Senator Richard Stone

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NEWS

Senator Richard (Dick) Stone

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STONE BILL WOULD EQUIP PRESIDENT WITH RESOURCES TO STAND UP TO OPEC

FOR RELEASE IN A.M.S OF MONDAY, June 23

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Senator Richard Stone will introduce legislation today to arm the President with the facts necessary to pursue a policy of reciprocity in energy price negotiations with OPEC and other oil exporting countries.

The bill would direct Executive agencies to provide the President with the information he needs to stand up to OPEC and demand a reasonable energy price.

"We cannot continue to afford paying the prices which OPEC is demanding on the world market for oil and oil products," Senator Stone emphasized. "Our economy cannot recover, inflation will not decline, and recession will continue to deepen if we don't confront OPEC armed with all the economic and scientific facts that tive us the ability to negotiate firmly."

The Stone bill would require the heads of Executive agencies to furnish the President with an inventory of U.S. exports and assistance to foreign countries which sell crude oil, natural gas and petroleum products to the United States.

"We don't need to stand helplessy by while our country suffers economically," the Senator said. "We should negotiate with the weapons at our disposal -- with the economic, military, scientific and educational benefits these countries now receive from us."

The Senator's bill would provide the President with information on commodities which the U.S. currently exports to these countries; research and development projects and educational and training programs overseas; foreign investments, both held by the U.S. in

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these countries, and held by the oil-exporting nations in the United States; and military assistance provided to these nations.

"This information -- ready at hand -- will give the President the leverage to negotiate on better terms with OPEC," Stone stated. "He will be able to use the facts to tell the OPEC nations that, if they continue to demand unreasonable prices from us for a resource we need, we will reciprocate in kind."

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EDITORS' BRIEFING No. 21
June 26, 1975

FROM SENATOR RICHARD (DICK) STONE OF FLORIDA

(This is one of a regular series of briefing papers to keeps editors, reporters and news directors informed.)

STONE SEEKS COLLEAGUES' AID TO OPEN DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

Because of my belief that open government works, as demonstrated in Florida, I promised last year not to attend closed sessions of the Democratic Caucus. This informal but well organized group advises the Senate leadership on the majority party's policies and priorities for legislation.

Since I came to the Senate this year, I have fulfilled a campaign pledge not to attend closed caucus meetings except those dealing with national security matters, by attending only one session which dealt with the Senate investigation of the CIA.

This week I sent a letter to my 60 Democratic colleagues in the Senate seeking their support in either opening the Caucus fully to the public and press--or at least to open a few Caucus meetings on a trial basis. The letter has just gone out and it is too early to determine what the response will be.

In the letter I told my colleagues:

"I have seen at the state level and at the federal level that allowing the public to attend legislative meetings does not hamper the smooth functioning of government.

"Closing a meeting is often a futile gesture. We all know that no meeting is ever really secret. Information about what goes on at closed meetings is usually leaked to the press and the leaked information is frequently inaccurate and incomplete.

"The best safeguard against distorted news reports is to open the meetings and allow the press and the public to hear for themselves what decisions their legislators are making and what their reasons are. Closed meetings are an unnecessary restriction on the public's right to know how their country is being governed."

I also noted for my colleagues that the House Republican Conference has already decided to open its meetings and that 105 Democrats in the House have signed Rep. William Chappell's petition that aimed at opening the House Democratic Caucus.

I decided to write my colleagues and seek public support for the open Caucus after five months of friendly discussion with the Senate Democratic leadership failed to win any agreement for a trial of open Caucus meetings.

This initial failure has not surprised or particularly discouraged me, as I believe the simple merits of the idea have not yet been fully developed and presented to the Senate leadership. I have now advanced the discussion into a more public stage in hopes of spurring more active consideration of the idea.

When sunshine in government was a developing idea in Tallahassee, I can remember that one reporter had to be carried bodily out of the State Senate chamber after he said he would not leave because the people had a right to have a press representative report to them on what went on inside. Those meetings were opened soon thereafter.

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KEY SENATE LEADERS BACK STONE'S NEW ENERGY BILL

This week I introduced a bill (S.1989) to help the United States to stand up to the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC) in price negotiations. The bill would direct government agencies to provide the President with the information he needs to pursue a policy of reciprocity and to seek a reasonable energy price.

We do not need to stand by helplessly while our country suffers economically. We should negotiate with the weapons at our disposal--i.e., with the economic, military, scientific and educational benefits these countries now receive from us. We should tell the OPEC nations that we know how to "adjust" prices, too, if necessary. This bill would provide the facts on which that approach will depend.

Joining me as principal co-sponsor of this bill is Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield. Joining him as co-sponsors are Interior Committee Chairman Henry Jackson, Senate Democratic Energy Task Force Chairman John Pastore and Florida's senior senator Lawton Chiles.

SUPPORTING FACILITIES FOR FLEMING KEY

The Fleming Key animal quarantine center for imported breeding cattle is scheduled to open in 1978, but animal disease support facilities at Plum Island (New York) need to be built first. The Senate passed by unanimous consent last Thursday a resolution I introduced to urge the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to report to Congress quickly on the Department of Agriculture's request for $9.45-million for expanded Plum Island facilities. It is my first measure to pass the Senate.

The money would be used to expand high security animal quarantine facilities and diagnostic laboratories and to build a pilot vaccine production plant.

The Office of Management and Budget has been considering the Dept. of Agriculture's supplemental appropriations request for more than a month. Congress cannot vote to appropriate the funds until OMB submits its recommendation.

COMMITMENT TO OPEN LANDS AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Congress has long committed itself to the recreational and cultural enrichment of the American people through conservation of open land and clean water and through the preservation of historic properties.

These twin goals were embodied in the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 and the Historic Preservation Act of 1965. Although the nation has made great strides forward in this area since then, these goals will not be fully realized in the next 10 years unless federal funding under both acts is increased to meet the states' mounting needs.

I recently co-sponsored S.327, a bill to increase funding for land and water conservation from $300-million each year until 1989 to $1-billion for each of those years. The legislation also establishes the National Historic Preservation Fund to match the over $150-million which the states have committed to the preservation of our nation's history.

As we enter upon the celebration of our nation's bicentennial, it is increasingly important to preserve for future generations America's natural and historic resources.

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NO SPEAKER'S FEES FOR STONE, BUT FLORIDA HOUSE MAY BENEFIT

It has long been my policy to accept no money for speaking engagements. If I have to fly to another city to address a group, I will accept from them a coach class round-trip air ticket. Though Senate rules allow each member to earn up to $15,000 per year from speaking engagements, I believe that appearing before groups in Florida--where most of my speeches are made--is part of my job as a U.S. Senator, and not an occasion to increase my earnings.

Earlier this month, Florida House--the nonprofit center for Florida affairs in Washington--received a $500 donation from the National Association of Electric Companies as the result of a speech I made to the group. As in the case of the NAEC, whenever a group insists that it has budget money to pay a speaker and desires to use it I will suggest that they consider giving whatever amount they deem appropriate to Florida House. The proceeds, small as they might be, would help to offset Florida House operating costs, which are raised entirely through private and business contributions. (The Florida House operating budget for 1975 is $62,500.)

The NAEC donation came only after they insisted they wished to make an appropriate gift. My office will never suggest to a group that a gift to Florida House is my "fee." Even the round-trip air ticket is not a "fee" because I do not require a ticket if a group is unable to pay.

A photostat of the NAEC check and record of any future donations to Florida House that result from public appearances I make will be kept in a public inspection file in my Washington office.

Florida House, a Capitol Hill townhouse with a view of the Supreme Court and the Capitol Building, was opened through the efforts of Sen. and Mrs. Lawton Chiles to provide hospitality and a meeting place in Washington for all Floridians. This spring my wife, Marlene Stone, became a member of the board of directors.

RECORD VOTES

Continuing Appropriations

By a unanimous vote of 90 yeas on June 19 (myself included), the Senate passed H.J.Res. 499 making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 1976 available until individual appropriations bills are enacted, or until the end of the current legislative session.

Unemployment Compensation and Housing Tax Credit

By a vote of 70 to 3, in which I voted with the majority, the Senate passed H.R. 6900 to allow an additional 13 weeks of benefits under both the emergency unemployment compensation and the special unemployment assistance programs, and to extend this latter program for one year.

During the course of debate on the bill, I voted against an amendment which would have increased Medicare Part B premiums, which cover the voluntary medical insurance part of the Medicare program for essential doctors' bills. The motion was tabled. I believe this is no time to increase the burden of inflation on those who can least afford it.

I voted for an amendment (passed 56-19) and against a move to table that same amendment (rejected 32-43), which provides that,

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in the case of the tax credit awarded for the purchase of a new home, the purchase price must be considered the lowest price at which the residence was offered for sale as of Feb. 28, 1975. I also voted for an amendment (passed 40-32) to extend from March 26 to June 19, 1975, the date by which construction must have begun on a principal residence for homebuyers to be eligible for tax credit.

New Hampshire Senate Seat

During the past week, the Senate has been entangled in consideration of S. Res. 166, the New Hampshire election dispute. I believe that it is the constitutional duty of the Senate to make the final determination, if the election result is ascertainable, and I have voted accordingly in a series of record votes.

On June 19 I voted:

--Against a measure (failed 40-59) to declare the contested seat vacant by August 1 if an agreement has not been reached by that time;

--For an amendment (adopted 92-1) to use New Hampshire state law in effect as of Jan. 6 as the basis for resolution of the various contested points;

--For a motion (passed 94-1) to agree to the guidelines by which the Senate is considering the contested election.

--For a successful tabling motion (passed 48-38) to an amendment authorizing an investigation of voting machines in Manchester by the Senate Rules Committee.

On June 20 I voted:

--Against a move (failed 34-49) to direct a complete recount of all ballots cast in the election to be conducted by a panel of three attorneys approved by the American Arbitration Assocation;

--Against an amendment (failed 22-47) calling for the Senate Rules Committee to conduct a complete recount of all ballots cast in the election;

--Against a move (failed 29-52) to declare the seat vacant by July 1, 1975, if the issue is not resolved by then;

--Against an amendment (rejected 32-47) to direct the Rules Committee to recount any and all precincts at any time requested by either Mr. Wyman or Mr. Durkin during the proceedings;

On Saturday, June 21, I voted:

--For a tabling motion (passed 41-18) to an amendment requiring the Rules Committee to conduct a re-tally of all precincts in which there was a change in the count for either Wyman or Durkin from the election night totals to the recount totals;

--For three procedural points: 1) directing the Sergeant at Arms to request the attendance of absent Senators in the floor; 2) compelling such attendance; and 3) calling for recess that day. (All passed, 45-1, 45-3, and 42-7.)

--In favor of an amendment directing the Rules Committee to investigate the dispute "Michaud" ballots cast in Nashua, New Hampshire, on November 5, 1974. The amendment failed 23-33. I sided with the minority in this vote believing that these two disputed ballots, presumably cast by Albert and Bertha Michaud,

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may involve election fraud and call for handwriting analysis to determine their validity. I felt that this matter should be resolved now, during the course of Senate debate on the resolution, rather than waiting until debate is concluded.

On June 23, I voted against a tabling motion to an amendment providing that the Rules Committee not consider again any ballot among those approximately 3,500 which it has previously considered (rejected, 33-51).

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