

The crunch has created a very interesting set of changes. It has meant that where in the past one person was working was enough for the family to stay ahead of the game, today, often it is two people working at more than one job. At least in the case of the people of my State of Michigan the solution, it seems to me, is quite clear. Unless we are going to get to the point where families working two jobs and two breadwinners working two jobs is inadequate to allow working families to keep up, we have to give them some relief. The one way the Federal Government can provide that relief is by reducing the tax burden that these families face.

Mr. President, I do not have the time today nor do I intend today to go into a variety of ways by which we can ease that burden. But I think the kinds of plans that have been put forth by Bob Dole and Jack Kemp, calling for across-the-board tax relief, combining that with a \$500-per-child tax credit is a step in the right direction. I think that is what the families of Michigan, the families of America can benefit from.

I add, Mr. President, in closing, in our State of Michigan we reduced taxes 21 times in the last 5 years. That has produced record levels of employment and it has not caused a budget deficit. We have balanced the budget and created a surplus at the same time. We need to give families that relief. I look forward to working within the Senate to accomplish that. I yield the floor.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ABRAHAM FAMILY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, did I understand the distinguished Senator from Michigan to say that there had been a new birth?

Mr. ABRAHAM. That is correct. I say to the Senator from West Virginia, I am happy to inform you as of 2:25 p.m. yesterday afternoon the third baby in the Abraham family was born. I am proud of our new son named Spencer who has joined us.

Mr. BYRD. This is the third child.

Mr. ABRAHAM. We have twin daughters who are 3 years old, Betsy and Julie, and now they have a little brother.

Mr. BYRD. I congratulate the Senator and the Abraham family.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Thank you very much.

Mr. BYRD. He has thrice tasted the experience of immortality. He is living on a new plateau.

What is the new child's name?

Mr. ABRAHAM. I have to indicate that with a certain amount of pride. It is Spencer. He is named after his father.

Mr. BYRD. Wonderful, wonderful.

May I say to the new child:

Once in thy father's arms, a new born child,
thou didst weep while those around thee
smile;
so live that in thy lasting sleep
thou mayst smile while those around thee
weep.

ALTERNATIVES TO MIDDLE EAST OIL DEPENDENCE

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I strongly support the actions of President Clinton in responding to the latest round of the politics of aggression by the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein. The response by President Clinton follows in the wise policy footsteps of President Bush by taking strong action, and in acting as a leader of both the West and the Middle East in responding to aggression.

To those who would doubt the necessity of the actions by the President, one should pose the question as to what the consequences would be in the face of American inaction. First, clearly, no other country would take the lead. The signature of the current era is such that response to aggression will not be taken up by other powers in the absence of American leadership, unfortunately. This was the case in the invasion of Kuwait. It was the case in Bosnia when, after several years of Western inaction in the face of ethnic atrocities in Bosnia, only the United States, only the United States, could bring about a credible, effective implementation of peace in that sorry part of Europe. While one should have rightfully expected the European nations to have led that effort, they did not, and would not, in the absence of American leadership. The same is the case today in the Middle East. Our friends and allies in Europe and the Middle East will not act in the absence of American leadership.

It is American leadership which is decisive to the peace in these regions, and I commend President Clinton for his decisive action. It was necessary to weaken the Iraqi leader's ability to intimidate his neighbors, and to make it clear that he will pay a price for his aggression. As President Clinton stated, our action has changed the strategic situation, with Saddam's military capabilities weakened in the south of Iraq. If further actions are necessary to ensure the protection of our pilots in the no-fly zone, then he will continue to have my unstinting support. The President's actions have ensured that the coalition which has acted to restrain and discipline Iraq since the invasion of Kuwait remains viable and intact.

It has been stated on many occasions, during the Gulf war and most recently by Secretary Perry in expressing the vital interests of the United States in the Middle East, that our policy is driven by the energy security interests of the United States. Oil, oil, is the lifeblood of our industrial base, and both Western Europe and the United States, as well as Japan, are far too dependent on the Middle East for supplies. We need to get serious about alternative sources of energy, clean coal technology, other non-petroleum sources, and the overall development of alternative sources of oil.

A very important, world-class, alternative source of oil exists and awaits development in the Caspian Sea area. Following the break-up of the Soviet

Union, large oil resources are now available for commercial development. According to industry sources, some 42 billion barrels of proven oil reserves in this region are available for lifting and transport to the west.

The oil pot of the region is estimated by American industry sources to be comparable to that of the vast Saudi Arabian fields, a potential of some 200 billion barrels of oil, and includes, as well, enormous natural gas reserves. Some 2-4 million barrels of oil per day could be brought out of the Caspian region, across Turkey by pipeline, and to the United States market. These new reserves, in the newly independent states of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, can bring substantial, rapid economic development to those nations, as well as to Turkey, on their western border. The riches of these reserves can bring new stability and stable independence to those new nations. For the West, Caspian Sea oil could help to diversify the world oil suppliers, stimulate price competition, and bring new security to our supplies.

Already, aggressive efforts have been underway by Western oil companies to develop this resource. In Azerbaijan, a \$7.5 billion contract with the Azerbaijan International Operating Company, a consortium of 12 energy companies, including 5 U.S. companies, could produce an estimated three billion barrels of crude oil over the next twenty years. In Kazakhstan, there is a \$20 billion joint venture between an American oil company and the Kazakh government which could yield as much as 9 billion barrels of crude oil over the next 40 years.

Nevertheless, the oil industry cannot by itself accomplish this achievement. The region has been in turmoil as a result of war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with large disrupting movements of refugees, and there are constant political and other pressures from Russia and the Islamic world bearing on the Caspian region. The resulting instability requires increased involvement and commitment by the United States Government for large scale projects to go forward. The power and the influence of the United States Government are necessary to accomplish the development of an assured supply of petroleum resources to the West. I believe this should be a major priority for the next administration. The stakes, both economic and strategic, are enormous.

Mr. President, Caspian region oil can be transhipped by pipeline across Turkey, avoiding politically fragile routes through the Middle East or through an unpredictable Russia. Turkey is enthusiastic about this prospect and is ready and able to cooperate with America to make the development of this major new alternative oil source available to the United States. We should not forget, as we so often forget, the contribution of Turkey to the Western anti-Saddam alliance. It was Turkey which