THE FOLLY OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 50 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, if I had a chance to pick a topic for my special order today, I would call it the folly of foreign intervention.

We have heard very much in the last few weeks about the possibility of a war being started in the Persian Gulf. It looks like this has at least been delayed a bit. There is a temporary victory brought about by Secretary General Kofi Annan of the United Nations in agreement with the government of Iraq.

This, I think, is beneficial. At least it gives both sides more time to stop and think and talk before more bombs are dropped.

Before we left about 10 days ago from the Congress, I think many Members and much of the Nation thought that within a short period of time, within a week or so, there would be additional bombing by the Americans over Baghdad.

□ 1645

There were polls out at that time that said 70 percent of the American people endorsed this move, something that I questioned and of course I question the legitimacy of dealing with policy by measuring polls, anyway. I think we should do what is right, not try to decide what is right by the polls. But in this circumstance, I think the polls must have been very, very misleading.

We heard a gentleman earlier this evening from North Dakota mention when he was at home essentially nobody was telling him that they were in favor of the war. I think most Members of Congress on this past week on visiting home had the same message. Certainly there was a very loud message in Columbus at a town hall meeting. It was written off by those who wanted to go to war and wanted to drop the bombs by saying, well, no, this was just a very noisy bunch of hippies who are opposed to the war. There are a lot of people in this country who are opposed to the war and they are not hippies. I think to discredit people who oppose going and participating in an act of war and try to discredit them by saying that they belong to a hippie generation, I think they are going to lose out in the credibility argument in this regards.

This debate has been going on for quite a few months. It looks like it is not resolved. Although there has been an agreement, it is far from a victory for either side. It is somewhat ironic about how this has come about, because it seems that those of us who have been urging great caution have been satisfied with at least a temporary solution, yet we are not entirely satisfied at all with the dependency on the effort by the United States enforcing U.N. resolutions. In this case I think what we must do is reassess the entire policy because it is policy that gets us into trouble.

It is in this one instance. We did not just invent foreign interventionism in foreign policy. This has been going on for a long time. The worst and the first egregious example, of course, was in Korea where we went to war under the U.N. banner and was the first war we did not win. Yet we continue with this same policy throughout the world. Hardly can we be proud of what happened in Vietnam. It seems like we are having a lot more success getting along with the Vietnamese people as we trade with them rather than fight with them.

There is a lot of argument against this whole principle of foreign interventionism, involvement in the internal affairs of other nations, picking leaders of other countries. We were warned rather clearly by our first President, George Washington, that it would be best that we not get involved in entangling alliances and that we instead should talk with people and be friendly with people and trade with people. Of course the first reaction would be, yes, but the person that we are dealing with as leader of Iraq is a monster and therefore we cannot trust him and we should not talk to him. There have been a lot of monsters in the world and we have not treated them all the same way. Just think of the tremendous number of deaths to the tune of millions under Pol Pot. At that time we were even an ally of his. Even the inconsistency of our policy where in the 1980s we actually encouraged Saddam Hussein. We sold him weapons. We actually had participated in the delivery of biological weapons to Hussein. At that time we encouraged him to cross the border into Iran. We closed our eyes when poison gases were used.

So all of a sudden it is hard to understand why our policy changes. But once we embark on a policy of intervention and it is arbitrary, we intervene when we please or when it seems to help, it seems then that we can be on either side of any issue anytime, and so often we are on both sides of many wars. This does not serve us well. A policy design that is said to be pro-American and in defense of this country where we follow the rules and follow the laws and we do not get involved in war without a declaration by the Congress, I think it would be very healthy not only for us as Americans but it would be very healthy for the world as a whole.

I am very pleased that there has been at least a pause here, although our troops will be maintained there and they are waiting to see if there is some other excuse that we can go in there and resume the bombing. But the whole notion that we are going to bring Hussein to his knees without the cost of many American lives I think is naive, because nobody has proposed that we go in and invade the country. There have been proposals that we just assassinate Hussein, which is illegal. At least that is acknowledged that this is an illegal act, to go in and kill another leader, although we have been involved in that too. But many people have argued that this should be our policy now, and that is to topple Hussein.

But we used the CIA in Cuba a few decades ago. Now it has just been revealed that our CIA botched the job. Also, those individuals who were trying to restore freedom to Cuba, we let them down by them assuming we would do more and then we did less. We were very much involved in overthrowing a leader in South Vietnam right before the rampant escalation of the war there. That did not serve us well. And then there is another example of our CIA putting a government in charge over in Iran. That is when we put the Shah in. But this did not bring peace and stability to the region. It brought us hostage takings and hostility and hatred and threats of terrorism in this country. So although many will make the moral cause for doing good around the world, there is no moral justification if we are going to follow the laws of this land and try to stick to the rules of providing a national defense for us and a strong foreign policy.

I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. I wanted to take just a moment to say how much I appreciate many of the points that the gentleman is making, particularly in regard to the folly of much or many of our foreign interventions in recent years.

I remember about 3 years ago reading on the front page of the Washington Post that we had our troops in Haiti picking up garbage and settling domestic disputes. Picking up garbage for Haitians and settling their domestic disputes should not be a mission of the American military. The Haitians should pick up their own garbage.

Then a few weeks ago, I heard that we had our troops in Bosnia giving rabies shots to dogs. The Bosnians should give their own rabies shots to their dogs. That should not be a mission of the American military. This business of turning our American military into international social workers is something I think the overwhelming majority of Americans are strongly opposed to.

The really sad thing is that we have spent many, many billions of hard-earned tax dollars in recent years in Haiti, Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia, now in Iraq, and I said on the floor of this House a couple of weeks ago, why the rush to war in Iraq, why the rush to war, why the eagerness to send young American men and women into harm's way. The American people were not clamoring for war then. They are even more so not clamoring for war now.

Going to war should be the most reluctant decision that we make. We should go to war only when there is no

other reasonable alternative. I saw George Stephanopoulos on television a few days ago and he said that even in World War II, we had some people who were opposed to World War II. But I can tell you the day after Pearl Harbor, the Senate voted 82–0 and the House voted 388–1 to go to war against Japan. But Japan had attacked us at that time. It was a totally different situation from the one we face in Iraq. You can say any bad thing that you want to about Saddam Hussein and I would agree with you. But I can also tell you that he was greatly weakened by the first Gulf War, he has been weakened even more by the sanctions since then. I heard one commentator say that even the Italian army could beat Saddam Hussein at this time. The threat is not there. For us to spend all these hundreds of millions of dollars deploying all our troops over there in the Middle East is a tremendous waste of money. It is not something that should be done. We should try to be friends with all nations in the world that will let us be friends. But that does not mean we need to keep sending billions and billions of dollars overseas. Much of this money and many of these interventions are creating great resentment toward us.

I read recently that in regard to the International Monetary Fund that many of these countries, they feel like we are behind the International Monetary Fund interventions in Southeast Asia, and they are requiring some of these countries and peoples to do things that they do not want to do and really all they are doing is bailing out big banks and big multinational companies, and it is creating great resentment toward us.

I will stop with just two other points. One is that Tony Snow said in a column a few days ago in regard to the situation in Iraq, we are about to achieve the worst of all possible worlds. We are about to alienate our European allies and our Arab allies and achieve nothing of military significance.

President Kennedy in 1961 said: We must face the fact that the U.S. is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, that we are only 6 percent of the world's population, that we cannot impose our will upon the other 94 percent, that we cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity, and that therefore there cannot be an American solution to every world problem.

That was President Kennedy in 1961. The only change is that now we are slightly less than 5 percent of the population of the world instead of the 6 percent that we were then. I think President Kennedy was exactly right. There cannot be an American solution to every world problem. Let us be friends with every country, but let us not try and impose our will and create great resentment toward this country. Let us have a foreign policy, a trade policy, an economic policy that puts this country and its taxpayers and its workers first, even if that is not politically correct or fashionable to say at any particular given time in history.

Mr. PAUL. I would like to ask the gentleman one question. He was just home in his district, he traveled and talked to quite a few of his constituents. Did he get a sentiment from his district on what they want?

Mr. DUNCAN. I spoke many places in my district. I represent east Tennessee, which is a very conservative, patriotic, pro-military district. I have said before that I think a strong national defense is one of the most legitimate functions of our national government. But we should not try to turn the Department of Defense into the department of offense and do things like that. When I spoke, and I told the people of my district what I had said on the floor just a few days before, that we should not rush into war, I told them some of the things that I had said on the floor that I have said here today, I got nothing but applause, nothing but support. All of my calls and letters that I have gotten have been totally against us attacking what Tom Aspell, the CNN correspondent, said now is a defenseless country.

I am not trying to get any sympathy for Saddam Hussein. I will say once again, you can say bad things against him. He is a megalomaniac. But the truth is even if we put every single person in this country in a military uniform, we could not 100 percent guarantee that there would not be some kook do something with a chemical or biological weapon of some sort. But we need to be a little more thoughtful in the way we handle some of these situations in the future and I think not be so eager to show that we are a macho nation and be so eager to go around and attack other countries. I do not think that is what the American people want us to do. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. PAUL. I thank the gentleman for his remarks. He made some very good points. I would like to follow up on the one point with regards to the military. That is one of the most essential functions of the Federal Government, is to provide for a strong national defense. But if we intervene carelessly around the world, that serves to weaken us.

I have always lamented the fact that we so often are anxious to close down our bases here within the United States because we are always looking for the next monster to slay outside of the country, so we build air bases in places like Saudi Arabia. Then when the time comes that our leaders think that it is necessary to pursue a war policy in the region, they do not even allow us to use the bases. I think that is so often money down the drain. It is estimated now that we have probably pumped in $7 billion into Bosnia and that is continuing. Our President is saying now that that is open-ended, there is no date to bring those troops back. We have already spent probably a half a billion additional dollars these last several weeks just beefing up the troops in the Persian Gulf.

The funds will not be endless. I have too many calls from so many in my district who serve in the military, and their complaint is that they do not have enough funds to adequately train. We are wasting money in the wrong places, getting ourselves into more trouble than we need to. At the same time we detract from spending the money where we should in training our personnel the way they should be. I think this is not so much a tactical decision made by management as much as it is a policy decision on what our foreign policy ought to be.

☐ 1700

If we continue to believe that we can police the whole world and provide security and right every wrong, I think it will lead us to our bankruptcy, and just as was mentioned earlier, we receive the same kind of grief when we pretend that we can impose economic conditions on other countries.

We, as a wealthy Nation, are expected to bail out other countries who have overextended themselves and they get into trouble. At the same time, we put economic rules and regulations on them and resentments are turned back toward us. The Arabs in the Middle East do not understand our foreign policy because there have been numerous U.N. resolutions, but it is only this one particular resolution that we have felt so compelled to enforce.

And the real irony of all this is that first we use the United Nations as the excuse to go in. Then, the United Nations gets a little weak on their mandates, and they themselves do not want to go in. So it is a U.N. resolution that we try to enforce, and then when it is shown that it is not a good resolution, the U.N. then backs away from it. So there is no unanimous opinion in the U.N., I think further proving that this is a poor way to do foreign policy.

And those who would like to do more bombing and pursue this even more aggressively tend to agree with that. They do not like the idea that we have turned over our foreign policy making to an international body like the United Nations.

So this, to me, is a really good time to make us stop and think should we do this? I certainly think that our foreign policy in the interests of the United States should be determined by us here in the Congress, and then some will argue, well, it is not up to Congress to deal in foreign policy. That is up to a President. But that is not what is in the Constitution.

As a matter of fact, foreign policy, those words do not even exist in the Constitution, and the Congress has all the responsibility of raising funds, spending funds, raising an army, declaring war, so the responsibilities are on us.

And this is the reason why I have introduced a resolution that would say that we do have the authority to withdraw the funds from pursuing this

bombing, and there is another resolution that the gentleman from Maryland will mention here shortly dealing with that same subject, because we do have the responsibility, and we, especially in the House, are closest to the people.

We have to be up for reelection every 2 years, and if we listen to the polls that say that 70 percent of the American people want this war, at the same time if we fail to go home and talk to our people and find out that most Americans do not want this war and there is no good argument for it.

The whole idea that we can immediately go over there and make sure there are no weapons of mass destruction when we helped build the weapons up in the first place, and if we are really concerned about weapons of mass destruction, why are we not more concerned about the 25,000 nuclear warheads that have fallen into unknown hands since the breakup of the Soviet Union? Our allies in the Middle East have nuclear weapons, and we have China to worry about. What did we do with China? We give them more foreign aid.

So there is no consistent argument that we can put up that all of a sudden Saddam Hussein is the only threat to world peace and it is in our interest to go in there and take him out. It just does not add up. If he really was a threat, you would think his neighbors would be the most frightened about this, and yet the neighbors are urging us not to do it. They are urging us to take our time, back off and wait and see what happens.

We, in the United States, so often are involved in conflicts around the world, and one of the things that we urge so many to do is sit down and talk to each other. We ask the Catholics and the Protestants in Ireland to talk, we ask the Croats and the Serbs to talk, we ask the Jews and the Arabs to talk; why is it that we cannot do more talking with Saddam Hussein? Instead, we impose sanctions on him which does nothing to him, solidifies his support, rallies the Islamic fundamentalists while we kill babies. There is now a U.N. report that shows that since the sanctions, well over a half a million children died from starvation and lack of medicines that we denied them.

So I think that there is every reason in the world for us to reassess this policy. There is a much more sensible policy. What we need is more time right now. There is no urgency about this. We did the bombing in the early 1990s, and by the way, I can see this as a continuation of that single war. But since that time with inspections, even the President claims that they have gotten rid of more weapons since the war ended than occurred with the war.

So if there is no military victory in sight by bombing and only great danger, what is the purpose? Why can we not continue with more negotiations and more inspections? And they say, well, we cannot trust Hussein. Well, that may be true. But looking at it objectively when we finished in 1991 our policy was to encourage the Kurds and the Shiites to rebel, and we implied that we would be there, and what happened? We were not there. Thousands and thousands of Shiites and Kurds were just wiped out because we misled them, similar to our promises that we made to the Cubans in the early 1960s.

So we do not gain the respect of the world by, one, saying, well, we cannot trust anything he says. Of course not, we cannot trust it. But we have to be realistic, and can they trust us, as well, because our record is not perfectly clean.

I now yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT).

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I could not join the discussion before this, but I have just come from a Members-only briefing on Iraq, where we are now in the Iraq situation.

I would like to start my discussion by referring to something that Congressman PAUL has just referred to, and that is there really is not just one, but two constitutional issues involved here. The first of those constitutional issues is Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution, and it is a little document, a very important one; I carry it in my pocket.

Article 1, section 8 says that one of the responsibilities of the Congress is to declare war. There is no hint of that in the responsibilities of the President, who is Commander in Chief, who commands the troops after they are committed by the Congress.

Yeltsin said that if we bomb, that could start World War III. By our President's own admission we were going to take casualties. I think it is very difficult to argue that this bombing would not have been the equivalent of what our Forefathers were talking about when they mentioned declaration of war.

And that is not the only part of the Constitution that would have been violated by this. Article 1, section 9 says that no moneys shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law. There has been no appropriation for this activity over in Iraq, so I think that clearly two parts of the Constitution are involved here, the part that says that the President, as you know, we do not elect in our democratic republic, we do not elect an emperor. We elect a President, and the President is bound by the Constitution. And the Constitution says that the Congress declares war; that he is the Commander in Chief after war has been declared.

The Constitution also says that moneys cannot be taken from the Treasury except by appropriations. We have made no appropriation for this. So he clearly needs to come to the Congress.

I have a resolution that Congressman PAUL was on and a great many others, and by the way, this has wide support across the aisle. We have Members from the most conservative to the most liberal on this. It is a very simple resolution. All it says is that, Mr. President, if you want to bomb Iraq, you have got to come to the Congress first.

We do not mention this resolution, the constitutional issues because one may debate those, but one cannot debate the common sense position that the President, if he is going to do this, has got to have the support of the American people.

The way to get the support of the American people is to have the Congress debate it. I would hope that debate would be long enough that the American people would have a chance to weigh in on that debate because we cannot do this kind of thing without involving the American people.

Let me just mention the two objectives of these strikes. The first was to destroy the weapons of mass destruction. This has to be the most telegraphed military strike in the history of mankind. If those weapons of mass destruction were where we thought they were when we said we were going to bomb him, you can bet that they are not there now, and we would have no way of knowing when you see some barrels moved on an ox cart or in the back of a truck whether they were barrels of molasses or chicken feed or anthrax. Our satellites are very good, but they cannot see inside the barrel.

The other objective was to diminish significantly his capability to produce weapons. If you have a brewery, you can produce biological weapons. That is why we call them the poor man's atomic bomb because they are so easy to make.

So we were not going to accomplish either one of those objectives. Let me tell you what we would have accomplished. We would have galvanized the Islamic world against us. We sit on 2 percent of the known reserves of oil. We use 25 percent of the world's energy. The Islamic world, the Middle East, controls 70 percent of the world's oil, and I cannot understand how it is in our vital national interest to alienate that part of the world, which controls 70 percent of the world's oil.

Let me tell you something else it would have done. I can see it now. Peter Arnett is holding up on CNN the shredded body of a baby. It would have been an absolute P.R. disaster, killing innocent civilians over there, and they are innocent. This is a tyrannical regime that does not represent, I think, the Iraqi people. But, you know, what are we going to accomplish by killing these innocent citizens? And we call that collateral damage, and there was an admission trying to steel us so that we could endure those TV pictures that were going to come. We were told we are going to have significant collateral damage.

□ 1715

As a matter of fact, they were all pleased that there had been a level of

constraint; and they were all raising their voices to President Clinton and to Madeleine Albright, saying let's keep talking. Let's keep negotiating. Let's continue to look and see if there is not a way to avert this crisis. That as long as there is a sliver of hope, let us find that hope and let us have the alternative and let us not put the American people in the predicament where we would have to know that because some innocent child lived down the road from Saddam Hussein, or some elderly citizen, who had no interest in moving towards war, had to be maimed, hurt or killed because of our inability to find a peaceful solution.

I think people like yourself, who talk about peace and who talk about alternatives, we know it is difficult.

Peace has never been easy. I grew up sort of in the traditional Christian experience, and we were led to believe that at one time there were only four people on the earth: Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel. And it seems as though they had some difficulty. One thought that the other one had something that was his or that he ought to have. And only four people, yet some friction.

I think if we try and live in movement towards peace, it can be obtained.

I am reminded of something I believe John Kennedy was supposed to have said, that peace is not really found in treaties, covenants and charters but in the hearts and souls of men and women; and if we actually look for a way, if people all over the world can believe that there is the opportunity to peacefully coexist and if we can use our resources to find solutions to the major problems that plague our earth, rather than using those to create and develop weapons of war, then, perhaps, we can find a cure for cancer. Perhaps we can indeed find a way to eradicate hunger or we can find a way to make people healthy, to create the kind of quality of life that we are looking for.

So, again, I commend the gentleman for taking out the time, for giving the rest of us an opportunity to share and participate; and I believe that if people continue to pursue, as the gentleman is doing, as difficult as it might be, we can ultimately find a peaceful solution to the world's problem.

Mr. PAUL. I thank the gentleman very much for participating.

Early on, I talked about a policy of nonintervention; and I would like to talk a little bit more about that. Because some might construe that if you have a policy of nonintervention, it means you do not care; and that is not the case. Because we can care a whole lot.

There are two very important reasons why one who espouses the constitutional viewpoint of nonintervention, they do it. One, we believe in the rule of law and we should do it very cautiously, and that is what we are bound by here in the Congress. So that is very important.

The other one is a practical reason, and that is that there is not very good evidence that our intervention does much good. We do not see that intervention in Somalia has really solved the problems there, and we left there in a hurry.

We have spent a lot of money in Bosnia and the other places. So the evidence is not very good that intervention is involved, certainly the most abhorrent type of intervention, which is the eager and aggressive and not-well-thought-out military intervention. That is obviously the very worst.

I would argue that even the policy of neutrality and friendship and trade with people, regardless of the enemy, would be the best.

Of course, if you are involved in a war or there is an avowed enemy, declared enemy, that is a different story. For the most part, since World War II, we have not used those terms, we have not had declared words, we have only had ''police actions,'' and, therefore, we are working in a never-never limbo that nobody can well define.

I think it is much better that we define the process and that everybody understands it.

I would like to go ahead and close with a brief summary of what we have been trying to do here today.

It was mentioned earlier, and I want to reemphasize it, something that has not been talked about a whole lot over this issue, has been the issue of oil. It is oil interests, money involved.

As I stated earlier, we were allies with Hussein when we encouraged him to cross the border into Iran, and yet, at the same time, the taking over of the Kuwait oil fields was something that we could not stand, even though there has not been a full debate over that argument. We have heard only the one side of that, who drew the lines and for what reason the lines were drawn there and whose oil was being drilled. There is a major debate there that should be fully aired before we say that it is the fault of only one.

But it is not so much that it was the crossing of borders. I do believe that oil interests and the huge very, very important oil fields of Iraq and what it might mean to the price of oil if they came on has a whole lot to do with this.

We did not worry about the Hutus and the Tutus in Africa. A lot of killing was going on there; 1 million people were being killed. Where was our compassion? Where was our compassion in the killing fields of Cambodia? We did not express the same compassion that we seem to express as soon as oil is involved.

We cannot let them get away with the repetition of ''we got to get the weapons of mass destruction.'' Of course. But are they mostly in Iraq? I would say we have done rather well getting rid of the weapons there. They are a much weaker nation militarily than they were 10 years ago, and those kind of weapons are around the world, so that, as far as I am concerned, is a weak argument.

Another subject that is not mentioned very often, but the prime minister of Israel just recently implied that, hopefully, we will pursue this policy of going in there and trying to topple this regime. I can understand their concerns, but I also understand the concerns of the American taxpayers and the expense of the American lives that might be involved. So I can argue my case.

But even taking it from an Israeli point of view, I do not know how they can be sure it is in their best interests to go over there and stir things up. They are more likely to be bombed with a terrorist bomb if we go in there and start bombing Iraq. If we do, Israel will not stand by as they did once before. They told us so.

So if we bomb first and then the goal of Saddam Hussein is to expand the war, what does he do? He lobs one over into Israel, and Israel comes in, and then the whole procedure has been to solidify the Islamic fundamentalists. Then there is no reason not to expect maybe Iran and Syria coming in.

Right now Iraq is on closer ties with Syria and Iran than they have been in 18 years. This is the achievement of our policy. We are driving the unity of those who really hate America, and will do almost anything. So we further expose ourselves to the threat of terrorism. So if they are attacked and they have no way to defend themselves against this great Nation of ours, they will strike out. Therefore, I think in the practical argument, we have very little to gain by pursuing this policy.

It is not difficult for me to come down on the side of arguing for peace. Peace is what we should be for. That does not mean you give up your military, but you use your military more wisely than we have over the past 30 or 40 years. You use it for national defense.

Today we have a powerful military force, but a lot of people do not think we are as strong in defense as we used to be. So, yes, we are stronger than others, but if we have a failed and a flawed policy and a military that has been weakened, then we are looking for trouble.

So even the practical arguments call for restraint and a sensible approach, for debate and negotiations. It is for this reason I think for the moment we can be pleased that Mr. Annan went to Iraq and came back with something that is at least negotiable, and that the American people will think about and talk about. Hopefully this will lead not only to peace immediately in this area, but hopefully it will lead to a full discussion about the wisdom of a foreign policy of continued perpetual interventionism and involvement in the internal affairs of other nations.

If we argue our case correctly, if we argue the more argument, the constitutional argument, and the argument for peace as well, I cannot see how the American people cannot endorse a policy like that, and I challenge those who think that we should

go carelessly and rapidly into battle, killing those who are not responsible, further enhancing the power and the authority of those who would be the dictators. They do not get killed. Sanctions do not hurt them. The innocent people suffer. Just as the economic sanctions that will be put on Southeast Asia as we give them more money, who suffers from the devaluations? The American taxpayer, as well as the poor people, whether they are in Mexico or Southeast Asia, in order to prop up the very special interests. Whether it is the banking interests involved in the loans to the Southeast Asians, or our military-industrial complex who tends to benefit from building more and more weapons so they can go off and test them in wars that are unnecessary.

REPORT OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Commerce.

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 19(3) of the Public Telecommunications Act of 1992 (Public Law 102–356), I transmit herewith the report of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 25, 1998.*

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I want to stand here and have the opportunity to have a discussion with some of my colleagues this evening, to talk about an issue that is near and dear to the hearts of the American people, and that is for those who are today in something called managed care for their health care, people who are looking at how they are going to afford health care, how in fact they can meet the rules and regulations that some of the HMOs have put upon them, how they can have the option of selecting their physician or specialist if they need one, how in fact they can get all of the information that they need in order to make good choices and good decisions about their medical treatment, and how, if they run into a difficulty with their provider, their HMO, their insurance company, that they have an appeal process that they can go to to see if this can be sorted out.

□ 1730

This is a topic that is going to be hotly debated in this Chamber in the next several months. The President talked about a patient's Bill of Rights, if you will. That sounds like a very elevated term. Essentially it is what I have talked about, having for individuals the opportunity to know what their best options are in order to get their health care.

This patient's Bill of Rights is going to be debated. The President talked about it in his State of the Union Address. He wants to see something like this passed. There are a number of us on both sides of the aisle, and as a matter of fact it was one of those issues the night of the State of the Union where Democrats and Republicans were on their feet because it makes good sense. It makes good sense for people to have the adequate kind of health care, the adequate treatment that they need in order that they may survive, themselves and their families. What is at stake here is not just the bottom line, the profit motive in health care today, but in fact the health and safety of the American public.

An issue that I have specifically focused on is the issue of mastectomies. I have found through a Dr. Sarfos in Connecticut, a surgeon, he came to me and told me that women were being treated as outpatients for mastectomies, and that they were getting a few hours' treatment, or less treatment than both their doctor and they thought they needed in order for them to be healthy, to be on that road to recovery both emotionally and physically.

Together a number of us have written legislation that says in fact that the length of stay in a hospital needs to be determined by a doctor and by a patient, and not be the decision of the insurance company. In the case of this specific piece of legislation, it says 48 hours for a mastectomy, 24 hours for a lymph node dissection, and that the individual, the woman can in fact have the luxury, if you will, of not having to stay for 48 hours if the doctor and patient make that determination that in fact it can be a shorter stay.

These are commonsense kinds of decisions that we are talking about. What we want to do is to make sure, as I say, at the base of all of this, is that people's health is the first order of business, and not the profit motive of the insurance provider or of the HMOs.

I am delighted to have with me tonight a colleague from Illinois, and I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for yielding to me, and I also want to do more than that. I want to thank her for the kind of leadership that I think she displays and continues to display in this House of Representatives by bringing before the American people on a daily basis issue by issue, making the greatest use of herself to awaken the conscience of the American people; for putting before them positions that they need to be aware of, things that they need to understand, and then taking the lead in actually not only talking the talk but walking the walk, and voting her conscience and convictions. It is just a pleasure and an honor for me to serve in this body with her.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, when we look at health care delivery and we look at what has happened in health care all over the place, there have been changes and changes and changes. We see in America right now thousands of individuals who are physicians who decided to go to medical school, learned their profession, because they wanted to be engaged in the practice of medicine. They wanted to work out with patients treatment plans and treatment patterns. They wanted to make use of the skills which they had acquired to provide the best possible care for their patients and their clients.

Now we reach a point where many of these very same physicians, individuals who have spent years and years and years of study and training, are actually being told how they must practice. They are being told what it is they have to prescribe for certain illnesses, what it is that they have to do for certain patients, how long they can keep their patients in the hospital, what they have to do with them if they have to go home. It just seems to me that rather than making use of that training and skills, now we have health maintenance organizations, managed care organizations, HMOs, which are telling the physician how he or she must practice.

I can understand when we first evolved to the point where managed care became a real part of the American scene, people were concerned about cost containment, lack of regulation. It appeared as though the health care industry was running wild, and in some instances people may have been staying in hospitals much longer than they actually needed to. There may have been a few physicians in some cases who may have been taking liberties with their prescriptions and what they were doing, or seeing patients when they were not needed to be seen. But that was not the majority. That was not even anything close to a majority.

I think we have now given managed care, HMOs, a little too much action. I think we have given them too much leeway to set the pace, to make the decisions, to make the determinations. It is time to look at the needs of the patients. That is why, when the President talks about a patient's Bill of Rights, what he is really talking about is looking now at what the patient can logically and reasonably expect from a health care provider, from a health care institution that will meet his or her individual needs.

I do not believe that you can practice medicine wholesale, when it gets down