

see tax relief. And just the average mom and dad want to see tax relief so they can take the kids to school, get to work, get to the grocery store, get to little league, and do all the important things that are important in their life.

I believe, yes, that the best way to lower gas prices and relieve not only the central coast of California gas pains, but our Nation's gas pains, is to repeal the Clinton gas tax. It is time. It is time we let working men and women keep more of their hard-earned dollars, and not have the bureaucrats here in Washington say that they know best how to spend those hard-earned dollars.

Mr. Speaker, since its imposition in October of 1993, the gas tax has taken \$613 million out of the economy. That is money that Californians could have had. Repealing the gas tax also would reduce taxes, as I said earlier before, by almost \$5 billion annually. And I want to repeat this number, it would reduce taxes in California by \$550 million. A repeal of the gas tax, I am summarizing here if you notice, the repeal of the gas tax would recoup the jobs most to the tax increase. If you recall, I said we lost 8,000 jobs in California, and I want to work for those 8,000 jobs, get them back, and I am going to work for the 69,000 jobs that we lost nationwide.

The Democrats love big government. They are so wedded to the old status quo that they are willing to deny American families, including those on the central coast of California, an annual \$48 tax break. I think you all would remember that last year, or I should say last election, we heard slogans like "It is the economy, stupid." Well, I guess that if there was a slogan to be had this election time, we should remind people that it is the paycheck, stupid. The folks need to see more of the dollars kept in their paycheck and spend those hard-earned dollars as they best decide.

I would say, let the bureaucrats here decide how they are going to tighten their belts, and put their agency and their particular program on a diet. I would rather have the folks on Capitol Hill here in the bureaucracies decide how to tighten the belt, rather than my folks on the central coast of California.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEY). The Chair will remind Members to refrain from quoting individual Members of the Senate.

55TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF CRETE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. KLINK] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may

have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this special order observing the 55th anniversary of the Battle of Crete.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, it is late, and many Members have not been able to join us tonight who had planned to make statements. They will put their statements in the RECORD. I am sure that will not be of distress to the Speaker, that we will not go as long as had been intended.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise today to mark the 55th anniversary of the Battle of Crete. This is really an historic event. It is of great significance. It took place on the Island of Crete during World War II. This was between Nazi forces and the people of Crete who were assisted by the allied armies.

I would like to rise today also to recognize the heroic efforts of the people of Crete that were exhibited not only during the battle itself, but during the subsequent 4-year occupation of Crete by Nazi forces.

At the outset of the war, Adolf Hitler had not intended to invade the Island of Crete. It was when Italian forces were unable to overtake the Greek forces on the Greek mainland that Hitler decided he would assist. Soon after Greece fell to German forces, Hitler was convinced by others to make Crete his next target.

Let me just talk a moment about the significance of the Island of Crete. It is the largest of the Greek islands, about 160 miles long. It varies in its width from about 7.5 miles to 35 miles. At the outbreak of World War II, Crete lay at a very strategic position for both the Allies and the Axis powers. For the British, who controlled the island at the time, Crete was a very strong point on the lifeline to India. It protected both Palestine and Egypt, and they had assigned elements of the Royal Navy to be sheltered in the great natural harbor of Suda Bay.

But despite its importance, the British maintained only a small garrison there. At the time of the outbreak of this war, it consisted of only three infantry battalions, armed with several heavy and light antiaircraft guns. They had coast defense artillery and searchlights. But sensing a coming Axis attack, they began to reinforce Crete with men and supplies.

□ 2100

But it was, in fact, too late. Because of the persistent attacks by the German Luftwaffe, they could send only a few thousand tons of supply to the island. And so it was on May 1941 that Adolf Hitler turned his attention to the Island of Crete.

Hitler's elite 7th parachute division began operation Mercury. At the time this was the largest airborne invasion to that point in our entire history, that

is the entire history of this world. With the aid of some 500 transport aircraft and 500 bombers and fighters, the initial wave of paratroopers, which numbered about 3,500, suffered great casualties at the hands of Crete's ground forces. These ground forces, of course, included heroic Cretan civilians who used knives and pitchforks and sickles in their hands, and sticks and rocks, as some of their only weapons.

The valiant Allied forces were eventually forced to retreat, but the battle lasted 11 days before the Germans could declare a victory, and it resulted in over 6,000 German troops listed as killed, wounded or missing in action.

The losses to the elite 7th parachute division were felt so hard by the German military and were of such significance that no large-scale airborne operation was ever attempted by Nazi Germany again for the remainder of the war.

After the Allied retreat, the people of Crete were left to fend for themselves. The Cretan resistance movement organized in an effort to thwart the German Nazi forces. For 4 years the resistance movement on Crete inflicted very heavy casualties on the Nazi army. At one point the Cretan forces even kidnapped a heavily guarded German general.

The struggle undertaken by the Cretan civilians became an example for all Europe to follow in defying German occupation and aggression. The price paid for the Cretans' valiant resistance to Nazi forces became that of thousands of lives of civilians who died from random executions, some who died from starvation, others by imprisonment. Entire communities were burned and were destroyed by the Germans as a reprisal for the Cretan resistance movement. Yet the battle of Crete, in part, was to change the final outcome of World War II.

A direct result of this battle was a delay in Hitler's plans to invade Russia. Originally Hitler had planned to move on Russia in April of 1941. But Hitler was not able to move his forces on Russia until June because of the time that was lost as the valiant people of Crete had fought off the Third Reich. The consequences of this 2-month delay was Hitler's forces facing the harsh Russian winter. And while Nazi forces were able to penetrate into Russian territory, the snow storms and the sub zero temperatures eventually stalled them before they could overtake Moscow or Leningrad. This marked the beginning of the end of the Hitler war machine.

As is so often the case in history, the battle of Crete was not the first time a small force of Greeks fought against overwhelming odds. Dr. George C. Kiriakopoulos, a noted author and professor at Columbia University, has compared the battle of Crete to the ancient battle of Thermopylae. Thermopylae, which is a very narrow passageway located in east central Greece, was the site where King Leonidas and his 300 Spartans made their

final stand against King Xerxes and his Persian army of 200,000 men.

Although King Leonidas' forces were defeated by the Persians, they defended the pass long enough for the bulk of the Greek army to escape. King Xerxes, of the Persian army, was finally, when they finally overtook Attica and Athens, was finally forced to flee Greece after his navy of 1,000 vessels was destroyed by fewer than 400 Greek ships during the battle of Salamis.

So just like King Xerxes, Adolf Hitler won his battle of Thermopylae in Crete, but that delay of 2 months cost him the war with Russia and cost him also the opportunity to eventually try to invade Great Britain.

Just last week, during his arrival ceremony for Greek President Constantinos Stephanopoulos, President Stephanopoulos stated that Greece, like the United States of America, continuously proves its commitment to the ideals of freedom of democracy and international law and order. It was because of the people of Crete and because they believed in these ideals and fought and died for these ideals that we as Americans should recognize and appreciate the historic significance of the battle of Crete.

The people of Crete themselves will always be remembered and will always remember the devastation that was brought to their island during World War II, however, I ask that all Americans observe the memory of the fallen heroes of the battle of Crete and honor the men and women of Crete, who, during World War II, fought an oppressive invader to preserve the ideals of freedom and democracy.

I would like to just mention a couple of other things about this battle for Crete, because it has been looked back upon with great amazement by many people who have analyzed it. It was the poet Calomenopoulos who said of the battle of Crete in one of his poems, "This castle you want to pillage, German, is founded on bones that are centuries old, and its foundations have drunk blood for thousands of years. It feeds on tears and sorrows make it strong. It's impregnable and it's indestructible and always stands erect. Unbendable and immovable, a bulwark of freedom. And it fights always standing and it wields the sword."

I wanted to take a look back at some of the amazing things that happened during the battle of Crete and put this great battle in significance.

Mr. DORNAN. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman would yield for a second.

Mr. KLINK. I would glad to yield to my friend from California.

Mr. DORNAN. I enjoyed getting the gentleman from Pennsylvania's Dear Colleague. I am sorry more Members could not join us. I know on our side GEORGE GEKAS, a loyal son of Greek heritage, would dearly loved to have been here. He has done special orders just like yours.

I walked the battlefields of Crete with my oldest son, Bob Junior, on the

40th anniversary, 15 years ago, or that anniversary week, and I had not realized that at two of the major air fields that German airborne were totally repulsed and at the third field, which we visited, it was what the Iron Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, said after the battle of Waterloo: It was a close-run thing.

The New Zealand troops, with great loss of lives and wounded men, almost shut down the third major area of German paratroopers, and that is the area that the prize fighter, Max Schmeling, went into as a sergeant and a leader. Platoon sergeant. Of course, he had lucked out and beaten Joe Louis in their first encounter, and Louis, the Brown Bomber, kept his prediction that he would take him in one round. He did it in seconds of one round.

Maximum Schmeling was a good man, as I understand, not a Nazi. He did not understand Hitler's evil in the beginning and went down there, and then never again was part of any major German movement. I forget what happened to him. I am going to look it up after the order tonight.

But I appreciate the gentleman's taking this special order. I agree with your assessment that it was a key battle that probably affected everything after that. It was on the eve of Operation Barbarossa, which we are coming up on that on the 22nd of next month.

I want to make an observation and then back out of this. More Members should do what you are doing, Mr. KLINK, and try to recapture for our young people, as Ronald Reagan warned us. Just recent history with one of our mutual friends on your side, TOM LANTOS. I was down in the small rotunda on the House side, in what we are now calling the Lantos rotunda, or the Hungarian rotunda, there is Lajos Kossuth, the national hero of Hungary in the last century; died, I think in Paris in the 1890s; exiled for 47 years. And thanks to Mr. LANTOS of California we have a bust of one of the great heroes of modern times, Raoul Wallenberg.

We must study World War II. It is the watershed not only of this century, but it is an epic. It is a watershed of centuries. And when we focus in on certain battles, like the struggle for Crete, the first really massive use of paratroopers, never to be done again by Germans, as you pointed out in your Dear Colleague, I think it is a worthy subject for young Americans to study in high school.

So I will go back to my office as fast as I can and watch the rest of your special order with great interest, and then dig into my Crete books at home and relive some of my footsteps walking this heroic battlefield for the Greek people and the subcategory of the citizens of Crete who are Greek citizens. Thank you for doing this.

Mr. KLINK. I thank the gentleman from California, and indeed he is correct. I am reminded of former heavyweight champ Max Schmeling, who was one of those 7,000 elite troops.

When the 7th Parachute Division—and you have to remember, again, this was the largest airborne invasion in the history of the world at that time. The casualties that were suffered by these forces were heavier than the total number of Germans that had been killed in the war to that date.

This precious live airborne weapon had been altogether decimated moving into Crete, and not just by Allied forces or trained military, but many of them by women with pitchforks and sickles and people with sticks and rocks. The Cretan people just fought ferociously, not just during the battle of Crete but for the next 4 years.

There is a lesson here for all humankind. The people of Crete, together with the remnants of Allied forces from Britain, Australia and New Zealand, as the gentleman from California mentioned, showed the greatest valor of any of the conquered nations in Europe. The commanding general, Kurt Student, this is the German commanding general, called it "the fiercest struggle that any German formation had ever had to face."

In fact, it was Adolf Hitler who sent a message to his German general, Kurt Student, and said, "France fell in 8 days. Why is Crete still free?" It took 11 days to capture the island of Crete and only 8 days to capture the entire nation of France. That gives you an idea of the ferocity of these Greek citizens.

Moreover, the costly Cretan campaign, in the opinion of many historians, prevented Adolf Hitler from invading the British Isles. Many of his closest associates, including Marshal Goering, had suggested that they use this 7th Airborne Division to make their invasion of Britain. In fact, let me just read to you in ending some of the newspaper headlines from this period.

On the 28th of July 1941, the Times of London carried the story that 500 Cretan women were deported to Germany because they took part in the defense of their native island.

It was the Evening Standard in London on May the 24th of 1941 that said, "If Hitler takes Crete, one thing alone is certain. The next island to be assaulted is our own."

The Times in London on the 31st of May 1941 said:

A British naval officer has now reached the hospital. He set out to cross the open sea to safety, with a Cretan girl in a rowing boat. The boat was partly stove in and flooded by machine gun attack from the air. Part of the officer's side was blown away. To stop the bleeding and the gangrene the girl forced him to lie with his wounded side in the bilgewater in the bottom of the boat and herself rowed him more than 50 miles to an allied island.

There was a German epitaph that was put on the entrance to the village of Kandanos. It says,

On the 3rd of June 1941 the village of Kandanos was raised to the ground, never to be built again. This was an act of reprisal for the brutal murders of German parachutists,

mountain forces and engineer corps, by men, women and priests who dared stand in the way of the Great Reich.

The victory at Crete cost the Germans 22,000 troops. About 400 aircraft were lost. The delaying effect of their attacks upon Greece and upon Crete not only interfered with Hitler's designs upon Syria and upon Iran, but eventually it proved disastrous in their attack upon Russia, as I mentioned earlier.

The German army reached the outskirts of Moscow in October of 1941. I think we know a little bit about the Russian winters from history. The early frost had begun to interfere with the movements of the Third Reich. Its arrival in front of Moscow 5 weeks earlier would have certainly led to capture of that city, and perhaps on to Leningrad, and history would not allow us to overexaggerate the impact that that would have had.

An eyewitness from 1941 said,

You should have seen the womenfolk carrying the cartridge belts folded round their waists. The women emerged in Chersonissos carrying sickles, sticks and virtually anything they could lay their hands on. The Germans suffered extensive losses at the hands of these women.

Again I would appreciate all of the Members who intended to be here with me, and I understand that they thought that it was late and did not want to make it. So that would end my comments.

□ 2115

Again, I would welcome Members putting their words in the RECORD and would also welcome Members to join me in cosponsoring a resolution, which I will plan to introduce next week, which would commemorate the people of Crete and their valiant efforts 55 years ago in fighting the oppression of the Third Reich.

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join in this special order commemorating the 55th anniversary of the battle of Crete. I am pleased to be able to celebrate the heroism and sacrifice of the Cretan people, who bravely opposed the Nazi invasion in 1941, and who suffered under Nazi occupation for the next 4 years.

In 1940 and 1941, the armies of Nazi Germany and Italy swept through much of Europe. France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Albania, Yugoslavia, and finally Greece were overrun by the Fascists. Commonwealth troops and thousands of patriotic soldiers from the fallen countries—Poland, France, and Greece, in particular—continued to fight the Fascist onslaught, and when they were hopelessly outnumbered they undertook daring seaborne withdrawals from continental Europe in order to regroup, rearm, and build up their forces to fight another day.

After securing Greece, the Fascists turned their attention to Crete. Crete's location in the Mediterranean Sea made it an important strategic objective for both the Allied and Axis forces. Crete sat astride the important British communications route between England and India that passed through Egypt via the Suez Canal. Possession of Crete made the defense of this route easier for the British. The capture

of Crete was central to Hitler's plans to conquer the Middle East and sever this important British supply line.

Because the British Royal Navy still maintained a strong presence in the Mediterranean, the German assault on Crete would come primarily from the air. Elite German paratroopers and glider troops spearheaded the assault on Crete. These were the same battle-hardened troops that had made the German sweep through the lowlands on Holland and Belgium in 1940 so dramatically successful. On the morning of May 20, 1941, thousands of German paratroopers and glider troops began landing on Crete. They were supported by hundreds of bombers and fighters from the German Luftwaffe.

The Allied forces on Crete were no match for the Axis invasion forces, but they were able to exact a heavy toll on the invaders. The British garrison on Crete was initially quite small—only three battalions—but many of the Allied troops evacuated from Greece had been sent to reinforce the garrison on Crete. These soliders—British, Australians, New Zealanders, and Greeks—aided by the civilians who lived on Crete—men, women, and even children—exactd a heavy toll on the first waves of airborne troops. Men and women armed only with knives, sickles and pitchforks attacked German paratroopers landing in their fields and on the beaches.

The outcome of the battle, however, hinged on control of the island's airstrips. If the Germans could capture one or more of these facilities, they could bring in planeloads of troops. Commonwealth and Greek troops, aided by patriotic Cretans, held onto the airfield throughout the first and second days' onslaught, but on the third day, the Germans secured the airfield at Málme and promptly began landing planes full of reinforcements and supplies at a furious rate. After that, German airpower and additional reinforcements turned the tide, and several days later the Royal Navy began evacuating the Commonwealth and Greek troops.

By early June, 18,000 troops had been evacuated and another 10,000 soldiers had been captured. The Germans began their occupation of the island, and the Cretan people began organizing an underground resistance movement. For the next 4 years, the Fascist occupation was characterized by guerrilla attacks and brutal reprisals. Villages were razed and thousands of civilians were imprisoned or executed. Yet the spirit of the people of Crete never faltered. Despite the horrible price, they continued to resist the Nazis until Crete was liberated in 1945.

Mr. Speaker, we have undertaken this special order today in order to pay tribute to the courageous men and women of Crete who, despite overwhelming odds, resisted the invasion of their homeland by the forces of prejudice and tyranny. Their struggle is a proud monument to the nobility of the human spirit and the importance that mankind places on freedom. It is only appropriate that on the 55th anniversary of the Battle of Crete, we celebrate the heroic deeds of the Cretan people.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague, Congressman RON KLINK of Pennsylvania, for holding this special order.

I rise to today to join my colleagues in commemorating a valiant stand made more than a half-century ago on what was then the frontier of freedom. It was a stand made by a battered

but brave group of individuals thrown together to halt the domination of a smaller, weaker nation by a larger, more powerful aggressor.

Greece was engulfed in conflict—along with the rest of the globe—during some of the darkest days of World War II. Indeed, in the spring of 1941, Nazi domination of the European continent was nearly complete. Following a valiant struggle against overwhelmingly superior German forces in and among the mountains to the north, Greek forces had been pushed entirely off the continent and were taking refuge on the island of Crete.

The German Army looked covetously across the sea to Crete. If captured, it would provide air and sea bases from which the Nazis could dominate the eastern Mediterranean and launch air attacks against Allied forces in northern Africa.

In fact, the Nazi high command envisioned the capture of Crete to be the first of a series of assaults leading to the Suez Canal.

On May 20, 1941, the largest German airborne attack of the war commenced against Greek, Cretan, and British forces, battle-weary and crippled after the withdrawal from the mainland. Waves of bombers pounded the Allied positions followed by a full-scale airborne assault. Elite paratroopers and glider-borne infantry units fell upon the rag-tag Allied soldiers, who valiantly stood firm in the face of certain defeat.

Watching death descend upon them from above, the brave defenders of Crete—having endured hours of vicious bombing, decimated the crack Nazi troops at two key airfields. However, the Germans managed to gain a foothold at a third airfield and soon were being resupplied and reinforced by air.

Seven days later, the defenders of Crete—though clinging to their rocky defensive positions—knew that they would soon be overrun. The evacuation order was given, and nearly 18,000 men were rescued. These valiant survivors had bought the Allies a week's precious time free of Nazi air and sea attacks based from Crete. More importantly, they inflicted severe losses on the German airborne forces, the showpieces of the Nazi Army.

Nearly 2,000 German soldiers were killed and more than 4,000 were wounded or missing. So injured were the German units, in fact, that they never again attempted an airborne assault of the magnitude of that launched at Crete.

This month marks the 55th anniversary of the Battle of Crete, a proud day in the defense of liberty and self-rule; when the sons of Greece and Crete along with their British allies firmly answered the Nazi challenge to freedom.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, may we take inspiration from the shining example of the defenders of Crete in ensuring that this is indeed the case. We must not forget those who have sacrificed their lives to secure our freedom.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman KLINK for organizing a special order to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the Battle of Crete. Throughout history, the Greek people have been champions of freedom and self determination and their actions in the Battle of Crete were instrumental in defeating fascism in the 20th century.

In October 1940, Mussolini's Italy invaded Greece, entering that country by coming through Albania. Responding to this crisis, the British rushed to Greece's aid and quickly sent

Army and Royal Air Force units to Crete. With Italian troops bogged down in Greece and delaying his brutal campaign of world domination, Hitler sent German troops into Greece and directed that the Nazi war machine take control of Crete.

In May 1941 the Nazis began executing Hitler's directive and launched an airborne invasion on a scale unprecedented in history. With lightning speed, the Germans dropped some 20,000 troops on the island by air; in addition, the Germans and Italians launched a land invasion, sending troops by sea from the Greek mainland, which had fallen to the Nazis a few weeks earlier.

The ensuing battle put up by the people of Crete and other Allied forces against the superior Nazi war machine was one of the most significant of World War II. And though the Germans won the battle and took the island, they did so at the highest possible cost—they would eventually lose the war. Karl Student, the Nazi general in charge of the invasion, called the battle "the fiercest struggle any German formation had ever had to face * * *" The German High Command would never again attempt an operation of that size.

The unanticipated heroism and ferocity with which the people of Crete fought delayed Hitler's planned invasion of Russia by 3 months. There were heavy losses on both sides. Strengthened by the knowledge that they were defending a concept—democracy—that had originated from their homeland, Cretan civilians, including women, children, and the elderly, joined the battle against the Nazis, wielding pitchforks and fashioning homemade weapons. By the battle's end, the Cretans and the Royal Air Force had inflicted so much damage on Hitler's elite 7th Air Division that it was rendered useless to the Nazi effort to conquer the Middle East.

The battle, moreover, continued long after the 11 days it took Hitler to finally take the Greek island. The Cretans organized a resistance movement, which for the remaining 4 years of the war zealously fought the occupying Nazi force. They suffered horrendously for their resistance; the Germans executed thousands of civilians and randomly decimated entire towns, villages, and communities. They did not, however, suffer in vain.

The resistance the people of Crete mounted against the invasion forced the Germans to attempt to invade Russia during the oppressive Russian winter—a task that proved to be too much for the Nazis. Their failure in Russia has since come to be recognized as the beginning of the end of Hitler's Third Reich.

We here in Congress should do our best to ensure our citizens never forget the role the citizens of Crete played in defeating fascism. Indeed, we honor ourselves by honoring them—many of those who participated in the Cretan resistance movement emigrated to the United States and became American citizens.

I am proud to have been able to participate in the remembrance of a historical event as important as the Battle of Crete. As the sacrifices the Cretans made 55 years ago demonstrate, we are indebted to Greece not only for giving the world the system upon which our country was founded, but for shedding the blood of their sons and daughters to protect that system as well. I strongly encourage all Americans to join me in honoring Greek-Americans of Cretan descent, and our friends in Greece and Crete, for their contribution to one

of the most important battles of the 20th century.

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would yield to my good friend, BERNIE SANDERS, for the rest of my time.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by expressing my disappointment at the vote that took place in the House today regarding the defense budget. It seems to me that in a time when Speaker GINGRICH and his colleagues are talking about the need to move this country toward a balanced budget and are talking about the crisis of our deficit situation, that it makes no sense for the Republican leadership to be proposing a defense budget which is \$13 billion more than President Clinton has requested.

I find it especially hypocritical that at a time when the Republican leadership is saying that we have got to balance the budget and to do so we must make major cuts in Medicare, major cuts in Medicaid, major cuts in education and veterans' programs and environmental protection, in the fuel assistance program, and so many programs that the middle class and the working class of this country depend upon, low-income people depend upon that at the same time Mr. GINGRICH says, well, it is OK that we spend billions more for B-2 bombers that the Pentagon does not want, that we start spending billions of dollars more for the star wars program.

The budget of the U.S. Government is what this country is all about, and I think it is a sad day that we are saying that it is appropriate to spend billions more on the military, despite the end of the cold war, that we are prepared to put approximately \$100 billion into defending Europe and Asia, although we do not even know who the enemy is now, but we do not have enough money to take care of our senior citizens who are in need, we do not have enough money to take care of our children.

This country has by far the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world, 22 percent of our kids in poverty. We do not have enough money to help them. We do have enough money to build B-2 bombers and star wars and things that the Pentagon does not even want. I think that is a very sad state of priorities that Mr. GINGRICH and the Republican leadership are expressing.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to concentrate on today is what I think is the most important issue facing this country, and that is the state of our economy and my very great fears that this country, in many ways, is moving toward an oligarchy, which is a nation controlled by relatively small numbers of very, very wealthy people.

What is going on in this country today is that since 1973, 80 percent of all American families have seen their incomes either decline or at best remain stagnant. What is going on in my

State of Vermont and what is going on all over this country today is that we are seeing working people work longer hours for lower wages. These families look to the future. They are extremely worried about what is going to happen to their kids because it appears very likely that for the first time in the modern history of the United States, our children will have a lower standard of living than we will have.

Mr. Speaker, this, in my view, is the most important issue facing this country. I get very disappointed as an Independent, as the only Independent in the Congress, that we do not see enough discussion here on that issue, certainly from the Republican leadership. We must have more of that discussion. What is also going on in this country is, not only is the middle class shrinking, but we are seeing another phenomenon that should be of concern to all people. That is that the wealthiest people in this country are becoming much wealthier at the same time as the middle class is shrinking.

We are looking at a schizophrenic economy. How bad is the situation today facing the working men and women of this country? Let me just make a few points. Again, these are points I think that should be made over and over again. Twenty years ago, the workers of the United States were the best compensated in the entire world. We were No. 1. Today, depending upon the study that you might look at, American workers rank 13 among industrialized nations in terms of compensation and benefits.

In fact, one of the great ironies of the current economic period is that we are seeing companies from Europe and elsewhere come to the United States in search of, quote unquote, cheap labor. In my State of Vermont and throughout this country, you can get hard-working individuals who must work for \$6 or \$7 an hour. Those are wages that large companies cannot get workers to work for in Europe. So we are seeing for certain European companies the United States becoming what Mexico is for American companies. That is a very sad state of affairs.

Mr. Speaker, adjusted for inflation, the average pay for four-fifths of American workers plummeted by 16 percent in the 20 years between 1973 and 1993. In other words, whenever you turn on the television or whenever you read the newspapers, they talk about the booming economy. The economy is booming for someone, but it certainly is not booming for the middle class or the working people of this country.

Between 1973 and 1993, the average pay for four-fifths of American workers plummeted by 16 percent. People are working for significantly lower wages. In 1973, the average American worker earned \$445 a week. Twenty years later, that worker was making \$373 a week. That is the issue that should be debated here on the floor of the House, should be debated in the Senate every single day, should be debated all over this country.

How did we go from 1st to 13th in the world in terms of the wages and benefits our workers received? How did it happen that the middle class is shrinking? How did it happen that real wages are declining? That is the \$64 issue that should be addressed by the President, by the leadership of the Republican and Democratic parties.

Mr. Speaker, as bad as the situation is for the middle class and middle-age, middle-class workers, the situation is far worse for young American workers. In the last 15 years, the wages for entry-level jobs for young men who are high school graduates has declined by 30 percent. Young families headed by persons younger than 30 saw their inflation-adjusted median income collapse by 32 percent from 1973 to 1990. Young families headed by someone between 25 and 24, these are young American families, had incomes \$4,000 lower in 1991 than they did in 1979. Their entry-level wages were 10-percent lower in 1991 than in 1979.

What all those statistics mean is that for young people graduating high school going out into the job market, the wages that they are earning are significantly lower than was the case just 20 years ago. So, as bad as the situation is for middle-age people, it is a lot worse for younger people. That is an issue that we must address and analyze and correct. Americans at the lower end of the wage scale are now the lowest paid workers in the entire industrialized world. One percent of American workers with full-time jobs are paid so little that their wages do not enable them to live above the poverty level.

Mr. Speaker, we hear a whole lot, we heard it from President Reagan, we heard it from President Bush, we are hearing it from President Clinton about all of the new jobs that are being created. The sad truth, however, is that the vast majority of the jobs being created are low-wage jobs. These are the jobs that pay workers \$6 an hour, they pay workers \$7 an hour. They often bring no health care benefits, no retirement benefits, and no time off for vacations or sick leave.

Also, one of the frightening aspects of the new economy is that more and more of the new jobs being created are part-time jobs or temporary jobs. What we are seeing is that many employers would rather hire two people for 20 hours a week or for 30 hours a week rather than one worker for 40 hours a week because the employer does not have to pay any benefits.

In fact, in 1993, one-third of the United States work force was composed of, quote unquote, contingent labor, and that is temporary labor. That means that you get a job for 4 months, for 6 months and then you have to go out looking for another job again. There was a time not so long ago in our history when a real job meant 40 hours a week with benefits, decent health care, perhaps retirement, that you moved up the ladder if you did your job well. You

made more money. You had a certain sense of job security.

It seems that those days are ancient history, as many of the new jobs that are being created are part-time jobs or temporary jobs. In the past 10 years, the United States has lost 3 million white collar jobs and 1.8 million jobs in manufacturing, just in the past 5 years. Five companies, Ford, AT&T, General Electric, ITT and Union Carbide alone have laid off well over 800,000 American workers in the last 15 years. Meanwhile, while the decent-paying jobs continue to disappear, the number of involuntary part-time workers tripled between 1970 and 1993.

People might be surprised to know that the largest private sector employer in the United States today is not General Motors. It is not General Electric. It is not IBM. It is Manpower Incorporated. They are the leading supplier of temporary employees.

Now, one of the tragic results of declining wages in America is that the average American worker is now working significantly more hours than used to be the case. The number of Americans working at more than one job has almost doubled over the last 15 years. So if the average American thinks, my God, I am the only person who has to work two jobs or three jobs, wake up. It is your neighbor doing that. It is people all over this country, because as real wages decline, people are just scrambling as hard as they can. Certainly in the State of Vermont, it is not unusual to see people working two jobs, three jobs, just to pay the bills.

Furthermore, when we talk about things like family values, I think what many of us mean is the ability of a husband and a wife to spend some quality time with their kids. I remember seeing a constituent of mine in Burlington, VT, who told me—she was shopping at a grocery store, that she was working three part-time jobs. Her husband was working four part-time jobs. They hardly ever had a chance to be together or, let alone, to spend time with their child.

That is what is happening all over this country. Not only are people working longer hours, in fact the average American is now working approximately 160 hours a year more than was the case just 20 years ago. But what we are also seeing is that more and more Americans are lacking adequate medical insurance.

We had a major debate here on the floor of the House several years ago about the need for a national health care policy. Those of us who advocated the right of all Americans to have health care as exists in virtually every other industrialized nation on earth, we lost that debate. The result is that 3 years later, we are seeing more and more Americans not only without any health insurance, but we are seeing more Americans who have inadequate health insurance. By that, I mean very high premiums, large deductibles, large copayments. The situation is such that

many people, even when they are sick, hesitate to go to the doctor because they just cannot afford the bill.

In terms of home ownership, which is a key part of the American dream, that home ownership is also in rapid decline for the average American worker. As a result of lower and lower incomes, an increasing number of young Americans can no longer afford to purchase their own homes. In 1980, 21 percent of Americans under 25 owned their own homes. In 1987, only 16 percent did. The answer is obvious: If you are not making decent wages, there is no way you are going to be able to put a down payment or pay the mortgage on a home.

Mr. Speaker, while the middle class is in decline or the real wages of American workers are going down, or while many of the new jobs are being created to pay people \$4.50, \$5 and \$6 an hour, there is another aspect of our economy that must be addressed. That is, clearly not everybody is hurting. Some people are doing very, very well.

This is an issue we just do not talk about enough. I think on this floor of the House, and certainly the media does not talk about it enough, today, the United States has the dubious distinction of having the most unfair distribution of wealth and income in the entire industrialized world. I think many of us used to think that in countries like England, where you have queens and dukes the lords and barons, that those were really class countries that you had a ruling class and an upper class and you had a lower class. But the truth of the matter is that the United States of America today has a much more unfair and unequal distribution of wealth than England. We have a much more unequal distribution than any other country on earth. Hardly ever talked about, this issue, but we should.

What is going on now is that the wealthiest 1 percent of the population own 40 percent of the wealth in this Nation. That is more wealth than the bottom 90 percent.

□ 2130

The richest 1 percent own more wealth than the bottom 90 percent, and that gap between the rich and the poor is growing wider.

But it is not only wealth. We also have the most unfair distribution of income in the entire industrialized world. The highest-earning 4 percent of our population make more money than do the bottom 51 percent.

Mr. Speaker, from 1979 to 1995, household incomes in the United States grew by \$800 billion in real terms. But 50 percent of that sum went to the wealthiest 5 percent of households, and 97 percent of it went to the wealthiest 20 percent. The remaining 80 percent of families scrambled for the crumbs, divvying up just 3 percent of all income growth between them.

So, in other words, when we talk about the growth of the economy, what we should ask ourselves is who is gaining that income. And what is clearly

going on is the lion's share, the overwhelming amount of the growth in income, is going to the very, very wealthiest people while the vast majority of the people are seeing a decline in their real incomes.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of reasons why the United States is seeing a decline in its standard of living for its middle class and for its working people, and I think one of them certainly has to do with the decline in our industrial base, a decline of manufacturing in the United States of America. I would urge Members of Congress just to go to their local department stores in virtually any part of America and check the labels on the products that they are observing, and more and more what we are finding is that products are not manufactured in the United States, but they are manufactured in the Far East, they are manufactured in Malaysia. More and more they are manufactured in China. And we are not just talking about cheap products, but we are talking about top-of-the-line products as well.

And the reason that more and more products are being manufactured in China is that American companies are beginning, have invested tens and tens of billions of dollars in China, in Malaysia, in Latin America, in many other very poor Third World countries.

So the good news is that corporate America is creating millions of new jobs every single year. The bad news is that they are not creating those jobs in the State of Vermont or the United States of America. They are creating those jobs in China, and in Malaysia, and in Latin America.

Now, why are these companies running to these countries? Well, it does not take a Ph.D. in economics to figure it out. They are going to China because workers in China receive 20 cents an hour. There are workers in China who are 12 or 13 years of age making products that we in the United States are purchasing, and, Mr. Speaker, I might mention that I have introduced legislation which would prohibit the importation of products made in any country that is made by child labor. There are children in China, children in India, children in Pakistan, who are 10, 11, 12 years old who are working for minuscule wages, who are doing the work that American workers used to do.

It is no secret that this year we will have a trade deficit of about \$160 million. That means we are importing \$160 billion more in goods and services than we export. That equates to about 3 million decent manufacturing jobs.

Mr. Speaker, in my view, we are not going to expand the middle class, we are not going to create decent-paying jobs for our young people unless we deal with the trade situation. I think the evidence is very clear that NAFTA has been a disaster, as many of us had feared it would be. I have very serious reservations about GATT.

We need a trade policy that is a fair trade policy, a trade policy that pro-

tects American workers, that allows us to export as well as import.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to address the issue of raising wages in America, not only do we have to deal with the trade situation, not only do we have to become a country again which is building real products here in the United States of America, which is using our technology go create new jobs, producing real goods, but we also have to, in fact, raise the minimum wage, and I am delighted that more and more Members of Congress are beginning to understand that.

A number of years ago I brought forth legislation that would raise the minimum wage to \$5.50 an hour. It was my view and is my view that if somebody in this country works for 40 hours a week, that person should not be living in poverty. That person should not be more in debt at the end of the week than he or she was in the beginning of the week. And when some of us began that crusade to raise the minimum wage, President Clinton was not on board, and many Democrats were not on board, and virtually no Republicans were on board. I am happy to say that right now we have a majority support for raising the minimum wage in the House, I believe that is the case in the Senate as well, and I certainly hope that the gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. GINGRICH] will allow a clean minimum wage bill to come up in the House so that we can vote it in and have the President sign it.

The minimum wage today is at its lowest point in 40 years. If the minimum wage today was at the same level as it was in 1970, it would be over \$6 an hour. So to raise the minimum wage to \$5.50 an hour, as the President would have us do in 2 years, is a conservative effort, and it is something we should do immediately.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to turn this country around, I think it is important that we also address the tax situation in this country. The fact of the matter is that as the rich become richer, as the middle class is shrinking, and as poor people are just fighting desperately to keep their heads above water, I think what we need to do is take a hard look at progressive taxation, and that is to say that the largest corporations who are today contributing significantly less to our national coffers than they did 30 or 40 years ago, to the richest people in this country who have enjoyed significant declines in their real tax rates, that it is appropriate to ask those people whose incomes are soaring to start paying their fair share of taxes so we can provide some real tax breaks for the middle class and the working people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that wages in America have declined is that the trade union movement in America has also declined. I think it will not be a surprise to most American workers to understand that employers often do not, out of the generosity of their

heart, pay decent wages. They pay decent wages because there are people who are negotiating with them to get them to pay decent wages.

One of the concerns that I have right now in this country is that it is harder and harder for workers to be able to form trade unions. Very often, employers will harass those workers who are trying to develop a union, they will fire those workers under all kinds of pretenses, they will bring in high-falutin consultants to try to frighten workers, they will threaten workers that they will go to Mexico and Asia.

I think we need a new set of labor law which says that any worker in this country who wants to join a union should have the freedom, without fear, to participate in that process, and I believe that as we strengthen the labor movement in this country, that is, more and more workers join unions, they will be stronger and be able to negotiate good contracts which will not only benefit them, but it will benefit the whole country. Nonunion workers benefit substantially when we have strong unions because unions drive wages up, and employers therefore must pay nonunion workers a decent wage as well.

Mr. Speaker, I will soon be introducing a piece of legislation which I think is quite important. One of the concerns that I have increasingly in this country is the degree to which the taxpayers of our Nation are subsidizing large corporations through corporate welfare. Very conservative groups as well as progressive groups estimate that we spend about \$125 billion every year on corporate welfare, which is tax breaks and subsidies that go to some of the largest corporations in America, and let me give you just one example of something that I and some of my colleagues are working on right now.

It seems to me to be very wrong that when the United States Pentagon, when our Pentagon, negotiates with various defense contractors, that some of the CEO's of those defense companies end up making huge salaries, basically at taxpayer expense, at the same time as they are laying off tens and tens of thousands of American workers. We pay the President of the United States \$250,000 a year, and it seems to me to be very wrong that the taxpayers of this country should be paying the CEO's of the major defense companies substantially more.

I think the taxpayers of America should be concerned, for example that in 1994 James Miller, who is the CEO of General Dynamics, earned \$11.3 million in compensation. Now, what is interesting is that General Dynamics, as a percentage of their business, does 100 percent of their business with the U.S. Government, which means that the U.S. Government is paying Mr. Miller \$11.3 million in income, and I think that is wrong for at least two reasons:

First, in terms of our deficit, I do not know why we are paying CEO's who are 100 percent dependent on taxpayer

money over \$11 million a year in compensation. That is wrong.

But, second of all, it is wrong as an example, as a model of what this Congress should be doing. One of the more shameful aspects of the American economy at this point is that CEO's of major corporations today are earning about 200 times what their workers are making; 200 times. That is unheard of in the industrialized world. It seems to me that the U.S. Congress should not be encouraging and supporting that type of economic activity.

So we have legislation, and I have introduced legislation along with several other Members, that would say to the CEO's of the major defense companies that they cannot earn from the taxpayers of this country more than \$200,000 a year in compensation.

I should point out once more that the head of General Dynamics receives \$11.3 million, and as best we could understand, every single penny of that money comes from the taxpayers of this country. That does not make any sense. We are cutting back on so many programs that working people need and to say, yeah, we got \$11 million to pay the head of General Dynamics makes no sense. And I should point out that this very same company has laid off over 35,000 workers between 1990 and 1995.

So these guys are making more and more money from the taxpayers at exactly the same time as they are laying off tens of thousands of American workers. That does not make any sense to me at all.

Mr. Speaker, I think you know sometimes Members of the Congress become a little bit obsessed with ourselves and we think that the end of the world is the Beltway around here. But we should pay attention to the fact that tens of millions of people are giving up on the political process, they are giving up on the two-party system. Again, it is an issue that we do not talk about too much, but maybe as the only Independent in the Congress I can raise the issue, and that is there is something fundamentally wrong with the politics of this country when in the last election, in 1994, only 38 percent of the people came out to vote. 62 percent of the people did not vote.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of reasons for that. But I think the major reason has to do with the fact that large numbers of people who are hurting very, very badly no longer believe that the U.S. Congress represents their interests or is capable of responding to their needs and their pain, and they are saying, hey, politics, it does not matter, we do not care what is going on in Washington, we do not pay attention to what is going on in Washington because all these people are living in another world.

I think, given the fact that so many men and women have put their lives on the line, have fought and died to defend freedom and democracy in this country, it is a very sad state of affairs that

the United States has today by far the lowest voter turn out of any industrialized nation on earth.

Now how do we turn that around? How do we create a vibrant democracy where we have 70 to 80 percent of the people voting rather than 40 percent of the people or 50 percent?

□ 2145

I think, frankly, the answer is that this Congress has got to show the American people that we do feel their pain, that we do understand what is going on in their lives, and we are willing to respond to their problems. If we do not respond to their problems, people are going to say, "It does not make any difference. Why do I have to get involved?"

It is a catch-22. Unless ordinary people begin to stand up and say, wait a second, the U.S. Congress, representing all of the people in this country and not just the very rich, in the United States of America we should be able to provide health insurance for every man, woman, and child, as most of the industrialized nations do; in the United States of America we should be able to make sure that every young person who has the ability is able to get a college education, as many of our industrialized neighbors do; that in the United States of America we should be able to create decent paying jobs; that unless the people make those demands on the Congress and start electing people to the Congress who are going to fight for the middle class, fight for the working people, the Congress is going to be unresponsive.

That takes us to another issue in terms of how and why the Congress is unresponsive. That takes us to campaign finance reform. Clearly there is something very much amiss when increasingly we are seeing in Congress, in State houses all over America, very wealthy people taking out their checkbooks and writing themselves large checks and saying, "Gee, I think I would like to run for President. It is kind of boring in business now, I have a midlife crisis, I would like to do something else. I will make out a check and then run for the Presidency. I will run for Governor, I will run for the Senate," so forth and so on. That is not what democracy is supposed to be about.

A democracy is not supposed to be about the Democratic and Republican Parties holding fund-raisers here in Washington, D.C. I think last month, or a couple of months ago, the Republicans raised \$16 million in one night, and recently the Democrats raised \$12 million in one night, money which is coming from some of the wealthiest people in the United States of America, some of the largest corporations in the United States of America. Some of these guys contribute to both political parties. Is that what democracy is supposed to be about? I think not.

I think we must move toward campaign finance reform, and the most im-

portant aspects of that is we have to limit the amount of money that people can spend in a campaign. If you limit the amount of money, you take away the advantage of the big money interests. They cannot outspend you 10 to 1.

I think we have to move toward public funding of elections, combined with incentives coming from small donations, matching small donations. In that way we will have people who are serving in Congress who come from the ranks of ordinary people and simply are not hobnobbing with the wealthy and the powerful.

Most importantly, what concerns me is that tens and tens of millions of Americans believe the political process does not matter to them. They have given up on the political process. That is very, very sad. I would suggest to people, and I say this as somebody who was the mayor of a city for 8 years and am now in my third term in the U.S. Congress, that the only solution, basically, to that situation is for ordinary people to begin to stand up and fight back and reclaim this country for the ordinary people, for the middle class, for the working people of this country, and inform the U.S. Congress that all of us have a right to a decent standard of living and a good life. All of our children have the right to a good future. That right should not just exist to the very wealthy and the very powerful, but that is not going to change unless people get involved in the political process, unless people understand what is going on at all levels of government.

Mr. Speaker, let me just simply conclude by stating that in this great country, if democracy is to survive, if all of our people are to enjoy a decent standard of living, that is not a Utopian vision, that can happen, but people have got to be involved in the political process and have got to stand up and fight for their rights.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. FOWLER (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today until 1:30 p.m., on account of medical reasons.

Mr. TALENT (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), after 2 p.m. today and the balance of the week, on account of awaiting the birth of Christine Lyons Talent.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HINCHEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. WISE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MEEHAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, for 5 minutes, today.