

that certainly you can say that the goal is well defined but, in fact, it has not been well defined.

Mr. INHOFE. The Senator from Wyoming, since he was in the Sarajevo area, I am sure observed the same thing I did. Keep in mind, this is the area where there has been fighting only in the last week, since this accord, if that is what it is, has been initiated.

The problem that I see over there is that there is no way to define who the other side is in Sarajevo. In Sarajevo, we have a convulsion of parties that have come in and taken up the vacuum that has been left by the pounding of the various dwellings—the single-family dwellings and apartment buildings—in Sarajevo. The true inhabitants of those dwellings, those wonderful people who were there during the winter Olympics, are not there anymore, and the ones who are in there now are refugees. We do not know where they came from. We do not know if they are Serbs, Croats, or any other, perhaps rogue, element. So it makes it that much more difficult.

Before yielding to the Senator from Georgia, let me just make one other comment about something that the Senator from Wyoming said. He used the term "peacekeeping." I suggest to you now that they are not using peacekeeping. If there is ever a classic area for mission creep, this is it, because we have already crept from peacekeeping to peace implementation.

There is a big difference between peacekeeping and peace implementation. Peacekeeping is an assumption that there is peace to keep. We know there is not peace to keep. The President stood and he said the war is over, we are in a cease-fire. I stood in Tuzla and heard areas where the war is not over. There is firing up there. The President has not been there so perhaps he does not know and perhaps his advisers are not adequately advising.

Before we go back to a budget discussion, I want to state again what I stated yesterday. I may be one last Senator standing alone, but I am going to fight with every fiber of my being to stop the President from this obsession he has been living with for a year and a half, and that is to send American troops on the ground in Bosnia.

CONCLUSION

I am very concerned with the discussion we were having earlier about what is happening in our budget battle. I guess I will sign off by stating at least my position.

We passed a good bill, the Balanced Budget Act of 1995, through this body and through the other body. It is one that is consistent with the mandates of the election of 1994, and I do believe that we have done a good job.

I certainly encourage the President to use the guidelines he committed to during the last CR—that is, a balanced budget in 7 years using real numbers—and come up with something that is acceptable.

At this point, I yield the floor.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia [Mr. COVERDELL] is recognized.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business up to 10 minutes.

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

The Senator should be aware, under morning business, the Senator has 5 minutes.

Mr. COVERDELL. Unanimous consent is approved for 10 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

PUT THE FISCAL HOUSE OF GOVERNMENT IN ORDER

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I want to respond to the remarks of the good Senator and my colleague from Oklahoma who has closed his remarks by talking about the importance of a balanced budget. Let me take just a minute to frame where we are.

It has been a rigorous year, and both the House and the Senate have now passed a Balanced Budget Act, just before Thanksgiving. This is the first time that this has happened in nearly three decades—a Balanced Budget Act in response to the American people. The American people have said over and over to put the fiscal house of their Government in order, like they have to do at home.

We have done it. We came here with a promise, and we have passed a balanced budget. We are sending it to the President. This balanced budget balances it in 7 years, reforms welfare, saves Medicare and lowers taxes. That is our plan.

There are currently meetings underway with representatives of the Senate and the House and the administration. They have not been productive as yet, because there is no balanced budget proposal from the President.

The President says he is going to veto this first balanced budget that the Congress has sent him. He said, "I will not accept it." That is his prerogative, but my question to the President is this: Where is your plan?

We have done our job. We have made our best faith effort. We have sent a rational and reasonable plan to the President. With all the debate and discussions in Washington, you almost have to step back from it to measure the reasonableness of it because all the financial markets in America are responding positively. The stock market is up. Interest rates are dropping. The people in the real world, the people running businesses and running families all across the land, are responding positively to what we have done.

It is time for the President to tell the country and to tell these conferees what his plan is.

Back when I was in high school, they would say, "The jig is up." We have done our work; we have laid the plan before him. He says it is not acceptable. Give us your plan, Mr. President.

Then we can work the two plans together. But this business of criticizing our plan while you have none of your own cannot go on, and America will not accept it.

Mr. President, I would like to talk just a moment about what our plan does and why it is so reasonable. Take Medicare. The trustees told us that Medicare will go out of business in 6 years—broke, bankrupt. It said that the Congress and the President need to step forward and do something about it. Our balanced budget plan does just that. It expands Medicare because it expands the investment in it over the next 7 years by 65 percent. It grows 65 percent larger under our plan. It takes the solvency of it and expands it from the 6 years that are left and pushes the solvency of the plan out almost a quarter of a century. And it expands the choices people can make about the kind of coverage they want.

We increase Social Security spending 44 percent. We increase the size of Medicaid 65 percent. We increase overall Federal outlays 22 percent. The U.S. economy, we are told, will grow \$32 billion in new disposable income. We will create 6.1 million new jobs. We will have \$66 billion in new purchases and 100,000 new housing starts. Ten million more Americans will be able to purchase their first home. We will lower interest payments on the average family's mortgage by \$1,500 to \$2,000 per year. We will lower the interest payments on their car \$200 per year. We will lower the interest payments on their student loan or the back porch another \$200 a year. Because of the tax credits of \$500 per child, in the average family we are going to add another thousand dollars of disposable income.

The bottom line here is, we are creating new jobs, new businesses, new homes, and we are putting between \$2,000 and \$3,000 of new disposable income on the kitchen table of every average American family. We depend on the family to nurture and grow America, to house America, to educate America. That is where we need to put our resources—on the kitchen tables in Hahira, GA, Denver, CO, or Keokuk, IA. That is where the resources need to be, not sent to Washington and redistributed by a bunch of policy mongers. We will help local government.

In my State alone, the balanced budget amendment will create \$333 million over 7 years—\$333 million; that is a third of a billion dollars—in lower interest payments for the State government of Georgia. In my capital city, Atlanta, we will save \$100 million over 7 years in lower interest payments. That is a boon to a city putting on the Olympics next year, which is pressed from every corner to meet its needs. And \$100 million would be saved. In all, \$29 billion will be saved by local governments over the next 7 years—\$29 billion—because we have balanced our budget.

A lot of people, including the President, who talk about the balanced budget, talk about it as if it is a painful exercise, a dreadful experience that we have to drag America through. It is the exact reverse. By taking charge of our budget, by managing our affairs, we strengthen every quadrant of America, and we keep the country strong and healthy so that it can keep on taking care of those who fall through the safety net.

Mr. President, this is history in the making. We have done our job. We have put forward a really solid plan to take charge of America's finances, to help every family in the country and to make America strong as it comes to the new century. Now it is on the President's desk. He promised America he would balance the budget in 5 years. He promised America the other day that he would join us in balancing it in 7 years. It is time for him to fulfill that promise to the country.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ABRAHAM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

THE BUDGET

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I will be brief. Mr. President, I rise to speak along the same lines as the Senator from Georgia and talk a little bit about our apparent budget impasse. We are told—and I read in the media—that political advisers to the President have urged him to resist negotiations, to allow an impasse to continue, to theoretically take the impasse to the American electorate a year from now. That has resulted, as far as I can tell, in very limited discussions so far, limited efforts on the part of the administration to negotiate, and no plan by the administration with respect to balancing the budget, protecting Medicare, or any of the other vital priorities in this country.

I do not know what the President's decision will be. I do know what I read to be the advice he is receiving from his political counselors. I do not know, he may well decide to take the politically expedient course here, Mr. President. Before he does, I hope the President will consider the implications of taking the advice of the political experts as to what is good for next year's election and understand the consequences of doing that, because if an impasse continues for a year, if the President is responsible for there not being a balanced budget passed, it means a lot of very critical, I think, things for the American people. It means, number one, that we will not deal with the problem of Medicare insolvency that is staring this country in the face.

As the Senator from Georgia has already indicated, we stand on the brink of having part A in the Medicare trust fund bankrupt in just 6 years. If the President does not negotiate in good faith, if he plays the political card his

advisers are recommending, then he will not sign, next week, the bill that would protect Medicare and keep the trust fund solvent.

If the President continues the impasse, if the advisers, the political folks at the White House, are successful, it will also mean, I believe, very detrimental things for our economy. We have been very fortunate in recent weeks, as we have seen the stock market go up and interest rates go down. There is a very clear reason for that, and the analysts on Wall Street and elsewhere in this country all say the same thing. They say that the economy and the markets are reacting to the belief that we will have significant deficit reduction when this budget process is over.

Mr. President, if they conclude that the President prefers an impasse for political reasons, then I think the robust stock market and the lower interest rates will be short-lived. Then the President will have to explain why interest rates are going back up again and why the market is going down.

But most important, if the President heeds the advice of the political counselors, instead of doing what is right for this country, the impact will be felt greatest by the families of America, because if we fail to take advantage of this unique opportunity we have right now, Mr. President, to bring the budget under control and to put us on a path toward balance, what it means for the families, as the Senator from Georgia just indicated, is very, very considerable.

It means continuing interest rates at levels beyond what they need to be. It means people paying more for their mortgage, more for their car payment, more for their student loans than they need to make. It means Washington continuing to make more money and keeping it here and making decisions for the families of America that they ought to make themselves.

Mr. President, I hope when the President returns from his trip to Europe that he will reject the opinion of the political advisers, reject the notion of allowing a long impasse to continue, reject the notion of refusing to negotiate upfront in good faith and with his own plan, and instead come to the table, begin the discussions that I think are necessary for us to bring about the kind of balanced budget that we have passed here in the Senate and the Congress and for the American people, the first balanced budget in a quarter of a century.

I hope that the President decides that the political advisers are not what matters and that next year's election is not what matters, but it is the future of this country, the future of our children that matter.

If he does, he will join the Republicans in seeking to balance the budget, seeking to end the impasse, and most importantly, seeking to protect future generations.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll. The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BALANCED BUDGET

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I want to rise to speak, as many of my colleagues have, on two very important issues that the Senate is facing right now.

I think there are great differences between the administration's position and the position of Congress. The first, of course, is the balanced budget. We are trying to keep the promise we made to the people that we will have a balanced budget in 7 years. The President has altered his position, starting in his campaign with a 5-year balanced budget, but then after he was elected saying, "Well, 10 years is good enough, 9 years, 8 years."

Now he has committed to a 7-year balanced budget. The only problem is the President is doing what he has been doing for the last 2½ years, and that is giving lip service now to a 7-year balanced budget, but his offer on the table is, "I need \$7 billion or \$8 billion more in spending." Fine, Mr. President. Where are we going to take that spending from? Silence from the White House.

That is not the kind of leadership that we need if we are going to truly sit down with a commitment to a 7-year balanced budget and say, "All right, here are the parameters, here are the spending limits. Now let's negotiate within these parameters." You cannot say, I need \$7 billion out of the sky, but yes, I am committed to a 7-year balanced budget, but I am not going to suggest where we would take it from. That is because the tough decisions are always the decisions on where you have to cut or slow spending or eliminate programs that do not work.

When it comes to the rubber meeting the road, we have to cut spending. That is how we are going to meet the test. Mr. President, \$7 billion more to spend, without saying where it is going to come from, is always the easy position.

I would love to spend the money on these programs. There is probably not one of them that is not a good program. But does it meet the test of our taxpayers feeling that it is worth their hard-earned dollars to put money in these programs rather than live within our means, like every household and every small business in this country must do. That is the question, and that is the test we are facing right now.

When I am home, people say to me, "Don't blink." I am here to say, we are not going to blink. We are going to do what is right for this country. I hope the President will come to the table and say not only where he would like