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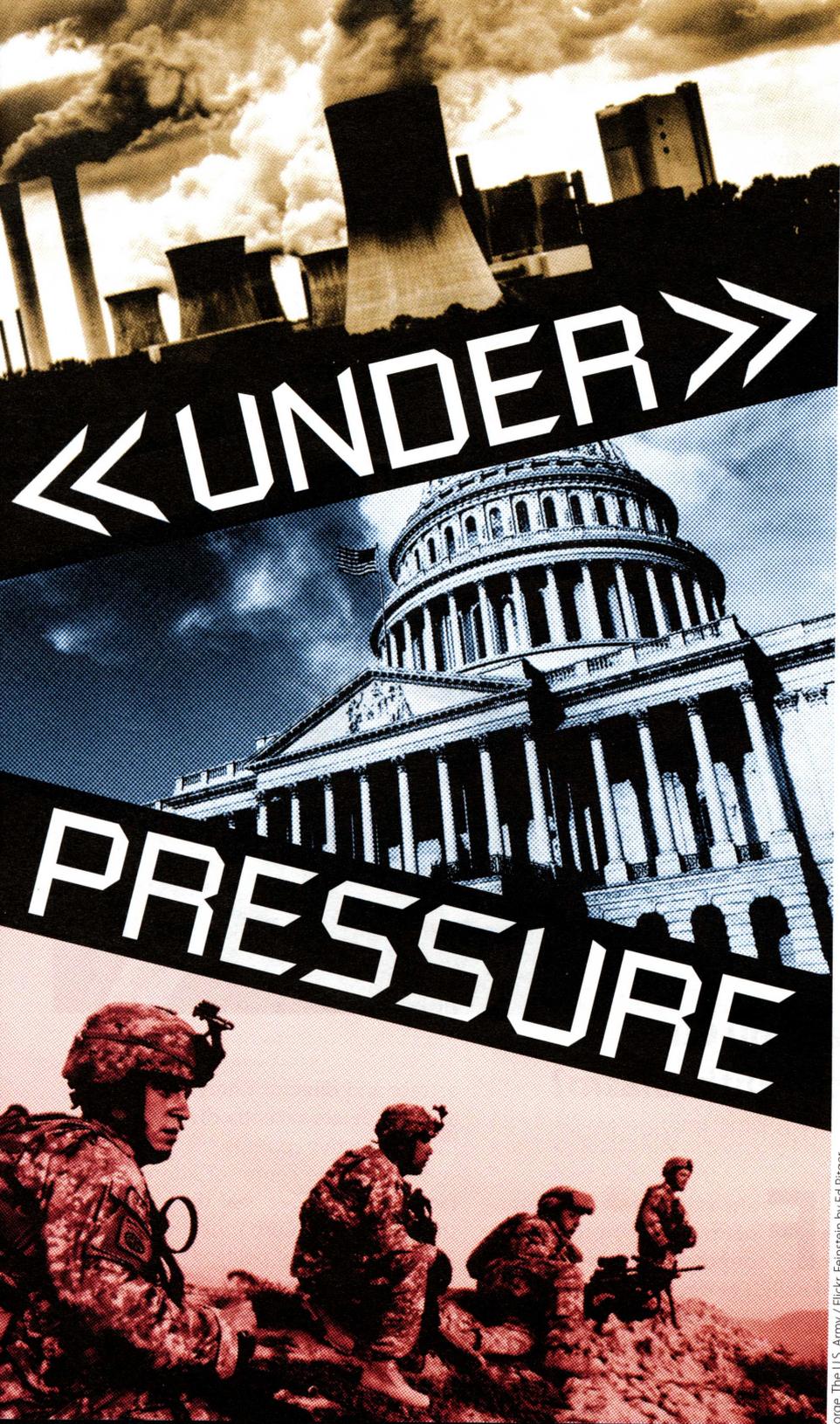
The Commonwealth

THE MAGAZINE OF THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF CALIFORNIA AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2011



**SENATOR
FEINSTEIN
AMERICAN
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DALTON: Let's start in the Middle East. You've been very clear that the U.S. goal in Libya is regime change and the removal of Muammar Gaddafi. Now, there's protest in Syria, where [President Assad] is using tanks, and there are concerns there, but the U.S. is imposing sanctions. What do you think the U.S. should do in Syria? Should it be regime change, or something else?

FEINSTEIN: I think we need to be very cautious. There are actually five revolutions that are taking place in the Middle East. There was Tunisia. There was Egypt, which is still ongoing. Now, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and then some problems, [though] not revolution, in Jordan. We've got a situation where there is a lot of instability; there are serious unknown consequences of action. My own view is that we've got 30-plus thousand troops in South Korea, we have 100,000-plus in Afghanistan, we've got 30,000 to 35,000 in Iraq. We have major problems to watch with Iran and Pakistan – one trying to become a nuclear power and the other a nuclear power and very unstable.

The commitment of American resources at this particular time should be looked at very conservatively. I had questions about getting into Libya in the way we did. Nonetheless, I think the president has been correct. No boots on the ground; America would lend its technology in terms of the no-fly zone and the attempt to take down the command and control system, and then turn it over to NATO, because NATO was a willing partner in this situation.

Now, Libya begins with Gaddafi and ends with Gaddafi. We know the kind of person that Gaddafi is. We know the president has said, "Gaddafi must go." The question comes: How do you back that up? That's the unknown in getting involved in these situations. We have a law against assassination. Gaddafi will not move. Therefore, there is stalemate right now in Libya. What do we do about that stalemate?

DALTON: What do we know about the opposition forces in Libya? There have been some conflicting statements about whether al-Qaida is there or not. Admiral Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said, "No al-Qaida." Other NATO commanders have said they have seen flickers of al-Qaida. You're the chair of the Intelligence Committee. What can you tell us about any al-Qaida presence in Libya?

Photos (top to bottom) by davipt, Crazy George, The U.S. Army / Flickr, Feinstein by Ed Ritger

California's senior senator discusses global hot points and local political hot spots in a wide-ranging Climate One conversation. Excerpt from "Senator Dianne Feinstein," April 27, 2011.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN U.S. Senator

IN CONVERSATION WITH GREG DALTON Director, Climate One; Vice President of Special Projects, The Commonwealth Club of California

FEINSTEIN: I think the bulk of the so-called rebel movement is composed of [ordinary] people – students, young lawyers, academicians – but that can't be a terribly large number. The rest is really unknown. I think there is some information in the public press that there are al-Qaida figures that have returned to Libya to do some training. How deep or wide that is, I can't say at the present time.

But if you're going to arm people, you really need to know that they're going to use those weapons wisely and well and are trained. This becomes very difficult, because there's a certain liability that a nation assumes when it does this. We are providing some non-lethal equipment. At the present time, we are using the Predator drone, which can really be very specific in its strike, much more so than an aircraft. That's about it right now.

DALTON: Can you envision, as a result of the stalemate, somebody – the British, French, Italians or perhaps the United States – needing to put boots on the ground to [assert] more force if the stalemate continues?

FEINSTEIN: Again, this is a learning experience as we go. What we've seen is it's very difficult to win this thing from the air.

DALTON: Right. Typically, that's the [case].

FEINSTEIN: So that's a lesson for everybody who says, "The United States has to get involved in this." Look at what's happening to people. There's only so much we can do at this time. We're sorely tested financially as well as militarily. So we really should consider very carefully the national security interest of our country before we get involved.

DALTON: And what is that interest in Libya? They have 1 percent of the world's oil. Can they attack our allies? What is the overriding national interest in Libya?

FEINSTEIN: The national interest goes back a ways to Gaddafi himself, and probably to the takedown of the airliner for which Gaddafi is [responsible], and to the kind of dictator that he has been. I don't think that's really enough. And, you know, if you're going to look at national security interests, there are much more in Yemen, which is a safe harbor, where we know the people are who are manufacturing this new explosive,

which is undetectable in magnetometers, and where we know [terrorist leader Anwar] al-Awlaki is. It's to a great extent Syria that becomes a pivotal nation with respect to Iran and a point of transfer for weapons coming from Tehran to Damascus and Lebanon. Lebanon now has at least 40,000 rockets, some of



them much more sophisticated than the last time Israel went to war.

DALTON: Is that pivotal role of Syria one reason perhaps the U.S. isn't pushing President Assad a little harder?

FEINSTEIN: I can't answer that. I don't know the answer to that question.

DALTON: Secretary of State Clinton was in conversation recently with former Secretary Kissinger. Secretary Kissinger made the remark that a lot of these Arab rulers have been in power for decades. Looking back, he surmised that perhaps the U.S. could have or should have anticipated that the time would come – perhaps not all at once – where they would be challenged. Do you think the U.S. intelligence community maybe should have seen some of these regimes becoming destabilized? Or did they?

FEINSTEIN: I happened to speak with the president this morning, and one of the things that I mentioned was, in my view, our intelligence coming out of the Middle East with respect to the movement of people is not very good. With respect to terrorist plots and counterterrorism, it's much better. I think we need to see a change. As we

know, this morning or tomorrow morning, the president will make an announcement.

DALTON: About Leon Panetta being the secretary of defense and General Petraeus becoming the head of the CIA.

FEINSTEIN: I believe that may be correct.

DALTON: You've been very outspoken about WikiLeaks and what you think ought to be done. How has the revelation of who thinks and says what about whom played into the dynamic in the Middle East? Has it harmed U.S. interests?

FEINSTEIN: I believe it is harmful to United States interests, and we have a very specific espionage law, written, I think, in 1918; it essentially says that the transfer of either classified or unclassified information to do potential harm to a nation – I had it written down; I was going to read it and I left it in the car. But essentially WikiLeaks qualifies, in my view, for a prosecution on the espionage statute.

DALTON: Do you think Julian Assange should be extradited from Sweden, if he goes there, to the United States?

FEINSTEIN: I think he has done this nation harm. People have died and will die because of what he's doing, and he's done it with knowledge and with intent. Yes, I do think he should be prosecuted.

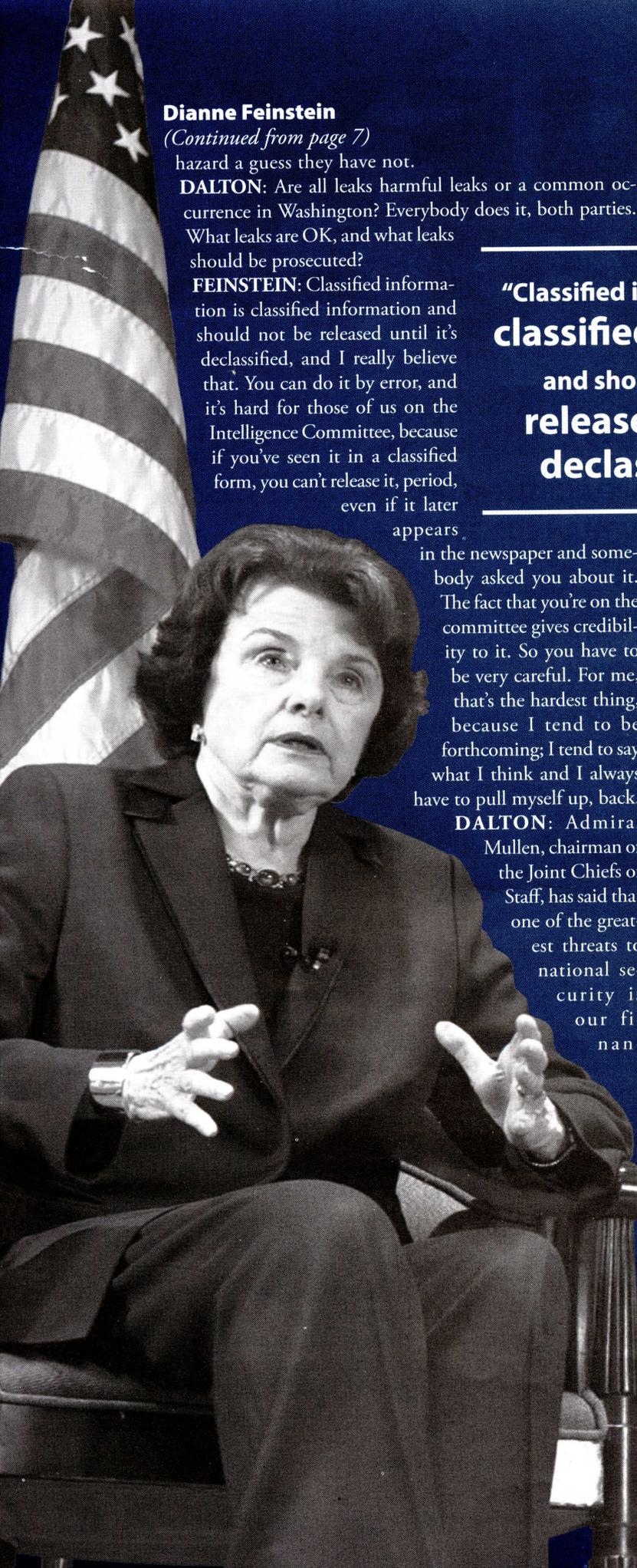
DALTON: Do you think that we've learned about things that shouldn't have happened? Is there any good side to WikiLeaks, that we've learned about things that the government was doing with power, that maybe people ought to know about or is all –

FEINSTEIN: Of course, but you're taking both classified and unclassified information that is transmitted through a supposedly secure network – which is another story, because that network is not nearly as secure as it should be – and laying it all out.

DALTON: Though some of it has been redacted and some news organizations would say, they have –

FEINSTEIN: Assange didn't redact it. The news organizations did some redaction. The news organizations – I could speak for *The New York Times*, I believe – talked with the government and redacted some of the names. I don't know if all of the other publications that he has released this to have done the same thing, but I would

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Dianne Feinstein

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hazard a guess they have not.

DALTON: Are all leaks harmful leaks or a common occurrence in Washington? Everybody does it, both parties. What leaks are OK, and what leaks should be prosecuted?

FEINSTEIN: Classified information is classified information and should not be released until it's declassified, and I really believe that. You can do it by error, and it's hard for those of us on the Intelligence Committee, because if you've seen it in a classified form, you can't release it, period, even if it later appears

in the newspaper and somebody asked you about it. The fact that you're on the committee gives credibility to it. So you have to be very careful. For me, that's the hardest thing, because I tend to be forthcoming; I tend to say what I think and I always have to pull myself up, back.

DALTON: Admiral Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said that one of the greatest threats to national security is our financial

"Classified information is classified information and should not be released until it's declassified."

cial situation. So let's talk about the budget situation. We've recently been through an unusual middle of the fiscal year budget fight over continuing to fund the government for the rest of this fiscal year, and almost shut down the government. I believe it was Paul Krugman of *The New York Times* who wrote that the Democrats had a chance last fall to pass a budget for the entire year and chose not to, because the elections were coming. Is that a fair assessment?

FEINSTEIN: They also have to get 60 votes, and it's difficult to do it because, unfortunately, what the Republicans have done is slow-rolled in the Senate: Virtually everything that comes up goes to cloture, which means it has to get 60 votes. You can look at the numbers and see that in

the past session this began, and it's continuing to some extent in this session, and the minute you begin a cloture motion, it runs for three days.

So it slows things down. It's a way of stopping the president's appointments. It's a way of stopping progress, and it's wrong. I'm elected to go there and cast a vote, yes or no, and a majority is 51 votes in the United States Senate. So what they have effectively done is created a super majority, sometimes even to bring up a bill, to vote on a bill, you need 60 votes. So the cloture and 60 votes becomes a determining factor, and I believe that's a mistake.

DALTON: Paul Ryan is a Republican from Wisconsin who has put forward a roadmap for the upcoming budget battle that preserves Medicare for people over 55 and preserves Social Security for people over 55. What do you think of the Ryan roadmap?

FEINSTEIN: It's basically unfair, that's what I think of it, because what it does is make the cuts basically in programs that the poor and the lower income of our nation are dependent on. And it does this to avoid having to put taxes back up where they were for the very wealthy –

Everybody in this room has watched the recession, and we know who gained and who did well and who didn't do well. [The Ryan approach is] a huge mistake. I don't think you can solve the problem without revenue increases, and it should be a fair share. When I was mayor and I had to make some changes in the revenue structure, we did it in a fair share way that everybody does their fair share. You can't leave the very wealthy out of this problem.

DALTON: So your position is to let the Bush tax cuts expire, which President Obama extended for a couple of years?

FEINSTEIN: That's correct. It's about 3 percent. It's about \$40 billion over a period of 10 years. It's important funding and it's necessary, because where we're going to go is into real class animosity if we don't maintain fairness. It's estimated, I think [Alan] Blinder wrote, that some 72 percent of [Ryan's] cuts are taken just so the wealthy can maintain the 36 percent instead of going up to 39 percent, and it's just not right.

DALTON: We addressed the revenue side. How about the expense side – Social Security, Medicare, defense?

FEINSTEIN: The best chance for movement in the Senate is the Bowles-Simpson plan. We now have from that committee that worked on it three Republicans and three Democrats essentially [who] have sat down to see if they could come to an agreement on how to proceed. That, to me, offers the most hope. I'm told that they may have an answer within the next couple of weeks. I hope they can reach an accommodation, because Democrats, though we're in a bare majority, can't do anything to get the 60 votes without some Republicans. So if that can be the case, that's the best of all worlds, and it should combine the revenues and the cuts.

DALTON: Speaker John Boehner recently said that big oil companies do not need the oil depletion allowance, and the president then got on that issue. Do you think that that is true, that the subsidies for fossil fuels ought to be changed as part of this –

FEINSTEIN: Absolutely, and a lot of other things as well.

DALTON: How about encouragement for renewable energy?

FEINSTEIN: Well, I happen to believe that global warming is real. I have a constituent breakfast every [week], and I go through this. I'm surprised how many people don't know that the atmosphere around the Earth is limited, and that when you put fossil fuels and carbon dioxide or methane or other things into that atmosphere, they don't dissipate. They warm the atmosphere. We've had a degree of change in the last century ever since the Industrial Revolution, and so the temperature of the Earth is warming.

I looked up at a map of the Arctic and you see, for the first time in history, the Northwest Passage open year round. You see the oceans beginning to rise. You see the weather changing, which is a product too of global warming – more tornadoes, more heavy hurricanes, raindrops bigger. And you know that if we do nothing in the next 100 years, the Earth will warm four to seven degrees. It's catastrophic if that happens.

And people believe that the Earth is immutable, that it doesn't change. Go back 250 million years and the likelihood is that there was just a single land mass and that land mass split apart based on earthquakes, based on volcanoes. The Earth can change, and we can destroy the Earth unless we're sensitive to these changes. So there is no question in my mind that we need to pay attention, and the way we need to pay attention is the development of alternatives to fossil fuels. That can be done. Just the other day, the governor signed legislation coming out of the legislature, which requires a 33 percent renewable

standard for California energy. That's positive. We have led the way and California will have a cap-and-trade system. I think the United States can well learn from that system.

DALTON: A question from the audience asks: Are California climate policies putting other state-funded programs at risk by driving industries out of state that produce jobs and tax revenues?

FEINSTEIN: I don't believe that. Energy is the largest source of new jobs for this state. The estimate is that it can produce 100,000 additional jobs. Whether it's solar or wind or biofuels, a lot of experimentation is going on at the University of California, at the labs, to come up with additional fuels. I went over to see the old Toyota factory, which is now a Tesla factory, [where they're building] an all-electric automobile which is very smart-looking. Things are happening, and we have to support them and see that the programs are in place that enable solar and wind

to really develop to be a substantial share of our energy production.

DALTON:

One way that some people think to do that is to make fossil fuels more expensive or have them actu-

ally reflect their true cost. The Bowles-Simpson plan calls for a 15-cent-a-gallon tax increase on gasoline. There's a group here in California

“Energy is the largest source of new jobs for this state; it can produce 100,000 additional jobs.”



that includes George Shultz and people from Chrysler and Volvo who want to raise the gasoline tax one penny a month over 10 years, very predictably and stably. Do you think the gasoline tax ought to be part of some mechanism for encouraging renewables in addressing climate change?

FEINSTEIN: Well, I go slow on that. We have very long commutes for workers in this state. You know, if you're buying \$5 a gallon gas for 20 gallons a tank and you're driving 100 miles to work and 100 miles back from work, which people do, it's very expensive. This is not the time. Gasoline is high, the nation is trying to pull itself out of recession. We need to keep gasoline below the \$4 mark right now.

DALTON: Another energy issue that you've been engaged in recently is nuclear energy. The disaster in Japan has raised new questions about nuclear programs in the United States and elsewhere. Recently you wrote a letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that they should consider newly discovered fault lines before granting license extensions for operating nuclear plants. Most of the U.S. nuclear plants are near the ocean. Several of them, like the Diablo Canyon in California, are near earthquake faults. How do you think we should respond on a nuclear front after Japan?

FEINSTEIN: We have 104 nuclear plants in this country; two in California. About 23, I think, have the same nuclear system as the Daiichi system. There should be deep concern over what happened in Japan. It's a big learning lesson. I visited the two nuclear plants, both Diablo run by PG&E and San Onofre run by Southern California Edison. What I found there was staff very much concerned about safety, really good staff – 1,100 staff at Diablo and 3,000 staff at San Onofre, each one producing about the same amount of megawatts.

However, what we have is a lack of attention to the whole fuel cycle and, particularly, the spent fuel cycle. Hot rods are put in pools, where they remain for up to 24 years now in our state. They should remain there for five to seven years, then they can be transferred to what are called *dry casks*, which are like cylinders that are made to survive. They were made as transfer products for the fuel rods to be put in and transferred into permanent nuclear storage somewhere. That was going to be Yucca Mountain. Yucca

Mountain is no more.

We need either regional or centralized nuclear fuel storage. It's asking for trouble to keep hot rods in spent pools for decades and dry casks right on the site of nuclear reactors. They should be moved away.

DALTON: An audience question says: Thank you for your work with baby bottle toxins. Do you think regulation of toxins and plastics will be feasible in the current political climate? There's a phthalate bill that

**“It's asking for trouble
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came out of San Francisco, went to California, and now you hope to make it national.

FEINSTEIN: I did a bill to essentially ban something called phthalates from plastic toys. It was based on some science that came forward that said these plastics, with their softeners and their hardeners, are really bad, particularly for young children.

I have been trying to remove BPA from baby bottles, from infant formula, and I haven't been able to get it through yet. But there is solid evidence that it's an endocrine disrupter for small children, and that means that they have changes in their endocrine system, and we now know that girls are increasingly going through puberty at a much younger age. So I become very interested in chemicals that are added that we know very little about.

Europe has a precautionary system. That means that the chemical has to be tested and found to be benign before it's added to a product. We don't. You have to prove after it's added to a product that it's harmful.

This is a hard fight, because the grocery stores want it, but there are some that are now taking action voluntarily to see that it does not exist and taking on BPA and baby bottles. I'm very proud. Wal-Mart, Target, other places don't sell them. Baby bottle companies are now changing. So there's good news happening.

DALTON: Can you talk about the terrible killings in Mexico?

FEINSTEIN: Yes. You have seven big cartels that are now down to four big cartels and they're called drug trafficking organizations. They are more brutal than the Mafia ever was, and it's just terrible. In Ciudad Juarez, I think some 35,000 people have been killed. The brutality, the chopping off of heads, the killing of families, the killing of law enforcement, of reporters, of judges, is just a scourge, and you have a president, Calderon, who's trying to do the best he can to fight it. You have a real element of corruption within the military and within the police in Mexico.

What we are trying to do through special task forces is build vetted units that can concentrate on intelligence on both sides of the border and begin to address special operations through the FBI. Mexico is now extraditing people to the United States to be tried. Some of the Arellano Felix cartel, which was the Tijuana cartel, and is now taken over by another cartel – most of those leaders are now serving time in American prisons. So this has to continue.

DALTON: As long as we buy and want this stuff and the guns come from the U.S., what's our accountability and role in creating the demand and supplying the guns?

FEINSTEIN: Well, some people say legalize drugs. I'm not there. I've seen what drugs have done to people. I spent five years sentencing women convicted of felonies in the early 1960s down at the state prison as an appointee of [Governor] Pat Brown's. I saw firsthand what drugs do to people and the addicting quality. I visited Needle Park when it existed in Zurich and I saw people passed out on the ground and vomiting. I don't think legalization is the way to go.

We need to concentrate on prevention, and that begins with the very young. Parents need to play a much bigger role than they [now] play in knowing what their youngsters are doing, what they're smoking, what they're drinking, what they're using.

DALTON: Will you run for another term, Senator? And when can we see your birth certificate?

FEINSTEIN: Yes, my intention is to run for another term.

And I don't know where my birth certificate is. But I was born right up here at UC Medical Center on Parnassus. Ω