

APRIL 27, 1998.

Hon. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE CUNNINGHAM: I would like to strongly encourage you to support the goal of doubling the budget of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 5 years, and, in particular, to support a \$2 billion increase in the NIH appropriation for FY99. The opportunities for advances in biomedical sciences over the coming decades are unparalleled. The United States has provided worldwide leadership in biomedical science research over the years primarily because of the visionary decision to establish the National Institutes of Health in the 1940's. No other country has done this.

The opportunities in the decades ahead are extraordinary as we see a merging of technologies in the physical, chemical and computational sciences and their applications to biology and disease. Whereas we have made advances with telescopes and rockets that probe the universe in the past, we are now poised to make equivalent progress by focusing our microscopes inward to cells and molecules. An investment in the NIH is not only a sound investment in the benefits it will reap for treating disease, for curing disease, and for eradicating pathogens, it is also a sound economic investment. Not only will it reduce health care costs, the basic science that has grown from basic biomedical research supported by NIH has fueled our rapidly growing biotechnology industry. Once again we are undisputed world leaders. We must continue to lead.

Federal support of biomedical research and the NIH is of crucial importance for the health and vitality of the people in our country. Historically, this type of research has led to, and continues to lead to, new treatments for previously incurable diseases, as well as new and lower cost for treatments. Both types of breakthroughs are not only of crucial economic benefit to the country, but also reduce much needless human suffering. Biomedical and other scientific research are also both economic drivers; they create knowledge and insights that lead to new inventions, new companies, innovation, and economic growth. As indicated above, research supported by the NIH is the main engine that drives the increasingly important Biotechnology industry in this country, and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future.

This is a crucial time in our country's history. The 21st century has the potential to be the golden age of medicine and human health. Our ability to realize this vision depends on the creative leadership of you and your colleagues. Your support will help us to achieve these important goals and is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

SUSAN S. TAYLOR, Ph. D.

APRIL 27, 1998.

Hon. RANDY CUNNINGHAM,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC. 20515.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE CUNNINGHAM, Alzheimer's disease is one of the greatest threats to the personal and financial security of most Americans as they reach their retirement years. It is also one of the greatest threats to Medicare and Medicaid. Today, 4 million Americans have Alzheimer's. Most of them are Medicare beneficiaries; on an average, the cost to the Medicare system is almost 70% more than beneficiaries who are not cognitively impaired. This is true even though Medicare does not pay for most of the care they need. Nearly half of the Medicare beneficiaries also receive Medicaid, because they have used up all of their own resources paying for long term care.

By the time the baby boomers reach the age of greatest risk in the next century over 14 million Americans will have Alzheimer's disease. It is hard to see how we can save Medicare and Medicaid for future generations if we let that happen.

There is an answer to Alzheimer's disease and to other costly diseases. The answer is medical research. Scientists now know that changes in the brain start as much as 20 years before the disabling symptoms of Alzheimer's appear. That means that in most of the baby boomers who will eventually get Alzheimer's, the disease process has probably already begun.

The progress that has been made in Alzheimer's research in the past decade is truly remarkable. But just when the path to real answers to the disease is becoming clear, the funding for Alzheimer's research has slowed to the point that scientists cannot begin the important work on prevention that must begin today if we are going to save the baby boomers from the disease.

If we can delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease for even 5 years, we can reduce the incidence of Alzheimer's disease in half and save as much as \$50 billion in the annual cost of care. That is one of the best investments in the future that Congress can possibly make.

Time is running out! That is why the Alzheimer's Association is asking Congress to increase funding for Alzheimer's research this year by \$100 million, and to increase the overall funding for NIH by at least 15%. Thank you for your support of cause.

Sincerely,

RON HENDRIX.

Ps: My father died of Alzheimer's disease on December 26, 1997, after 10 long hard years. My mother died 7 years earlier due to stresses brought upon by caregiving. I don't want my children to face this disease. Please help!

APRIL 27, 1998.

Hon. RANDY CUNNINGHAM,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CUNNINGHAM: Along with 2,500,000 other Americans, a thief resides in my home, robbing my eleven year old son Skyler of his health, his ability to learn, his self-confidence, his personal safety, and perhaps, one day, his life. The intruder is epilepsy, a brain disorder that presents in the form of seizures. Epilepsy can affect anyone; any gender, any ethnicity, at any age, at any time, and in 30% of all cases, the cause remains unknown.

Modern treatments are successful in fully or partially controlling seizures in about 85% of cases. Unfortunately, my son is counted in the additional 15% for whom all known medical treatments have been tried and failed. Skyler has been on every seizure medication available in the world, including clinical and compassionate use trials. At times it has been difficult to distinguish which were worse, the seizures which assault his brain and body, or the drugs which cause him to lose his balance, his speech, his kidney and liver functions, and at times, his will to live. He has undergone obscure medical therapies such as steroid injections, immuno-globulin transplants, and ketogenic diets. And still Skyler has debilitating seizures everyday of his life.

Mr. Cunningham, research holds the only hope that my son might live a productive and meaningful life. New medications with fewer side effects are desperately needed. Research alone holds the key to treatments for epilepsy and many other catastrophic brain diseases and disorders. Congress must in-

crease the federal commitment to biomedical research by allocating sufficient funding to the efforts at the National Institutes of Health and Center for Disease Control.

Please, on behalf of all Americans who live with the thief epilepsy, like my son Skyler, support initiatives to double the total national commitment to medical research from all sources. It is Skyler's only hope.

Sincerely,

TRACEY J. FLOURIE.

APRIL 26, 1998.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN CUNNINGHAM: I have a beautiful, lovable 13 year old daughter, Cassidy, who was diagnosed with Insulin Dependent Diabetes when she was 10. She did nothing to cause it. It is still a mystery why certain people get type I diabetes. She is a normal 13 year old; she loves to go to movies, talk on the phone with friends, play softball, basketball and soccer, figure skate, play piano and go to our church's youth group.

This could happen to anybody. We do not know of any diabetes in my husband's or my families.

We say prayers every night and when she was first diagnosed, she would pray for God to help her get over the diabetes. I had to tell her the bad news: once you get insulin dependent diabetes (Type I), it never goes away. Every day for the rest of her life she will have to prick her finger and test her blood from 4 to 6 times a day and inject insulin from 3 to 5 times a day. And the insulin must be done in proper dosages and at proper times or she will die. That is until there is a cure. Diabetes can have a horrible effect on these children's bodies. One of every 7 dollars in health care and one of 4 Medicare dollars are spent on diabetes and its complications.

So what is the answer? Research to find a cure. These two reasons: (1) to reduce the human suffering and deaths, and (2) to save the billions of dollars that are spent treating diabetes and its complications. Sixteen million Americans have diabetes. (That's Type I and II.)

That is why, as a mother, I feel it is important to join with the many parents and volunteers at the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation is urging a 15% increase in NIH funding this next year and a doubling of the NIH funding in the next 5 years. Thank you for all you are doing to help. Your compassion and commitment are deeply appreciated.

JANET KINTNER.

TOBACCO REPORT ON TEENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Pallone) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to address a number of issues tonight: first, a very important domestic issue, and that is the tobacco settlement and some recent information that has come out which supports, in my opinion, the need or the suggestion that many of us have made, that we need to move forward quickly and pass a tobacco bill that is very stringent in its effort to try to get after the problem of teen smoking in this country. That basically increases the Federal tax on cigarettes so that the money can be used for these tobacco prevention programs, particularly among young people.

Then I would like to move on from there and talk about a couple foreign

policy issues. But I would like to begin with a report that just came out again on the issue of tobacco and teen smoking.

Yesterday, the Surgeon General, David Satcher, released a report. It was prepared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is called Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups. The report is the 24th in a series of tobacco reports that began 34 years ago. It has some very disturbing information in it.

This report's release also, I might add, Mr. Speaker, could not be made more timely in light of what is going on in this House of Representatives on the issue of tobacco settlement.

It is very unfortunate, and I have already said on the floor and I will say again, that Speaker GINGRICH and the House Republican leadership has opposed tough tobacco legislation. Because of their opposition and because they are in the majority and control what happens on the floor of this House of Representatives, tobacco legislation and the tobacco settlement's future is essentially in doubt.

It is not clear at all that we will be able to pass a tobacco bill this year. I want everyone to know, and I think everyone does already, that myself and other Democrats and the Democratic leadership and the Democratic caucus in general are very much in favor of a tobacco bill passing. Because if it does not pass this year, we are going to lose the opportunity to deal with the problem of teen smoking in the United States.

Getting back to the report that was released yesterday by the Surgeon General, it makes a compelling case, I believe, for passing a tough tobacco bill.

In a letter to Members of Congress that accompanied the report, the Surgeon General explained, and I quote, smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Certain racial/ethnic minority populations remain at high risk for using tobacco and often bear a disproportionate share of the human and economic cost of tobacco use.

Although some recent declines in lung cancer trends are encouraging, we have reason for great concern about reported increases and rates of smoking among African American and Hispanic high school students.

That is in the letter that accompanied the report from the Surgeon General.

The Surgeon General then continues that the report sounds an urgent alarm. If minority tobacco use continues to increase, we can expect severe health consequences to begin to be felt in the early part of the next century. We must use every tool at our disposal to reduce tobacco use amongst racial and ethnic minorities, especially amongst adolescents, and to reverse these frightening trends.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, if you look at this report, and I actually brought a copy of the report with me

this evening, it is a rather thick report, it is a rather thick document, and there is an executive summary, but it does give us some very alarming information.

It says that teen smoking rates grew among all ethnic groups in the 1990s. So even though this is about ethnic minorities, the teen smoking rate grew amongst all ethnic groups in this decade. The smoking rate amongst African American teenagers grew a staggering 80 percent between 1991 and 1997.

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Approximately 20 percent of African American high school students smoke today, and that is one out of every five African American teens. The Surgeon General estimates that if this trend continues, 1.6 million African American children will become regular smokers and 500,000 of them will die as a result of that smoking habit.

I think it is important to note that the increase in the 1990s amongst black children reverses the trend set in the '80s and '70s when smoking rates actually declined.

Among Hispanic teens, the smoking rate rose by 34 percent over this same period. Approximately 33 percent, or one out of every three Hispanic teenagers smokes cigarettes.

Amongst Asian American teens, the smoking rate rose 17 percent between 1990 and 1995; and the overall rate of teens who smoke in the Asian American community is estimated to be about 20 percent.

The report also provides information with regard to Native American teens, the fourth ethnic group examined by the report; and the teen smoking rate rose by 26 percent amongst that group between 1990 and 1995. Approximately 50 percent or one of every two Native American teens smokes.

It is also estimated that about 40 percent of white high school students use cigarettes.

Now, the unfortunate thing about all this is, and we have pointed this out, myself and other Democrats who have been concerned about this issue, is that the tobacco companies clearly see the need to increase smoking amongst teenagers because they are the smokers of the future. If the teen smoking rates decline, then in another 10, 20, or 30 years the amount of tobacco use in the country would significantly decline. So that is the particular reason why the industry targets teenagers. It is also the reason why we must stop them from continuing to do that targeting amongst young people.

As numbers like these continue to roll out, in concert with the documents from the tobacco industry that detail their efforts to target children, I think Republican leaders in both the House and the Senate should not ignore reality and block progress and basically join with the Democrats and particularly with President Clinton in trying to move tobacco legislation in the few months that we have left in this Congress.

Now, of course, we know that the opposite is, in fact, happening. Just last week, Speaker NEWT GINGRICH felt compelled to defend Joe Camel, amongst all things. He went out of his way to make it known in his opinion that Joe Camel is not the reason why teenagers smoke cigarettes.

Now, we have document after document and report after report being released, many of those reports coming out of my own committee, the Committee on Commerce, and they show the havoc that tobacco has wreaked on our children in the past and the devastation it is causing today, and they clearly show that Joe Camel is part of this effort, that Joe Camel was an effort to essentially target young people. And here we have the Speaker of our House of Representatives defending Joe Camel.

This, I should add, comes shortly after the Speaker picked up the mantle of the tobacco industry itself and blasted the bill authored by his fellow Republican, Senator JOHN MCCAIN of Arizona.

I have said before that I admire Senator MCCAIN for pushing a relatively tough piece of tobacco legislation. It does not go as far as I would have it go. I think it does not go far enough on the issue of liability for the tobacco companies and some of the issues that Democrats care about. But he is making a bipartisan effort to pass a tobacco bill that deals with the problem of teen smoking; and he should be commended for it, not condemned for it.

Speaker GINGRICH said that, in talking about Senator MCCAIN, he said that those people who say that is not a Republican bill, he is talking about Senator MCCAIN's bill, they are right. So I guess, from what the Speaker seems to be suggesting, any bill that does not win the tobacco industry's stamp of approval cannot be called the Republican bill. The reality is, it is sponsored by a Republican, and it was passed on a bipartisan basis, and I commend the Republicans who have been joining with the Democrats to try to move this legislation.

This weekend, still more of Senator MCCAIN's colleagues took to the airwaves to bash his bill. Again another Republican, Senator ORRIN HATCH, appeared on Meet the Press this Sunday to make it known he, too, does not approve of the MCCAIN bill.

And at the same time that members of his own party continue to publicly squabble about tobacco legislation, the Republican majority leader, Senator LOTT, ironically enough, continues to criticize the President for showing no leadership on the tobacco issue.

I would suggest that Senator LOTT needs to check his facts. The President and congressional Democrats are on the same page. We are all in agreement that the tobacco companies should not be left off the hook.

In fact, President Clinton, when this report that I am making reference to today from the Surgeon General, it was

actually released at a press event with the President, where he stood with I think 30 teenagers from the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, and he noted the fact that the tobacco industry, in order to survive, has to attract these young people and how wrong it is for them to attract young people. And he has been pushing have very hard for tobacco legislation almost on a daily basis.

To suggest that somehow the President is not supportive of efforts to move a tobacco bill is simply not true.

What I think is going on here is that the Republican leadership is in the process of what I call a work slowdown. There are only about 40 legislative days left in the year in which the Republicans basically have clearly projected their intention to do nothing, and the tobacco bill could very easily be a victim of that. If we do not move something quickly to the Senate floor, out of committee in the House of Representatives, there will not be an opportunity this year to pass a strong anti-tobacco legislation.

With 3,000 kids a day getting hooked on cigarettes, Mr. Speaker, I think it is an awfully high price to pay. We need to move on tobacco legislation.

I know that myself and other Democrats are going to continue to press this until the Republican leadership agrees to move anti-tobacco legislation to address the tobacco settlement and to try to make it possible for us to address the growing problem now of teenage smoking.

NO EXCUSE FOR DELAY IN AID TO NAGORNO KARABAGH

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to now move to a couple of foreign policy issues that I consider very important.

I often talk about Armenia and India because of my position as a cochairman, the Democratic chairman, of the India caucus and also the Armenia caucus; and there are two issues, one with regard to each country, that I would like to address.

With regard to Armenia and the separate Republic of Nagorno Karabagh, which is next to Armenia, I would like to address the need to expedite humanitarian assistance that has already been appropriated to Nagorno Karabagh.

Just by way of background, the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh is a region which has been populated by Armenians since ancient times and which is still an Armenian region known as Artsakh to the Armenian people, but which is claimed by the Republic of Azerbaijan as part of that country's territory.

As I have mentioned in this House on several occasions, the people of Karabagh fought, and won, a war of independence against Azerbaijan. A cease-fire has been in place since 1994, but it has been shaky at best.

The U.S. has been involved in the negotiations intended to pursue a just and lasting peace in this region but,

unfortunately, the United States' position has sided with Azerbaijan's claim of so-called territorial integrity, despite the fact that this land has been Armenian land for centuries and the borders which gave the land to Azerbaijan were imposed by the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin.

Despite the ongoing pressures on Nagorno Karabagh, the people of that mountainous land have built a viable, democratic society. In February, they celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Karabagh movement, the galvanizing moment in the long history of the Armenian people.

But it has not been easy. The people of Karabagh are victims of a cruel and illegal blockade maintained by Azerbaijan. Karabagh's only connection to the outside world is via the Republic of Armenia, which is also the victim of blockades imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey; and front-line Karabagh defense forces are constantly under attack from Azeri snipers violating the cease-fire, as I witnessed firsthand during my visit to the region just in January of this year.

The humanitarian and infrastructure needs of this area are severe, and I also witnessed that firsthand.

Now, last year, this Congress played an extremely positive and constructive role in helping the people of Karabagh. I want to praise the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs of the Committee on Appropriations for providing for the first time direct aid to Karabagh in the amount of \$12.5 million for humanitarian assistance.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, none of that aid has yet been provided to Karabagh, and that is why I am addressing the House tonight on this issue. I am very concerned that some elements in the administration have misinterpreted the clear intent of Congress that the aid is destined for the people of Karabagh and, instead, are suggesting some of the funds should be diverted to Azerbaijan.

I will be circulating a letter to Brian Atwood, the Administrator of USAID, the Agency for International Development, urging that the funds be provided immediately; and I am also demanding the entire \$12.5 million be provided to Karabagh as it was intended by Congress. I hope my colleagues will join me in this appeal as we go around and try to get co-signatures for this letter over the next few days.

It is true that USAID did send a need assessment team to Nagorno Karabagh earlier this year pursuant to the language in the Foreign Ops bill. While the team has reported its findings to Congress, we are still waiting for the aid to be provided.

Give us the aid. It needs to be provided. These people are hurting, and they need the help.

USAID officials have suggested that humanitarian aid will be committed in the near future; but, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to emphasize this aid was ap-

propriated by Congress last fall. So we are talking 6 months for humanitarian assistance that is desperately needed, and there is no excuse for this delay.

While working to get the aid that has already been appropriated to its intended recipients in Karabagh, I am also urging the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs this year to build upon its historic achievement in the fiscal year 1998 bill to earmark assistance to Nagorno Karabagh at \$20 million, an increase, and make it even more clear that aid is intended for disbursement within Nagorno Karabagh.

I also hope the subcommittee will consider broadening the scope of assistance to Karabagh to include the rebuilding and reconstruction of infrastructure damaged during the war. I know there are some true friends of Armenia on that subcommittee, and I am hopeful of support for these much-needed funds.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that, having twice visited this mountainous republic, I can attest that it is indeed a functioning society, a fact also attested to by members of the USAID team that visited Karabagh to conduct a needs assessment pursuant to this year's fiscal year 1998 bill.

Unfortunately, the State Department has apparently interpreted the provision of aid to the "victims of the Karabagh conflict", and they have interpreted this language of "victims of the Karabagh conflict", contrary to the intent of the House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs, as referring also to expanding existing funds for Azerbaijan's needy.

While I am concerned about the needy people of Azerbaijan, two things are important to point out: First, U.S. assistance is already being provided to Azerbaijan's needy through nongovernmental organizations, with tens of millions of American funds having been provided over the past few years. And, second, and I regret to say, the government of Azerbaijan has done very little to help the needy population in its rural areas, despite the huge revenues being generated for Baku for development of the Caspian Sea oil reserves. This is a fact that even our own State Department acknowledges.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to again stress the importance of maintaining the current ban on government aids to Azerbaijan until that country lifts its blockade of Armenia and Karabagh. This ban was enacted as part of the Freedom Support Act of 1992, and it is a good law.

Now, Congress, unfortunately, is re-examining the issue of the prohibition on aid to Azerbaijan as part of an effort to enhance U.S. engagement in the region. While I am all for greater U.S. engagement in the Caucasus, we must not tinker with this provision. That is Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act.

Unfortunately, some in Congress, the administration and the oil industry are

looking to curry favor with Azerbaijan by lifting or at least easing the ban on aid to Azerbaijan. And for the ban on aid to be lifted, Azerbaijan need only lift the blockades of Armenia and Karabagh. Until then, there should not be any consideration of asking the United States taxpayers to support the dictatorship in Baku.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I feel very strongly about this matter, and I think we need to seriously address the fact that this aid has not been coming to Nagorno Karabagh and that, hopefully, if we continue to tell the State Department that they are not doing their job in providing the assistance, they will do so forthwith.

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN U.S.-INDIA
RELATIONS

Mr. PALLONE. Lastly, this evening, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity today to visit in New York with the President of India. Some of my other colleagues were there, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MANTON). Each of us had the opportunity to talk for some time with the President, and I wanted to comment on his historic visit to New York.

He was there to receive an award, I believe at a reception this evening; and he also spent some time at the United Nations. But he, in my conversations with the President, was very optimistic about what has been happening in terms of India and U.S. relations. And those of us who are members of the India caucus, again which I mentioned that I co-chair, are very pleased because we see more and more positive developments in terms of U.S.-India relations.

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Just to mention a few things, just a few weeks ago, one of our former colleagues who is now the U.N. Ambassador, Bill Richardson, visited India along with Rick Inderfurth, who is the Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, and also some other U.S. officials as part of the first delegation that the President sent to India since the new government was formed just about a month ago. And that trip I commented on last week was a very good trip because it really enhanced good feeling, if you will, between other two countries.

But one of the things that the President of India said today that was very good about the trip or that he appreciated about this trip by Bill Richardson was the fact that the U.S. representatives, including Ambassador Richardson, viewed India independently from the other South Asian countries. In other words, in the past, India has felt that U.S. foreign policy looks at India vis-a-vis Pakistan or vis-a-vis Bangladesh or some of its other South Asian neighbors and does not see it as its own country with its own place, if you will, an important place in world affairs. And that clearly has changed.

When Ambassador Bill Richardson went to India, he made it quite clear

that India is a priority of U.S. foreign policy, and it is a priority viewed independently, if you will, because of India's own status in world affairs.

Now, that is not to say that Ambassador Richardson and the others during this visit did not want to increase the dialogue between India and its neighbors in South Asia. Quite the contrary. They stressed during the trip, and the media reported the fact, that they stressed the need for India and Pakistan to resume their dialogue and try to improve their relations. And in fact, today when I spoke to the President of India, he was very optimistic that that indeed would happen, that sometime in the next few weeks or the next few months that the two Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan would meet at the Prime Minister level possibly, at the trade meeting of the SAARC group in July, or maybe even sooner than that, and that this dialogue between the two countries to try to reduce tension and bring not only Pakistan and India but all the countries of South Asia together again economically, politically and maybe even eventually militarily, that this dialogue would continue. So that was a very optimistic aspect of my conversation today with the President that I wanted to mention to my colleagues this evening.

The other thing that the President of India stressed at the meeting today was the need for U.S. support for India to become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. Obviously, a big part of his trip today to New York related to the United Nations, and the United Nations is a focal point of India's efforts these days to become a permanent member of the Security Council.

Myself and a number of other members of our India caucus have, in fact, sponsored a House resolution where we express the sense of this Congress that India should be a permanent member of the Security Council, and we are hoping that eventually we can get that resolution passed, but we are also hopeful that the State Department will eventually come around to that point of view.

Again, the President of India was appreciative of the fact that the United States is pushing for an expanded Security Council, but he would like to see the U.S. directly support India's bid for a seat, as would I.

The last thing I wanted to mention in this regard is that when I spoke to India's President today, he was also very much of the vein, and I certainly agree, and I think it has been shown in the last 2 weeks as well, that the trade and business and investment relationship between our two countries, between India and the United States, is also going to move progressively forward.

There was some concern, I think, on the part of American businesspeople that with the new government, the BJP government as we call it, that they might not be as willing to move

forward to encourage U.S. investment and more trade or might put up some barriers to U.S. articles, certain U.S. materials or articles coming into India. But that has sort of been put to rest in the last 2 weeks.

India's Finance Minister was in Washington just a short time ago, and he made it quite clear that the new government wants to move forward in terms of U.S. investment, particularly in infrastructure, that the market reforms would continue, that privatization would continue. And I mentioned to the President of India today that this was very important to the United States, and he was of the opinion that we had nowhere to go but forward in terms of increasing our trade and business relationships.

So once again, I just wanted to say in conclusion this evening that what has been happening since the new government was elected in India in March has been very positive in terms of U.S. relations. I believe very strongly that the United States needs to think of India as a priority of its foreign policy and that we need to expand business and trade opportunities with India and basically have our countries work together in almost every area, whether it is political, diplomatic, economic, or even military. And I think we are clearly moving in that direction in terms of the developments that have taken place in the last month between our two countries.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3717, TO PROHIBIT THE EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF NEEDLES OR SYRINGES FOR THE HYPODERMIC INJECTION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington (during the Special order of Mr. OWENS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-497) on the resolution (H. Res. 409) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3717) to prohibit the expenditure of Federal funds for the distribution of needles or syringes for the hypodermic injection of illegal drugs, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3546, THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON SOCIAL SECURITY ACT OF 1998

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington (during the Special order of Mr. OWENS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105-498) on the resolution (H. Res. 410) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3546) to provide for a national dialogue on Social Security and to establish the Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.