

The point is, this is not an accident; this is a destination that has been long planned. There are some around here who now gloat about it, that they have caused a shutdown. They may well cause a debt default. It is my judgment there is no good reason for anybody to gloat. There is no credit in this set of circumstances. We need to solve these problems together.

I want to tell you what the problem is in the differences in priorities. The 7-year plan—and I have no problem with 7 years—the 7-year plan to balance the budget is a plan that is fundamentally unfair. Let me describe it this way: You take the poorest 20 percent of the people and you say to them, “We are going to burden you with 80 percent of all the spending cuts.” To the poorest 20 percent of the American people, we are going to say, “We are going to burden you with 80 percent of the spending cuts.”

Then you turn to the wealthiest 20 percent of the American people and say, “Guess what, get ready to smile. We are going to give you 80 percent of the tax cuts.” The poorest 20 percent is burdened with most of the spending cuts, and the top 20 percent is rewarded with tax cuts.

Now, I do not know what school you attend to take a course in fairness that comes out that way, but it is a school that ought not be accredited. That is what this debate is about.

The other side says, “Well, we’re for the middle class.” I did not know what they meant until I saw one of our colleagues on the House side, a Congressman from Pennsylvania, and he said his salary of \$133,000, plus a \$50,000 pension that he also gets, “doesn’t make me rich.” He said, “That doesn’t make me middle class. In my opinion, I’m lower middle class.”

This Republican Congressman said, “When I see someone who is making from \$300,000 to \$750,000 a year, now, that’s middle class.” I guess now I understand what they mean when they say they are here to help the middle class—somebody making \$600,000, \$700,000 a year. Well, you know, there are a lot of folks that are not middle class making \$600,000 or \$700,000 a year in this country.

Ronald Reagan, when he proposed a budget plan, he said, “We’re going to have a safety net for the most vulnerable Americans, and there will be seven things in the safety net. We’re not going to cut them—Head Start, Medicare, Social Security, veterans, SSI, school lunches and summer jobs for youth.”

Guess what? Six of these are under the budget knife. Six of what Ronald Reagan said was in the safety net over a dozen years ago are now under the budget knife of this crowd.

No, this is not about whether there should be a balanced budget. Of course there should. It is about the priorities. It is about describing \$600,000-a-year people as middle income and saying, “By the way, we’re helping the middle-

income folks.” What about the people that work all day, every day, for 8, 10 hours, work hard, come home, take care of their family, making \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 a year, and then discover that much of what they rely on is gone, going to make it harder for them to send their kids to college, going to kick some of their kids off the Head Start Program—55,000 of those kids. Every one has a name. They are told, no Head Start Program; 600,000 summer youth do not get a job because we cannot afford it. But we are off building star wars and B-2 bombers.

No, these priorities are wrong. We ought to balance this budget and we ought to do it soon, but we ought to get the priorities squared away. Let us not talk about middle-income families as \$600,000 a year and give them a big, fat tax break and say, “By the way, we’re here to help the middle-income folks.”

What a bunch of nonsense. There is no school in America that teaches us this is the definition of “middle income.”

There is nothing wrong with someone making \$600,000. God bless them. I wish everybody could do that. But there is something wrong to tell vulnerable people, kids, families who are struggling, that we cannot afford you, but we can build B-2 bombers and star wars because that is where our priorities are. Those are bad priorities, and we ought to change.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRIST). The Senator’s time has expired.

Mr. DORGAN. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BOXER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

CONGRESS IS STILL GETTING PAID

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I want to certainly applaud the Senator from North Dakota for his words because they are right on target. This is day two of a partial shutdown of the Government of the United States of America. And, yes, we know it is not impacting too many Americans yet, but it is hurting some veterans, Social Security recipients, those who use our national parks, museums, and monuments, those who need to travel and need to get their passports for business who have already paid for their airline tickets and cannot get their passports.

There are environmental laws that are on the books that are not being enforced because they are not deemed “essential emergencies.” That is dangerous. And I might say, there are hundreds of thousands of American workers staying home who chose to work for the Federal Government because they believe that is a proud place to work, and they do not know if they will get their pay. I think they are asking a very legitimate question, and that is:

What about the pay of Members of Congress? What about that?

Well, unless the House acts as the Senate did and passes the no-budget, no-pay bill that I authored with Congressman DICK DURBIN, Members of Congress will get their pay—oh, yes, do not worry—while they send to the President debt extensions and continuing resolutions loaded down with political blackmail. They are getting their pay. They are getting their pay.

NEWT GINGRICH said in April, we are going to “create a titanic legislative standoff with President Clinton by adding vetoed bills to must-pass legislation increasing the national debt ceiling.” And that is what he has done. But he has protected his own flock of supporters over there. And I hope people are ringing his phone off the hook, telling him to pass the no budget, no pay. It was supported here by Senator DOLE and Senator DASCHLE, and it passed here twice. Today, the House has a chance to join us because it is in the DC appropriations bill. It is in the conference, and it turns out that Senator JEFFORDS and Senator KOHL are going to push it. Congressman DURBIN is on that conference. All the Members of Congress have to do is vote to send the President a short-term continuing appropriations bill clean, not loaded down with the budget fights because those budget fights are coming.

Why have we not had them yet? Because this Republican Congress has not done its work. They have not finished the appropriations bills. They have not finished the reconciliation bill. When they do, it will be vetoed by this President because of its cruel cuts in Medicare, its cruel cuts in Medicaid, its repeal of national standards for nursing homes, its deep cuts in environmental protection, its deep cuts in education.

This President and the Democrats in this body want to have a balanced budget, but we want to do it the right way, not the wrong way. We are not going to steal from Medicare and Medicaid and education and give a tax cut to those earning millions of dollars a year.

Under their plan, if you earn \$350,000 a year you are going to get back \$5,500 a year. Oh, but Members of Congress are getting paid while this standoff happens, while a million workers are wondering if they can pay their rent. And I can tell you, if not this, what is our job? If not to come together and keep the Government running, what is our job? This is not a ball game.

This is the greatest Nation in the world. When I was a stockbroker, I watched the financial markets, and they shivered when the President got sick or there was any threat of instability.

I am going to show you a quote. The Washington Post wrote on November 15: “Newt’s Nightmare for America. Budget gridlock could send stock prices down as much as 20 percent and lead to higher interest rates and a weaker dollar.”

Is this why we should be getting paid? We should not be getting paid.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. FORD. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. President. What is the timeframe now? We had morning business, I think, until 12:30, and then it was extended. I am not sure where we are.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. To recognize two remaining Senators, the Senator from Minnesota and the Senator from Montana, after which morning business will be closed.

Mr. FORD. I thought it was those Senators on the floor at the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. FORD. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period for the transaction of morning business be extended to the hour of 1:30 p.m. today, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

GREAT MYTHS: ELVIS LIVES—AND THE PRESIDENT SUPPORTS A BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, to the ancient Greek philosophers, the Earth was the centerpoint of the entire universe. We were fixed in one position, while the Sun, Moon and planets revolved around us.

It was, at the very least, an egotistical assumption.

But it held, for about a thousand years, in fact, until Copernicus came along in the 16th century with a radical idea of his own. This Polish monk who moonlighted as an astronomer decided that the Greeks had it completely backward—that the Sun, in fact, was the central heavenly object and that the Earth, Moon, and their planetary cousins orbited around it.

Even though he was dismissed as a heretic at the time, his revolutionary notion eventually changed the course of science forever.

Well, about 350 years have gone by and today, once again, some long-held beliefs about what actually revolves around what are being challenged. And this time, we are talking about the Federal Government.

Over the course of this century, the Federal Government has gradually developed the attitude that it rests at the center of the Nation's political power.

The people exist to service it.

The States exist to service it.

After 40 years of especially excessive growth, everything today seems to revolve around the Federal Government, and the Government has spent billions of dollars, building up trillions of dollars of debt, trying to justify its existence and all the money we have continually poured into it.

That is in spite of the Constitution, and the very protections built into it by the Founding Fathers to keep a bloated, arrogant, intrusive Federal Government from taking hold.

In 1995, this Congress has the revolutionary idea that things worked better back in the old days, that the Federal Government should revolve around the people and the States, not the other way around.

Our commitment to making that fundamental change is the driving force behind our plan to balance the budget by the year 2002. Unfortunately, trying to convince President Clinton that a balanced budget is worth fighting for is what this temporary Government shut-down is all about.

To Congress, a balanced budget within 7 years is nonnegotiable, as it should be. To President Clinton, it is a political poker chip. He promised during his 1992 campaign that he would eliminate the deficit in 5 years.

Since taking office, he has proposed goals ranging from 10 years down to 7, but in the two budget plans he has actually submitted to Congress, the budget never even comes close to balance.

And yet he strode into a news conference yesterday to announce that: "I proposed to Congress a balanced budget, but Congress refused to accept it."

He used the phrase "balance the budget" 16 times in his brief statement, then walked away without facing the tough questions that would have followed, or should have followed, if the press would want to make the President accountable for his statements.

What he neglected to mention is that his so-called balanced budgets were so ridiculously out of balance that they did not get a single vote—Republican or Democrat—when they were brought before this Chamber.

Mr. President, I have received more than 500 telephone calls from my Minnesota constituents over the last 3 days, and the overwhelming majority of them—seven to one—agree with Congress. "Stick by your guns and balance the budget," they are saying.

Mark and Sally Crowell of Burnsville, MN felt so strongly about it that they sent me this fax yesterday—something they said they did on behalf of their four children. The fax says:

If President Clinton doesn't want to balance the budget and wants to shut down the government, we guess we are going to have to put up with it for a while.

They—the Democrats—have had 40 years to get it right and have shown that they have no intention of balancing the budget. Balance it for our children!

Nobody wants a prolonged Government shutdown. Federal workers deserve better than that. The Americans who rely on Government services deserve better than that. Most of all, the taxpayers deserve better than that.

But until we can get past all the campaign rhetoric, threats, and flat-out lies we are hearing from the White House—and until we get a commitment that we will have a balanced budget

within 7 years—I am afraid we are not left with much of a choice.

Mr. President, we have debunked a lot of the world's great myths over the last 350 years:

We now know that the Earth revolves around the Sun, just as Copernicus suggested.

If you sail toward the horizon, you will not fall off the edge of the world.

Man can build a flying machine and even take it to the Moon, which, by the way, is not made out of green cheese after all.

All that is left to prove is that Elvis really is dead and that President Clinton does support a balanced budget.

The first one should be easy, but empty rhetoric aside, it is going to take a lot more evidence than we have seen over the past week to convince Congress and the American people that President Clinton is truly serious about wanting a balanced budget.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BURNS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

A BALANCED BUDGET—SOMETHING Clinton is truly serious about wanting a balanced budget.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, if we are going to be quoting, let us start off with the President. Candidate Clinton said he would balance the budget in 5 years. President Clinton says it cannot be done. Yes, he would embrace a 7-year budget agreement. Now that is not any good anymore. He said he wanted a 10-year plan—I am not real sure—but all with a caveat of, "Yes, I would use and want to use CBO figures," real assumptions. He said that in his State of the Union Address. Now that is off the table.

Basically, what we are saying here is what is on the table: Balance the budget in 7 years using CBO's assumption and real economics. That is all we are asking. I do not think that is too much. It is because we have a very deep feeling and support for education. It is because this side of the aisle is very supportive of and deeply cares for Medicare that we want to save it. We do not stick our head in the sand. Medicare spending will actually go up some 45 percent in the next 7 years, and you say we do not care? Medicaid continues to go up. Welfare continues to go up, even with reform.

And we care for children and grandchildren. Instead of handing them a bill that their country is so far in debt they never will see the bottom—we are spending \$1 billion a day in interest on the national debt now, and to those who would not support a balanced budget, are you saying that you want your benefits now at the expense of your children or your grandchildren? That is the funniest parent I have ever seen, or grandparent.

By not taking the meaningful steps to confront the problems we have now