

Even President Clinton in 1995 when he was projecting the 1997 defense budget, which is what we are debating today, said "In fiscal year 1997," that is this year's defense budget, "I want to have almost \$50 billion spent on modernization." Yet when he came through with the budget, it was \$10 billion less than what he said he was going to be asking for a couple of years ago. So it did not even fit the President's blueprint. It was \$10 billion under the President's blueprint for defense spending this year.

So we asked the service Chiefs to come in. We said, "What do you need to make sure that the men and women of the services have the best equipment?" They came up with a list of \$15 billion. In the defense bill today we are going to be able to go over those systems and tell the Members exactly what they are. We did improve the safety requirements for the Marines also. We are adding 24 Harrier safety upgrades, in light of the 3 crashes that occurred in the last few months. We will describe this in greater detail in the defense debate.

PLIGHT OF THE KASHMIRI PANDITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the President might have delinked human rights from trade, but that should not be taken as a signal by other countries that the U.S. Congress no longer cares about human rights.

Indeed, concern for human rights in our own country and around the world remains a prominent concern on both sides of the aisle. Congresswoman PELOSI, Congressman LANTOS, Congressman SMITH of New Jersey and Congressman WOLF are just four of the many Members who have made human rights a burning concern.

I want to add my voice today to the concern about human rights in a part of the world about which we hear very little: Kashmir.

Indeed, Kashmir is one of the main trouble spots in the world today. India and Pakistan have fought two wars over Kashmir, and it remains a sore spot in Indo-Pakistani relations. Pakistan has taken every opportunity to destabilize the situation in Kashmir.

Soon after I took office in 1993, I received a group of activists from the Kashmiri Pandit community. The Pandits are not well known in this country.

They are Hindus who have been made refugees in their own country.

They are also a proud people with a special place in the history of India and the subcontinent. I might note that as India struggles to form a new government in the wake of the historic defeat suffered by the Congress Party, the Pandit community has made enormous contributions to Indian culture, including Jawaharlal Nehru.

Listening to the Pandits, I was touched by their story.

And I was shocked by the human rights abuses that have been perpetrated in Kashmir against the Hindus.

Indeed, the Pandits have been the target of a campaign of ethnic cleansing.

They have been brutalized and killed because they are Hindus.

Many of them have been forced from their ancestral homeland and now live in squalid camps.

Their future is uncertain.

I believe the Pandits are truly the forgotten people of Kashmir.

The State Department recently included a mention of the Pandits' plight in the annual "country reports" on human rights. That is at least a start—a recognition of a human rights problem.

We must not look the other way while Pandit people are killed, raped, abducted, brutalized and exiled. We must not accept the fact that they have been exiled in their own country.

We must pay attention to the plight of internally displaced people, a status that is becoming all too familiar in our new world.

I urge other Members to look below the surface of the conflict in Kashmir and focus on the human cost.

In the refugee camps there is a growing sense of unease, even panic, at the thought of being forgotten by the rest of the world.

As we have shown in Bosnia and other places, the United States is not the type of country that turns its back on people who are in dire straits.

That hope is what keeps the Kashmiri Pandits and other internally displaced people from lapsing into despair at their predicament.

They look to the West for the hope of a better future. We must not look the other way.

PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY—WILL AMERICA GROW UP BEFORE IT GROWS OLD?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized during morning business for 6 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I attended a Social Security forum. One of the presenters at that forum said Social Security could be taking in less money from FICA taxes than it is required to pay Social Security checks by the year 2005. By the year 2005, Social Security under that definition could be broke. There is no real trust fund. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I have entitled my remarks for this morning "Protecting Social Security—Will America Grow Up Before It Grows Old?"

In 1983 Congress passed historic legislation to save Social Security. At that time the Social Security Administration warned that the system had an un-

funded liability equal to 1.82 percent of payroll. In other words, the taxes would have to be increased by 1.82 in order to accommodate the requirements for survival for Social Security.

A 1983 law eliminated this liability temporarily. However, the actuaries today now say that the unfunded liability is 2.17 percent of taxable payroll, 19 percent worse than in 1983, and yet, Mr. Speaker, we do nothing. Some people have called it a third rail. Some people say, do not touch Social Security because you might not be reelected, because seniors do not want their Social Security interrupted or considered. I do not believe that is true. I believe most senior citizens today want to protect Social Security for their kids and their grandkids.

Let me tell my colleagues about the existing liability that equals \$4 trillion in Social Security. Put another way, under the current system every beneficiary for the next 75 years will have to absorb a 14-percent cut in benefits for the system to balance. The other alternative is that we raise taxes by 16 percent on the already overburdened American worker.

Traditionally Congress waits until the last minute or the last moment to solve these kinds of problems, using a crisis environment to convince our constituents and ourselves that sacrifices could be made. If that happens, probably what Congress would do first is to look at reducing COLA's for existing retirees.

That is not the right way to solve this problem. I think, no matter how we try under current law, there will only be two workers paying into the system for each retiree drawing benefits by the time that we reach the 2010 to 2020 era. When we started this program, there were 38 workers for every 1 retiree. Today there are 3 workers for every retiree. When we hit the catastrophic era of 2010 to 2020, there will only be two workers for each retiree.

I am introducing legislation this year, and it offers a way out and I believe it justifies consideration. Part one of my bill eliminates the unfunded liability of the trust funds by slowing the growth of benefits in two basic ways.

Under the bill initial benefits will still rise after inflation, but they will not double as they do now under current law. It also imposes some modest means testing of benefits. This proposal holds harmless low-income workers and also existing retirees. I repeat, my proposal holds harmless the low-income workers and also existing retirees. Furthermore, this proposal gradually raises the retirement age, then indexes it to life expectancy. These two reforms more than eliminate the unfunded liability of this system, according to the Social Security's actuaries.

The Social Security Administration has scored this bill and found that each worker could invest between 1.8 percent of what they earn in payroll and 10 percent of their paycheck in a personal retirement savings account that

is going to be their personal passbook savings account, their property, so at least for those funds they do not have to be worrying about a government that is going to use these moneys up and eventually not pay those payments.

Over time, the assets in workers' accounts will grow very rapidly, producing genuine retirement security. The balances grow so rapidly that it seems only fair to ask these successful investors to agree to lower Social Security benefits. Thus, worker/investors will still receive Social Security checks, although they will be smaller than those defined under part 1, as well as full ownership rights to their plans. However, the benefits flowing from their personal retirement savings accounts will more than make up the difference. Furthermore, account balances will belong to workers and will be passed on to their heirs, improving the financial security of wives, husbands and their children. Personal retirement savings accounts are a very good deal.

With some guidelines I believe it should be up to each worker to determine how his funds will be invested or if he wants to fund a personal retirement savings account at all. In fact, workers may elect to remain in the existing system if they wish and collect only Social Security benefits. It will be their option alone whether to place a portion of their paychecks in the hands of professional money managers. However, eligible investments in accounts include only assets now eligible for investment in individual retirement accounts [IRA's]. Also, under the proposal, managed investment accounts will have to meet investment and reporting requirements.

Another important benefit of this proposal is that it will stabilize fiscal policy. This year, Social Security will take in \$75 billion more than it distributes. By 2005, the annual cash flow surplus will rise to \$135 billion. But in 2025 and beyond, there will be annual cash deficits of \$330 billion and rising as far as the eye can see. Under this plan, cash flow in and out of the Social Security System will always be equal. Pressure to cut other spending or to raise taxes will not be required by cash flow problems. Social Security will be depolitized—as it should be.

I plan to introduce this bill soon and invite my colleagues to cosponsor. Together, we can restore the solvency of America's most popular program and make it even better.

THE TRAGEDY OF FLIGHT 592

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER]. Knowing her long years of service in the area of our defense appropriations and spending, I simply want to pose the question to my Republican colleagues, what kind of House are we when we are not allowed to debate fully a reduction in the defense budget, a fair, open discussion about how best to utilize the precious

dollars that we have in this country to serve America?

However, Mr. Speaker, I have come to the floor for another concern. Before I start, let me say to my colleagues that I am a former member of the city of Houston's Aviation Committee. I think if my colleagues review my record, they will find me a strong and active advocate for the aviation industry.

I also will say that I believe that those who work in the aviation industry are some of the more dedicated workers and employees and individuals committed to service. But this is not about questioning the integrity of our industry and who works in the industry. It is, of course, raising a question about a terrible loss of life just 1 day before Mother's Day in Flight 592. We realize that many mothers lost sons and daughters, and families were destroyed and devastated.

But the question becomes, when we come to the U.S. Congress, I always thought that we should be problem solvers and not dart throwers. It was interesting to listen to the expose of Rush Limbaugh. He always gives us such pointed dialog, sometimes greatly erroneous, as I thought his comments were in giving us a gravity study and a gravity talk about how wonderful it is that airplanes float and fly and how we should marvel at that, and why is there such hysteria and emotion around the loss of 109 lives?

Well, I will tell you, Rush, because America is a humanitarian Nation. And yes, we lose lives in violence, gun violence and car crashes, but every time there is a tragedy like Flight 592, we raise our voices because we want to ask the question why, and does it have to happen again? Rush, I am not interested in your debate and comment on flotation and the marvel of aviation. I understand that. The question becomes, why did we lose those 109 lives?

First, this particular airline or airplane was some 30 years old, almost. Its maiden voyage for this particular airline was in 1993 but it was actually purchased in 1969. I am not against old airplanes, but I am for maintaining them.

In addition, some seven times this particular airplane was forced back to the gate to return for some mechanical problems over a 2-year period. The question becomes, to FAA Administrator David Hinson, "What kind of job is the Federal Aviation Administration doing? What kind of safety measures are you providing for the American people?"

I am now asking for a full report on inspection procedures that are done by the FAA. I want to find out the status of staffing, the expertise of those who inspect, the years of experience and what kind of criteria they use to inspect our Nation's airplanes.

I would like to know whether or not we in this Congress have provided sufficient resources so that the planes we travel in can be in fact inspected. And,

yes, I will be exploring legislation that requires that when a plane has been pulled back for mechanical violations a certain number of times, it be retired, out of commission, until that plane meets all safety standards.

Yes, I am in pain about the loss of 109 lives, just as each and every one of us each time we lose an American through such a terrible tragedy. I think it is a travesty for us to make excuses about what should have been done and not do it.

Oh, yes, Rush, next time I hear from you, I look forward to hearing a discussion about flotation, but I am going to stand on the side of saving American lives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address the Chair and not others outside the Chamber.

REPUBLICAN LEADERS WANT MEDICARE TO WITHER ON THE VINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Medicare provides quality health care benefits for over 32 million senior citizens, but the Republican leadership wants to transform Medicare into a program of substandard care.

The Republican leadership says that Medicare is in crisis—that it is now running at a deficit. I would argue that minor adjustments, not a major overhaul, could ensure Medicare's solvency. When Democrats were in the majority, we made sure that Medicare was being adequately funded. In 1982, the Medicare trustees predicted that the Medicare trust fund would run out of money by 1986. Obviously that did not happen.

Democrats protected Medicare and maintained a level of quality care for senior citizens into the 1990's.

Now the Republicans are scaring seniors by saying that Medicare is again going to go bankrupt in the early part of the next decade and using the words like "reform" to disguise their efforts to destroy the Medicare Program. Senior citizens are not in danger of not receiving health care, but Speaker GINGRICH still claims that a major overhaul is necessary.

His real motives lie in an earlier speech he gave during last year's Medicare debate, where the Speaker said he wanted to see Medicare wither on a vine. Only minor adjustments need to be made to ensure Medicare solvency. When Democrats were in the majority, Medicare never ran deficits. It is a sign of the misguided Republican leadership that Medicare has run its first ever deficit in its 31 years as a health care program for senior citizens. Enough is enough with Speaker GINGRICH and his