

that faith in recent days has been derived, Mr. President, solely, I am convinced, from the failure of the administration to meet the obligation which it entered into jointly with those of us here in Congress.

This Congress passed a balanced budget, a set of proposals that would balance the budget by the year 2002. Every Member who voted for that budget believed not only that obligation, but every one of the other priorities set forth in our continuing resolution just before Thanksgiving with respect to the protection of Medicare, the more favorable tax treatment of working Americans, education, the environment, the entire list. It was perfectly appropriate, I suppose, for the President to disagree with that proposition. That is what makes up political debate. It is perfectly appropriate for Members of the other party to disagree with that proposition. What was inappropriate was the absolute, total, complete, abject failure to come up with an alternative that met their priorities, and met the legal requirement for balance using these honest figures.

It is for that reason, and one other that I will mention in a moment, that we have this second crisis, this second partial shutdown of the executive branch.

Now we are given hope once again that in a relatively short period of time between this evening and the end of the year in fact we will be able to work out a truly balanced budget using the honest figures, the conservative figures supplied by the Congressional Budget Office. Perhaps—perhaps—tomorrow we will see for the first time, for the first time a submission by the President of the United States that meets those requirements, and then we can join in a discussion of how significant the tax reductions for working Americans should be, how dramatically we should reform and strengthen Medicare, what we should do about education and the environment. But to this point we have only budgets which say we ought to spend money in these various areas but not pay for those services, send the bills to our children and to our grandchildren. And that is the cause of the situation in which we find ourselves today.

Even so, Mr. President, we could be discussing this issue more objectively perhaps if there were not the constant interference of the shutdowns of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Interior, our museums, our national parks, and the like.

Well, Mr. President, in that connection, this Congress passed and sent to the President appropriations bills for the whole next year pursuant to which none of those departments would have been shut down whatsoever and bills that were consistent with reaching a balanced budget in the year 2002. And yesterday, the President vetoed those bills. He vetoed those bills and closed

down the national parks, closed down the Department of Veterans Affairs, closed down our museums and tourist attractions here in this city. Why? At least in part because we did not appropriate enough money for them, appropriations inconsistent with ever reaching a balanced budget, and often on rationales which contradicted what he has done earlier during the course of this year.

And so now we have a bit of static in public opinion. We have departments shuttered, closed down, parks shuttered and closed down because of Presidential vetoes on particular appropriations bills passed by this Congress and sent to him but interfering with the far more important long-range goal of seeing to it that we finally give up the habit of determining that today we cannot do without various services, however important they sound, whatever the interest groups are that support them, but that we are not willing to pay for them ourselves. And so we sent the bills to those who cannot vote today, those who are already born, who are children in school but who are under the age of 18 and those who are not yet born. They can pay for what we want for ourselves today.

Mr. President, that is fundamentally wrong. It is wrong from the perspective of our economy. We know that if we honestly balance the budget, we will retain and strengthen lower interest rates. We will strengthen our economy, or new job opportunities that we have. We will give people hope. It is morally wrong to demand services today that we are unwilling to pay for. And the one thing we have not heard in this debate at any time from either the President or the Members of the other party, we ought to spend what the President asked us to spend and we ought to increase taxes. By what, Mr. President, half, two-thirds, three quarters of \$1 trillion over the next 7 years? So that we can have these services but pay for them ourselves. They have not suggested that. Their suggestion remains let us have these goodies now and let us send the bill to someone else, someone without a voice in this Congress.

Now, my friend from Nebraska, who has stayed in the Chamber, has made what I think is an excellent suggestion, and I know that he does share our goals with us. He has said that he is troubled by the fact that so much in the way of these spending reductions are deferred to the end of this 7-year period. And can we continue beyond the year 2002? Well, Mr. President, even if the Medicare reforms that we have proposed were passed lock, stock, and barrel, without any change, we would not have solved the problem of the burden that creates for the American people in perpetuity by any stretch of the imagination.

Oh, yes, Mr. President, I say in response to my friend from Nebraska, there would still be more to do in the year 2003 and 2004 and 2005 and probably

before then. But most of the objections to what we are doing from his party have not come from the proposition that many of these spending cuts take place in the last 2 years. They come because the spending cuts are there at all. They simply do not want to do them at all. And I believe, Mr. President, that if we will look a little bit beyond ourselves, look across the Atlantic Ocean, we will see the ultimate result of a refusal to deal with the social and financial burdens imposed on a society by unrestrained entitlements. We simply have to look at what is going on in France today, a much worse situation than we have here: Strikes and disruptions in services all across the territory of a free country caused by a set of social policies which have choked its economy, which have created unemployment more than twice that in the United States and with no hope for any change whatsoever.

This task that we are taking on now would have been easier had our predecessors taken it on 5 years ago or 2 years ago. It will be more difficult if we defer it until next year or into the next century and the longer we defer it, the more we will look like France.

The time is now. If the Senator from Nebraska has a suggestion that will cause more of these spending cuts to take place earlier rather than later, and to be more permanent, I think he will find many who will support him on this side. Nor does this Senator nor most others say that any one of the numbers within this budget is sacrosanct, whether it is particular spending numbers, particular tax numbers or the like. What we do regard as the bottom line is that we really get to balance; that we provide that dividend to the American people of half a trillion dollars or more which we are told will come from a truly balanced budget using honest figures.

Perhaps we will look back and say today was a major day in the course of reaching that goal. Perhaps this is the day on which the President truly joined in the search for that balanced budget and those dividends. I sincerely hope that that is true. I am certain that if it is true, this will no longer be a partisan exercise but will be one in which the Senator from Nebraska enters into enthusiastically and successfully.

Mr. REID addressed the Chair.

Mr. WARNER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. I yield to my friend from Virginia.

DETERIORATING WEATHER CONDITIONS

Mr. WARNER. I thank my distinguished colleague. I rise for the purpose of advising the Senate, in my capacity as chairman of the Rules Committee, that there are many employees quite anxious to go home in view of the

seriousness of the deteriorating weather. I recognize the subject being discussed is of paramount interest, but I hope we can strike a balance.

I thank the indulgence of my colleague.

MR. REID. Mr. President, I understand that my friend from the State of Oklahoma wishes to make a statement regarding one of his children. I will be happy to yield without losing my right to the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

MR. INHOFE. I appreciate very much the Senator from Nevada yielding to me. I would like to inquire of the Chair, what is the regular order?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The regular order is the Senator from Nevada has the floor.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

MR. INHOFE. All right. Mr. President, I was interested in the statement that was made by the very distinguished Senator from Washington State a few minutes ago when he was talking about those who are not represented here and the moral issue of the conduct in which we have been conducting our country over the past 30 years.

I was reminded of an experience the other day of back when we had our prayer breakfast. This was the international prayer breakfast where we had people here from all over the world, and I was in charge of international visitors, when one of the visitors who was here from Moldavia, which was a former Soviet republic that had gained its freedom, came in and he asked me a question during one of our visits that we had.

He said, "Senator INHOFE, I have a question to ask you. In the United States, how much can you keep?" And I said, "I am sorry, I do not understand what you mean." He said, "How much money do you have to give the government?" Then I got a little better idea of what he was asking.

So I asked the question—in fact, I would be a little embarrassed to tell you the answer that I gave the gentleman that was here from Moldavia. He was so proud. And he said, "In Moldavia, we have a new democracy. We have new freedoms. And when we"—they have some type of a tax collection system where every 3 months or so they collect the taxes. And he said, "Every time we make a dollar, we get to keep 20 cents." In other words, they have to pay 80 cents out of every dollar to support the government there. And he was rejoicing because this was the new freedom that he had discovered.

I got to thinking and looking at the facts, that I do not think anyone will refute, and that is that if we do not do something now about changing this pattern that we established back in the Great Society days of the middle 1960's, that someone who is born today will

have to pay not 80 cents out of every dollar but 82 cents out of every dollar just to support government.

I bring that up today because today is a day that a very important person is to be born, and that person has the name or will have the name—and maybe as we speak has the name—of James Edward Rapert. This will be my third grandchild. So it becomes a much more personal thing when you think of someone coming into this world—such as the Presiding Officer who recently had a young child named Daniel born in his family—all of a sudden it becomes personal. It comes out of the realm of the normal discussion as to the various social programs that the various Senators have stood on the floor of this Senate today talking about—the education programs, the social programs, the poverty programs, the nutrition programs, and all of these—and it becomes an issue of, what are we willing to do to those who cannot be heard, those for whom there is no lobby, such as James Edward Rapert?

I understand that yesterday the House, by a very decisive margin, with many, many of the Democrats, voted to reaffirm the commitment we have to a balanced budget by the year 2002 using real figures, not smoke and mirrors, but using real figures and using the CBO figures. In fact, I cannot imagine when I go back to Oklahoma, such as I was this weekend, everybody saying, well, what is there to debate? I mean, we have the Democrats who ran for office on a balanced budget. We have a President of the United States who ran for office on a balanced budget to the Constitution. And everyone is for it. Who is against it? And I tried to explain the reality up here is not always what it seems to be at home because this, in fact, is Washington.

So we are in a situation—I know there are several who want to be heard tonight. I just want to make a comment about a statement that was made by a very distinguished Member of the other body, John Kasich. The other day he said, "We're in a frustrating situation where we have a balanced budget amendment or Balanced Budget Act that we passed in both the House and Senate, and yet we don't have anything from him." And he said, "It is like going Christmas shopping and going up and saying, 'I want to buy this tie. How much is it?' And they will not tell you.

So he said, "I will give you \$100." They said, "No, that's not enough." "How much more?" Well, they will not tell you."

That is the situation we find ourselves in right now. So we have probably the second most significant issue facing us that we will face for maybe the last 10 years, and that is doing something about a balanced budget. We have an opportunity that is coming up any hour now, any day, certainly I hope it is going to happen prior to Christmas. When that time comes, I

hope we will all remember not ourselves, not all the nutritional programs, not all the things we talk about and how we can wisely spend the people's money that we are borrowing from future generations, but I hope we think of James Edward Rapert who will be paying for all this fun that we are having.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

THE BUDGET

MR. REID. Mr. President, my friend from Washington said a number of things that I want to respond to. I have a great deal of respect for the senior Senator from Washington, and he and I serve together as chairman and ranking member of an appropriations subcommittee. I have found him to be an extremely easy person to work with, and I have developed during that process great respect for his legislative abilities. But I think it is important to mention a number of things that I think need to be responded to in regard to his statement.

He talks about the second crisis. The first crisis and the second crisis were caused not by the minority, which is the Democrats. The fact of the matter is that by October 1 of each year, it is the responsibility of the Congress to pass appropriations bills. The record is very clear. By October 1 of this year, the majority in the House and in the Senate had not passed bills that could be sent to the President.

The second crisis referred to by the Senator from Washington again was not created by virtue of something that the Democrats did that was wrong, the minority did that was wrong. The fact of the matter is that the majority did not pass appropriations bills. This crisis that we have is not something caused by the minority. The fact of the matter is, on October 1 the bills were not passed.

I also think it is important to acknowledge again on this floor, we hear constant talk about the fact that the majority is now pushing for a balanced budget. I think that is good. I think that is important. But the fact of the matter is that the 1993 budget plan that was passed in this body and the other body—it was the so-called Clinton plan—was the largest deficit-reduction plan in the history of this country. It reduced the deficit over \$500 billion over a 5-year period of time, the largest deficit-reduction program in the history of this country.

Yesterday it was an unusual day in the last couple years in this country. It was unusual because the stock market went down. It was an extremely unusual day that the market went down. Today it went back up. But the stock market is over 5,000, Dow Jones. The stock market has been hot. Why? Because the economy has been doing extremely well.

We have had the lowest unemployment, lowest inflation in 40 or 50 years;