

yet to send us a budget that is balanced at all, not in 10 years, not in 9 years, not in 8 years and not in 7 years.

So because we have this impasse, the people of this country are certainly concerned. There are people who say, "Settle it. Pox on both your houses, settle it."

I just ask people who say, "settle it," do they want us to settle it at the cost of our future security, our future prosperity?

Do they want us to settle it at last year's spending rates so that we cannot possibly meet our goal of a 7-year balanced budget? Do they want us to settle it regardless of the promise that we made in 1994?

Mr. President, I ran on a platform, in 1994, of a balanced budget. I promised the people who voted for me, and I promised everyone whether they voted for me or not, that I would come up here to try to balance the budget, to try for a 7-year balanced budget. The President also, in his campaign, in 1992, promised the people that he would work for a balanced budget. The President made the promise, I made the promise. The difference is, I am keeping my promise.

I think that is the issue here. The people have been promised for 25 years a balanced budget in this country. But the politicians have always walked away from it. And the reason is, they did not have the guts to look at entitlements, and everybody knows entitlements are more than 50 percent of our budget, that they are the toughest of all things to work with. This Congress did something different. This Congress kept the promise by tackling entitlements, by saying that welfare is going on a budget, just like your family budget, just like your small business budget. Welfare is going on a budget.

So we have produced reform of a very important former entitlement. It is an entitlement today, but hopefully if we can do what is right for the long term of this country, it will not be an entitlement. It will be a budget item. And we will have limitations on welfare for able-bodied recipients for the first time in this country since we created the welfare system.

So it is very important that the people understand that we did reform welfare, that we did take on Medicaid entitlements, that we are going to give it to the States so that they can do it without Federal strings, in a more efficient way, that we are going to save the Medicare system from bankruptcy, so that it will be there for our future generations.

Mr. President, we are keeping a promise, and it is not an easy one. It would be more comfortable to just cave. Sure, I would like for everyone to go back to work in Government. I would like to take the easy way out. It would be much more comfortable. But, Mr. President, my constituents did not put their faith in me to take the comfortable, easy way out. My constituents elected me because they believed that I would keep my promise.

I am not going to mortgage the long-term security of this country for a short-term comfort rate. I am not going to do it because the people elected us to represent them, and they sent a powerful message in 1994. They want a balanced budget and they want people who are tough enough to do it.

So I did not get elected to come here and cave to the President, who made the same promise that I did, but is walking away from that promise. I am not going to walk away. I am going to stand here for a balanced budget in 7 years. We are doing it in a responsible way. In fact, a lot of people think we should do it in 5 years. But we are saying, no, we believe 7 years would keep the economy strong at the same time that we are doing what is right for the long term. So we are making the right decision for the short term and the right decision for the long term.

Mr. President, this is a crossroads for our country. As the great "philosopher" Yogi Berra once said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." Well, once again, we have a choice of which road to take. We have the choice. Mr. President, the Congress is going to stay on the road that will take this country back to prosperity and stability. We are going to bring back what made this country strong in the first place. Families, the spirit of entrepreneurship, the small businesses, a strong national defense built this country. We won the cold war because we were strong, not because we were weak. And we are going to do what is right, Mr. President, in the short term and the long term. We are not going to walk away from our promises, and I wish the President would do the same.

Mr. EXON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, apparently, the present occupant of the chair wanted to make some remarks; is that correct?

(Mrs. HUTCHISON assumed the chair.)

Mr. INHOFE. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. EXON. Madam President, we have been trying to go back and forth. As I understand it, my colleague from Oklahoma wishes to make some remarks. I would agree to that. I hope that the Chair will see fit to recognize the Senator from Nebraska after the Senator from Oklahoma has completed his remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will recognize the Senator from Nebraska, Senator EXON, following the remarks of the Senator from Oklahoma.

The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

SENDING TROOPS TO BOSNIA

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, let me thank both Senators from Nebraska who have been kind enough to allow me to have a little time. I appreciate it very much. I will try to return the favor some time.

Madam President, I have a feeling that this is a historic moment right now, that we may not have any more votes, and we may be leaving all of this up here and going back, hopefully, for the Thanksgiving holidays, in which case I have a couple of comments I want to make. They are not really exactly on the focus of today, but I will also go back and wind up with some thoughts I have on this subject.

There have been some rumors—and I always hate to talk about rumors on the floor of the U.S. Senate—that have come from so many different unrelated sources, and I am concerned that during the period of time that we will be in the Thanksgiving recess, there may be some agreement reached and our troops may be deployed to Bosnia.

This concerns me very much, and this is not a very appropriate time to bring it up. But I do think that we need to get on the record and remind the President that this Senate passed, just 2 days ago, a strong sense-of-the-Senate amendment to the DOD appropriations bill which says that we, Mr. President, want you to come to the Senate and to the House of Representatives for authority to send troops into Bosnia.

It was a very similar situation that the President of the United States at that time, George Bush, faced back in the early nineties when he wanted to send troops to the Persian Gulf. He did not want to come to Congress. He felt it was necessary and that we had vital national interests in the Persian Gulf and we had to go. Yet, he did not want to do that and take a chance of being turned down. So we have a similar situation today.

I can remember talking to one of the generals training over at the 1st Armored Division in Germany. Those are the troops that were going to go to the Persian Gulf. Now he is training the troops that would go to Bosnia. He related to me an experience of sitting and listening to the radio, hoping, and praying that George Bush would take this to Congress to get authority. They did not want to be sending their troops into a hostile area without the American people behind them.

I see exactly the parallel situation here. I certainly hope that the President will come to Congress and not use an opportunity when we might be on recess to deploy troops to Bosnia. Not too long ago, before the Senate Armed Services Committee, we had Secretary Christopher, Secretary Perry, and General Shalikashvili. I asked them the question, after they defined the mission the United States has in Bosnia. The mission was twofold: First, to contain a civil war to the former Yugoslavia, and second, to protect our position in NATO and the integrity of NATO. I felt—and I think several other people who have spoken on this floor feel the same way—that those two missions are not worth the loss of one life.

Shortly before, General Rose—Michael Rose, who is the commanding

general of the U.N. forces in Bosnia—had made a statement that if America gets involved and sends troops over to Bosnia, we will lose more lives than we lost in the Persian Gulf war, which was 390. I asked the question to all three of these top officials representing the President of the United States. I said, "Is that mission worth the loss of 400 or more American lives?" Secretary Perry said, "Yes." Secretary Christopher said, "Yes." General Shalikashvili said, "Yes."

I think there is the honest difference of opinion, and we need to see how that opinion is shared by the American people and by both Houses of Congress.

I certainly admonish the President if, during this period of time, if the temptation comes to deploy troops, to think of the troops going over there without the American people behind them.

A HISTORIC TIME

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, this is truly a historic time. Some of us have been working on this idea of balancing the budget for many, many years. When I look over and see the two very distinguished Senators from Nebraska, I want to remind them of another great Senator from Nebraska in years past. His name is Carl Curtis.

Carl Curtis, back in 1972, came to me as a member of the Oklahoma State Senate and he said we want to get a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution passed. He said, of course if that happens we have to have the States ratify it.

He had an idea. This came from the genius from the State of Nebraska, I say to the two Senators from Nebraska. He said we should preratify a balanced budget amendment. Go to the States and get two-thirds of the States or three-fourths of the States to preratify a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

I introduced a resolution in the Oklahoma State Senate. It passed. We became the first State to preratify a balanced budget amendment.

I remember the argument at that time. At that time the total national debt was \$400 billion and there were radio and TV ads and they were stacking hundred-dollar bills up—at that time I believe the Empire State Building was the tallest building—and they were stacking \$100 bills up and they said that is the size of the national debt.

Of course we know today that was just a drop in the bucket. That is how significant this thing is. That is how long many of us have been working on it. This is truly the opportunity that we have to do it.

The Senator from Indiana just a few minutes ago made a statement that rang a bell. He said this is a moral issue. I think we should look at what we are faced with and what the President is faced with, his temptation to veto this Balanced Budget Act of 1995, to look at it as a moral issue.

I had occasion to be at the national prayer breakfast where we had several foreign visitors coming in, and one from Moldavia, a former Soviet State, came in very proud. He was smiling. He said: "Senator INHOFE, how much in America do you get to keep?"

I said, "I am sorry. I do not understand what you are saying."

He said, "Well, how much in America do you have to give the Government so you can keep something?"

Then I knew what he was talking about. He was talking about how much do we pay in taxes. I gave an answer I would be embarrassed to share on the floor because I am not sure how accurate it is, because he said in all pride they have a system over there in Moldavia where they work for about 3 months and they have to pay the Government—he said, "We pay the government 80 percent of what we make," and then with the pride showing through in this new-found democracy and free economy he thought they had, he said, "We get to keep 20 percent."

We look at that in this country, how could they be so proud of being able to keep just 20 percent? But the fact remains that someone born today, such as my three grandchildren, if we do not do something to change this course, then that person is going to have to pay 82 percent of their lifetime income just to support Government.

Mr. President, I will conclude by sharing an exciting experience I had a year ago yesterday, November 17, 1994. I was sworn in as a Member of the U.S. Senate. That happened to be my 60th birthday. I thought a year ago, how in the world could I ever top this? What do you do for an encore? You are sworn in as a Member of the U.S. Senate on your 60th birthday.

I say, what are we going to do for the 61st birthday? Yet, something much more exciting happened on my 61st birthday yesterday. We passed the Balanced Budget Act of 1995. This is the act that is going to take our kids out of bondage.

As difficult as it is, and I heard it demagogued around this Chamber that we will be slashing programs. We know we will not slash programs. We know we will be increasing Medicare, for example, at a greater rate of growth than the President himself had suggested before.

I think clearly right now the ball is in the court of the President. We have passed it in the House. We have passed it in the Senate. It is now up to the American people, because we know one thing about our President, he does listen very carefully and watch the polls. If it becomes very evident to him that this is the last opportunity we have to commit ourselves in America to a balanced budget, as I believe this is our last chance, then, I think he may not be doing as he said, and will sign the Balanced Budget Act of 1995.

I thank the Senators from Nebraska for allowing me to move ahead.

I yield the floor.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Oklahoma for his history lesson on Nebraska politics. My colleague from Nebraska and I know a great deal about the history of politics in the State of Nebraska.

I simply say to him one of the great experiences of my lifetime has been service in the U.S. Senate with Henry Bellmon, two times elected Governor of his State. Some of the lessons that I have learned were at the knee of Henry Bellmon when I came here as a freshman after two terms, 8 years as Governor of the State of Nebraska, so I also know something about the political history of that State.

THE BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I have been listening with great care to the speeches that have been made here. I noticed on two occasions my Republican colleagues have brought the name of Thomas Jefferson into the discussions.

It was somewhat amusing to me. I do not know what position Thomas Jefferson would take if he were on the floor of the U.S. Senate today, but as the founder of the Democratic Party I suspect that he might not appreciate too much the Republicans invoking his name in the support of the proposals that they are making.

Facetiously, it kind of reminded me, Mr. President, of my own dad. As a very young lad, brought up in a very traditional Democratic household with Franklin Roosevelt the new President of the United States, whom my mother and father and grandfather thought was an outstanding individual, and I was thoroughly brought up in the Democratic traditions.

After going to school one day, I came home and I told my dad we had studied a President by the name of Abraham Lincoln, and I asked my dad what he thought of Abraham Lincoln. I did not tell dad that I discovered that Abraham Lincoln was a Republican.

My dad said, "Jim, Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest Presidents that this Nation ever had or probably ever will have. He was a truly outstanding American."

I said, "Yes, dad, but he was a Republican."

Dad paused for a moment, and he said, "Well, yes, Jim, but if Abraham Lincoln were alive today he would be a Democrat."

Now, maybe that is the reverse of what my Republican colleagues are arguing today. But at least I loved my dad and my dad said that to me in jest.

So when we start instituting the names of great leaders, Presidents, political leaders of the past, sometimes we take license that probably we are not entitled to.

Mr. President, there has been a lot of talk about balancing the budget here. I hear the Republican cry today and I think they are talking about saving the children and saving the grandchildren.