C.I.A. recently flew Sudan's intelligence chief to Washington for consultations about the war on terror, and the White House doesn't want to jeopardize that channel.

All three concerns are legitimate. But when historians look back on his presidency, they are going to focus on Mr. Bush's fiddling as hundreds of thousands of people were killed, raped or mutilated in Darfur—and if the situation worsens, the final toll could reach a million dead.

This Thursday marks Holocaust Remembrance Day. The best memorial would be for more Americans to protest about this administration's showing the same lack of interest in Darfur that F.D.R. showed toward the genocide of Jews. Ultimately, public pressure may force Mr. Bush to respond to