

the decision of what kind of care you will get, whether you will get an operation, whether you will be able to say, stay in the hospital a few extra days, have that decision be made by the physician and his patient, in consultation with the patient, and not by the insurance company.

Too many people have been denied care under their HMO policies or their managed care policies, and that should not be the way it is in this country. We have quality health insurance, but people have to be able to assure, if they need a particular operation, if they need a particular procedure, that they can have it.

That is what Democrats stand for, and that is what we will be fighting for over the next four weeks.

CUBAN TERRORISM AGAINST AMERICA CONTINUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning first of all to commend the FBI. They yesterday carried out a very important operation in furtherance of United States national security, along with, obviously, other law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida.

The United States is indeed blessed to have agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and our other law enforcement agencies, as well as the intelligence community generally, that works day in and day out to protect the national security of the American people.

Yesterday, the arrests that were made, ten in all, were of spies for the Cuban dictatorship, agents of the Cuban dictatorship engaged in activities, in espionage activities, to infiltrate U.S. centers of military, political, economic and academic power, as well as means of communication. That is the mission of the state security intelligence services of the Cuban dictatorship.

So when we see an action such as the one carried out yesterday by the FBI, all of the American people have to feel pleased, supported and protected, and in exchange I think it is the duty of all Americans to support the FBI, to commend the FBI and our other law enforcement agencies.

I think yesterday's arrests of Cuban spies in the United States underlines the true nature of the terrorist state in Havana. These arrests by U.S. authorities of numerous Cuban intelligence agents, I am sure, will serve to remind the American people of the genuine nature and continued threat posed by the Cuban totalitarian regime, just 90 miles from the shores of the United States.

Despite what is evident on behalf of the majority of the media and the

means of communication is a total ignoring of the reality of Cuba. Just the night before, how ironic, CNN, that television network that has sometimes been referred to as the "Castro News Network" because of its fetish for seeking to make Castro at all costs look good, and I know that is something that is impossible, but it is continuously attempted to be done by CNN. CNN had provided one hour of prime time to the Cuban tyrant, one hour of prime time, with the main objective of giving him an opportunity to white-wash and somehow project that he did not in fact in writing call for a nuclear first strike upon the United States of America during the missile crisis in 1962.

Castro, some of you may have seen the interview, pulled out these books of reports and tried to somehow say, obviously with no follow-up, absolutely no follow-up questioning by the CNN reporter, that no, he did not really mean to say that the Soviet Union should launch a nuclear first strike.

Well, how ironic, that just the next day, and a generation later, it is that same regime led by that tyrant that has spies in the United States that were arrested for precisely caring out activities against U.S. military and political centers of power.

So I commend the FBI. There is so much more that has to be done. There is an indictment that is prepared, it is ready, it was prepared by the U.S. Attorney in South Florida, against the Cuban regime. This was leaked out of frustration, by the way, by the U.S. Attorney to the press, when evidently from Washington the order came down that the indictment was not to be issued.

Prosecutors have an indictment ready charging the Cuban government as a racketeering enterprise for a 10 year conspiracy to send tons of Colombian cartel cocaine through Cuba to the United States. This indictment is ready. The evidence is available. It is overwhelming. The Clinton Administration has in fact ordered this indictment to be placed in a drawer and hidden. Because of the frustration, it was leaked to the media.

I have not even had time to address the dangers this morning to our national security from the nuclear power plants that Castro is building, but, Mr. Speaker, in coming days I will address on this floor those threats.

REPAYING THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, first of all, to commend my colleague from Washington (Mr. SMITH) who spoke earlier today. I was sitting in my office going through correspond-

ence from my constituents when I heard his comments on the plan to spend the interest on the Social Security trust fund on a tax cut that is part of the Republican Party, the majority party's plan either to have this year or next year.

I think this is one of the largest mistakes that we could make in this country. I think we have to go back and take a look at the economic history, the fiscal economic history of the United States, to see where we are, how we got there and the risk that this plan provides to the American people.

It was not too long ago in 1992 when the country was looking at fiscal deficits in the range of \$292 billion a year. In fact, if we go back to 1981, we see since that time the national debt has quadrupled to \$5.4 trillion. In terms of our gross domestic product it has doubled to the level of 677 percent to the level of our Gross Domestic Product, something that no business or no state or local government in our country would allow their finances to get into. Interest on the debt has become the third highest Federal program since 1981, tripling over that time.

Now, after many years of very strong fiscal medicine to get our fiscal house in order, starting with the 1990 budget agreement that was passed by the Democrats in the House and the Senate, the 1993 budget agreement that was passed by the Democrats in the House and the Senate, and followed by the 1997 bipartisan Balanced Budget Act, the Congress has now been able to show the country that we can live within our means and get the budget in balance, and this year in fact we are looking at the possibility of a surplus in the range of \$65 billion in the unified Federal budget.

But that should not cover over the fact that we still have this enormous debt, and it should not evade the fact that the total unified budget would only be in balance because of the huge surplus in the Social Security trust fund.

Some of my colleagues have suggested that perhaps the interest on the Social Security trust fund is not really the property of the Social Security trust fund or the beneficiaries. I would remind my colleagues, and I contacted the Treasury Department to get a copy of the bond that the Social Security trust fund is invested in, and that is a bond just like any American or anyone could go down to their bank or to their brokerage House and buy, and it is a bond backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Government, just like any other Treasury bond. It is not just the principal, but the interest that is paid.

The interest on the Social Security trust fund belongs to the beneficiaries of the Social Security trust fund. The idea that somehow you could bifurcate the trust fund, only giving the principal and not the interest, makes no sense at all. Certainly those of us who come from the business world, and I

know many of my colleagues on the Republican side came from the business world, as did I, would never do anything like that. They would be laughed out of the marketplace.

But what this comes down to is taking money from the Social Security beneficiaries and using it for a tax cut, which we could not need. But even worse than that, what this would do is add to the national debt, that is already starting to consume a vast amount of our annual Federal budget.

And what does the Congressional Budget Office say? The Congressional Budget Office says even if we stayed within the levels of the 1997 balanced budget agreement, but allowed for demographic growth, no increase in spending, with the growth in Medicare and the growth in the Social Security system as the baby-boomers come on line with retirement, that our national debt could get as high as 200 percent of the gross domestic product by the middle of the next century, which would mean that interest on the debt would become the largest Federal program and would start to squeeze out things like education, like national defense, as well as Social Security and Medicare.

Now, let me also remind my colleagues what the esteemed chairman of the Federal Reserve, who we often hear about on the floor of the House from both sides of the aisle, said about the situation. He was very clear in a hearing before the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services just a few weeks ago that paying down the debt was the most important thing we could do. In fact, he said the paydown of debt associated with the Federal surplus has helped hold down long-term interest rates.

Let us not spend the Social Security beneficiaries' money on a tax cut. Let us pay down the debt.

INFORM AMERICAN PEOPLE OF RESULTS OF ATTACKS ON TERRORISTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago the President addressed the Nation and told the American people that based on convincing evidence he had linked the bombings of the embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to Osama bin Ladin, the Saudi millionaire whose base of operations is in Afghanistan. He went on to say that he had given our Armed Forces orders to launch cruise missile attacks against these targets. The first, of course, was a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan. The second target was a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan where evidence pointed to the fact that it was being used to manufacture chemical weapons.

Mr. Speaker, what troubles me about this is that since these strikes were

made, we have not heard anything more from the President or his administration about this matter. The question is, did we achieve our bombing objectives at these two sites? Where is Mr. Ladin today? Is he still alive and still operating in secret and conspiring against the United States, or was he in the training camp when we destroyed its base of operation in Afghanistan?

As the days went by after these retaliatory strikes were carried out, new information surfaced about the pharmaceutical plant in Sudan. On September 1st, the Los Angeles Times reported that Shifa Pharmaceutical Plant produced human and veterinarian medicines for the impoverished nation and the evidence about Mr. Ladin's financial stake in the facility had been overstated.

Mr. Speaker, the President owes this country a full accounting, because the orders he gave, which were carried out, could have far-reaching effects that impact every U.S. citizen living both here and abroad. There is a long history of terrorist activity against the United States. Sadly, our response has been weak at best.

I would like to read you a quote from Mr. Jensen, an international editor of the Rocky Mountain News in Denver in his article entitled "Responding to Terrorist Attacks." He states,

Our government imposes sanctions on so-called rogue nations that sponsor terrorism, which hasn't altered their behavior one bit, but one makes no effort to go after terrorists on the ground. In most cases it does not even retaliate for terrorist attacks.

Mr. Speaker, we are a civilized nation and thus far have refrained from fighting terror with terror. Is that the answer? Mr. Jensen goes on to say that Israel, through the Mossad, has perfected the art of fighting terror with terror.

Mr. Jensen's article also points out that over the last few years, 90 foreign hostages, including 11 Americans, have been held in captivity by Hezbollah and its operatives. Eleven were killed or died while in captivity.

Such atrocities cannot be allowed. Do we as a nation deal with such vicious attacks against our citizens by seeking to use the rule of law? According to Mr. Jensen, in the few instances where we have retaliated, such as President Reagan's bombing of Libya and President Clinton's use of the Tomahawk missiles, the civilian casualties that resulted have caused such international outrage that our reasons for taking such actions were totally obliterated.

We must make our enemies realize that if they take action against our country, we will take swift and decisive action against them as well.

Therefore, it is not my intention this morning to criticize the President's actions, because I think they were justified, based upon American intelligence and foreign intelligence. Thousands of people were killed in Kenya and Tanzania, and I do not think we should stand

idly by and pretend it did not happen. However, I am concerned that we have lost credibility in the international community because of the confusion about why we took the actions we did against these specific targets.

Mr. Speaker, my message is simple today: Mr. President, do you not think the American people have a right to know whether our mission was successful? Please tell us today.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 38 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. EWING) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Kenneth L. Samuel, Victory Baptist Church, Stone Mountain, Georgia, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray. Gracious God, our help in ages past, our hope for the new millennium, and our strength to stand this day, we are deeply grateful for the amazing grace and the wondrous mercies which have established us and sustained us as a people. Lord God, we have seen you move in and throughout our history to cultivate us and to correct us and to challenge us to make real the vision of our national mantra: One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

We know that the challenge to secure the rights of everyone, without denying the rights of anyone, is easier said than done. We know that the distinction between mercy for our weaknesses and judgment for our wickedness is often difficult to discern. But we also know that for every noble vision, You provide sufficient provision. And so we look to You for divine direction to accomplish Your divine directive.

Father, when You have shown us the way, please give us the courage and the faith to walk therein. We thank You today not just for the blessings You have bestowed upon us, we thank You today for the opportunity to make our blessings count. We thank You today for the opportunity to demonstrate our greatness through our service to humankind, and in that light we ask that You would help us to become greater than we have ever been before.

We offer this prayer in the name of the Christ who came that we might have life, and life more abundantly. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the