

June 15, 2016 Proceedings of the House of Representatives

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Strike section 8127.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 783, the gentleman from California (Mr. *Huffman*) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I stand, once again, today to offer an amendment with my fellow Californian, *Tom McClintock*, and I have to say this is a *deja vu* moment. Just last year, Mr. *McClintock* and I worked together, on a bipartisan basis, to finally strike a wasteful provision that was in the 2016 Defense Appropriations Act and had been in many previous Defense Appropriations Acts.

Our amendment, which passed overwhelmingly in this House, would save taxpayers millions of dollars by ending an outdated earmark mandating that the Defense Department ship coal from a certain part of Pennsylvania, 4,000 miles across the planet, to American bases in Germany.

Somehow, this zombie provision from the deepest days of the cold war and the golden era of congressional earmarks, when you could go into a bill like this and arrange a sweetheart deal for a certain district and a certain coal company, somehow that provision was snuck back into this year's bill. It just won't die.

Now, for years, the Department of Defense and the President's annual budget has urged Congress to get rid of this provision, to allow the use of cheaper fuels to power its military bases in Germany. But because of certain special interests, the provision has persisted. It is a terrible deal for the American taxpayers, for the environment, but it has persisted.

Now that finally changed last year, and our amendment not only passed this House but it passed by a vote of 252-179. In this House, that is what we call a home run.

Like a bad sequel, this earmark is back once again, sneaking into the 2017 bill under a new name. Now don't let the new wording trick you. The practical implications and the intent are exactly the same as the old zombie earmark language.

Congress worked on a bipartisan basis last year to kill this bad idea, and it should do so again because the bottom line is that taxpayers should not be paying to ship coal, or any other energy source, 4,000 miles across the planet to a certain facility in Germany. We should give the Air Force the same flexibility to meet its energy needs that every other U.S. military installation around the world has.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Huffman/McClintock amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, last year, the House voted to remove longstanding language from the fiscal year '16 Department of Defense Appropriations bill that sourced Pennsylvania Anthracite to a public utility in Germany, which provides energy and heat for our troops stationed in the Rhine area and, in particular, in Kaiserslautern.

While seemingly well-intentioned, my colleagues misrepresented the overall costs associated with this provision, and they painted this as the poster child for government waste.

Taking their concern into account, the Appropriations Committee drafted language for fiscal year 2017 that does not prescribe the energy type or where it is to be sourced from, with the exception that the energy be domestically produced here in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, nearly 56,000 American defense personnel and family members reside in the Kaiserslautern military community. There are more overseas U.S. defense installations and personnel in Germany than in any other nation. Their well-being is of the utmost importance.

Unfortunately, the amendment to strike section 8127 will place the energy needs of our military installations and, by the way, all the dependents, those family members, clearly in the hands of Russia.

And I am not the only one sounding this alarm. In February, Commander of the U.S. Forces in Europe, General Philip Breedlove, testified before the House Armed Services Committee that, and I quote: ``European continued dependence on Russian energy, specifically former Soviet and Eastern Bloc states, only serves to bolster Russia's ability to coerce those nations to achieve political gains."

Former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO provided testimony before the Armed Services Committee that: ``Mr. Putin's strategy does not rely on military power alone. He seeks to maintain European dependence on Russian gas and

continues to use that dependence as a weapon; he deftly applies a 'divide and conquer' strategy to undermine Europe's cohesion."

Mr. Chairman, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia, Dr. Evelyn Farkas testified that "the Defense Department should no longer do any business with Russia." She concluded that "we must work with Germany and other allies to meet Europe's natural gas demand in a way that gives them leverage against Moscow, not the other way around, and benefits U.S. companies and alternative suppliers."

Those who have environmental concerns need to recognize that even Greenpeace evaluated the facilities at Kaiserslautern in 2013. They set a goal for the reduction of CO2 emissions by 2020 greater than 40 percent, with a 35.4 percent reduction that was achieved by 2014.

Mr. Chairman, I do agree with my colleagues that we should do everything in our power to increase efficiency, but the cold reality is that if we do not domestically source energy for our troops, it is going to be left in the hands of Russia.

I encourage my colleagues to take into consideration what is at stake and reject the Huffman amendment. Failure to address these concerns could leave our servicemen and -women serving overseas in a new and very literal cold war.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to the balance of my time?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California has 2 1/2 minutes remaining.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the other gentleman from California (Mr. *McClintock*).

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Chairman, I do not support the war on coal that is waged by this administration and my friends on the left, but I do support the war on waste, and I support this amendment based upon that fiscal imperative.

Now we are told our defense budget is so stretched that we now have to scavenge museums for aircraft parts. Yet there appears to be plenty of money to squander in a corrupt earmark that dates back to 1961.

As has been pointed out, that earmark requires that one American Air Force base in Kaiserslautern, Germany, has to purchase 9,000 tons of coal a year at a grossly inflated price, plus the cost of transporting this overpriced coal across the Atlantic Ocean and halfway across the European Continent.

The latest excuse we just heard is, well, otherwise we have to buy coal from Russia. Well, why in the world would we want to do that?

One company in Poland produces 48 million tons of coal from 23 mines. It produces more coal in an hour than this base uses in a year. And the objection seems particularly ludicrous, considering that the NDAA authorizes hundreds of millions of dollars for rocket engines purchased from Russia.

The Pentagon and successive Presidents have consistently protested this waste, but these protests have fallen on deaf ears in Congress, even while we are told that our defense spending has been cut to the bone.

If we don't change the spending trajectory of this government, the Congressional Budget Office warns that, in 6 years, interest on the national debt will exceed what we spent this year for our defense. That makes rooting out waste like this a national defense imperative.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. *Barletta*).

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment offered by the gentleman from California. A vote for this amendment is a vote to force American servicemembers serving abroad to rely on Russia as their source of energy, energy they need for warmth and comfort.

The language that this amendment strikes simply requires our military base in Kaiserslautern, Germany, to use at least one American energy source for heat and power. If we remove this, our military base will have to turn to Russia for energy.

Now Vladimir Putin has used Russian energy as a weapon in international politics before. We should not give him that power over our military assets.

I urge my colleagues to reject this amendment and stand against Russian influence over the energy used by our military personnel.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to another gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. *Dent*).

Mr. DENT. Mr. Chairman, I want to concur with the comments of my colleagues Mr. *Thompson* and Mr. *Barletta* in opposition to this amendment. I work closely with our friends in Germany. I am chair of the Congressional Study Group on Germany. I also have been very close and meet with many leaders from Kaiserslautern. They are very pleased with the arrangement that we have had with their community for a very long time. In fact, I met with their leaders, their municipal utility, and we have had these conversations.

But what they have said is true. We might as well call this the ``Buy Russian'' amendment. Buy from Russia because if you are going to replace anthracite from the

United States, there is really only one place you are going to get that. It is in Russia or perhaps in maybe some Russian-dominated areas of Ukraine right now.

That is it. If this energy is not sourced in the U.S., it will be sourced in Russia. As has been stated, Russia uses energy as a weapon against the West, particularly against our European allies. Why we would be unwitting allies with Vladimir Putin on this little dustup on Kaiserslautern is beyond me.

For all these reasons, I say oppose this amendment, buy American-sourced energy, and reject this buy Russian amendment.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, the boogeyman of Russian coal and Vladimir Putin really do strain credulity. In addition to the option of buying coal in Germany itself, which would obviously be one way to do this, as my colleague, Mr. *McClintock*, points out, there is abundant coal alternatives if they want to buy coal in Poland, our NATO ally, or in Ukraine, an ally that we would like to help in lots of ways as they strive for independence and economic development under the boot of Vladimir Putin's Russia.

The last thing that was raised, the fact that somehow the language in the base bill would not require coal from Pennsylvania, is also a red herring. The language in this bill that says domestically sourced energy is required and other provisions effectively mean that the status quo--the sweetheart arrangement with one specific coal company in Pennsylvania--would be the only way that the Air Force could comply with this requirement.

So let's reiterate our bipartisan opposition to this wasteful, zombie earmark. I ask for an ``aye" vote.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. *Huffman*).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.