

PRESIDENT TRIES TO BRING NATION TOGETHER

(Ms. MCKINNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, last night President Clinton reached out to the Republican leadership, asking them to join him in balancing the budget, and to leave the policy fights until the election.

However, the GOP is so obsessed with giving a tax cut to their wealthy contributors that they cannot agree with the President's proposal to balance the budget in 7 years using CBO numbers.

Mr. Speaker, this just proves that the Republican budget is just the vehicle by which they deliver their tax breaks to Wall Street. The President has kept his side of the bargain by introducing a budget which balances in 7 years using CBO numbers. Where is the Republican commitment to protecting Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment?

Unfortunately for the American people, it is just not there. Thank you, President Clinton, for trying to bring our Nation together.

MATCHING WORDS WITH ACTIONS?

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, that speech last night was just like other speeches that this President has given. He is a great public speaker, but unfortunately, after the State of the Union is over, and he has had a chance to act, Willie's actions never match his words.

He talked about a secure future, yet he this very week is demanding that Congress raise the debt limit and increase the burden on our children. He talks about the importance of educating our children, yet he continually relies on bureaucrats in Washington to dictate how we educate our kids. Just like the last three State of the Union addresses, the delivery was great, but that is about it. He is a liberal who is ferociously fighting for big government, higher taxes and Washington control over every part of our lives. It is still the same old Bill Clinton. Our Republican ideal is for a better America for our kids: lower taxes, less government, and power back to the people. Our prayer is that the President holds our same views.

COMMON GROUND FOR ALL AMERICANS

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, you can tell how big Texas is. My colleague is from Dallas and Plano, and I am from Houston, and we do have a difference of opinion once in a while.

Mr. Speaker, the President last night reminded us that we are all Americans and Americans are the best when we work together. On the balanced budget, both parties have put forth plans that achieve a balanced budget by the year 2002. Right now we have enough cuts that we agree on to give the public the balanced budget they want. We can make meaningful reforms in health care so that our citizens can change jobs and not lose their insurance, and we can also protect Medicare and education funding without tax cuts to have that balanced budget.

The President was right on mark when he warned us not to play politics with the full faith and credit of the United States. The public wants us to address the issues of lost jobs, conditions in our schools and the kind of country we leave for our children, and as the President said, we have to do it together. It is time we find that common ground for all of us Americans.

FEMA'S RESPONSE TO PENNSYLVANIA'S NATURAL DISASTERS

(Mr. GEKAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, just as Pennsylvania was emerging from a series of natural disasters that lasted over a period of 10 days, snow and then more snow and then rain, and then flood, the Governor of the Commonwealth, our former colleague, Tom Ridge, decried the slow response of FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He did so because FEMA seemed to not be able to make the connection between flood and rain and snow and all the tragedies that occurred all at one time.

□ 1245

Then, of course, the Governor received a nasty rebuttal from the White House, and nothing was then accomplished in trying to address the problems of the disaster. Since that time the Governor convened a meeting in Harrisburg of the FEMA officials, Secretary Peña and others. We were able to resolve the methodology by which the Federal Emergency Management Agency will respond in the future. In the meantime, I aim to bring to the committee process an examination of the FEMA procedures.

POSSIBLE DEFAULT

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, one day the House leadership says it will not force the United States into default. The next day the House leadership says it might force the United States into default. The majority leader says yes; the budget chairman says no.

Mr. Speaker, nothing good can come from holding America's credit rating hostage to ideological extremism. The cost of credit to American business is at risk by reckless statements about forcing the United States into default. Threatening to force the United States into default is reckless and irresponsible. It makes it impossible for businesses throughout the country to plan for their needs in the credit market.

We hear a lot of talk these days about our children's future on the floor of this House. Mr. Speaker, threatening to force the United States into default risks our children's future because it jeopardizes the gold-plated creditworthiness of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, please do not hold the Government hostage again to ideological extremism. And, Mr. Speaker, please do not force the Government into default because of this extremism.

AN END TO BIG GOVERNMENT

(Mr. HERGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, it is a great day to be a conservative Republican because last night the President came over to our side. He even declared an end to big government.

Last night the President gave a ringing endorsement of the Republican revolution. He wants tax relief for working Americans. He wants a balanced budget. He wants to save Medicare from bankruptcy. He spoke of the importance of the family. He even advocated a get-tough policy on illegal immigration.

Now that the President has come over, I now extend an invitation to my Democrat colleagues here in the House to join the cause of lower taxes and less government.

Just in case my colleagues cannot wait, I brought along a change of party form that I am sure will be quite useful.

Again, I welcome the President to the party of real balanced budgets, real welfare reform and lower taxes.

HOLDING THE NATION HOSTAGE

(Mrs. SCHROEDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I thought the most interesting thing the President had to say last night was his point No. 7. It was a very serious thing. I certainly hear this as I travel around this country. I have never heard a President in the State of the Union do this.

He said, now that we have talked about all the agendas that we come together in this great American community and try to work on together, let me tell you what the American community thinks of this body. He virtually said, grow up.

He is absolutely right. Do not take the full faith and credit of this Nation hostage for ideological wars. This is absolutely ridiculous. It has never been done in the history of this Republic. I think the people are fed up with our, A, shutting down the Government and, B, now talking about that as not enough, we will push the credit off the cliff.

That would not be tolerated by our forefathers and foremothers, and the American people have run out of their toleration with it. I hope this body listened last night.

REFLECTION ON THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I too was gratified by much of what I heard last night. But as I looked around the Chamber, I saw several of my colleagues look much younger. It was the same speech that we heard throughout the 1992 campaign: Ending welfare as we know it; balancing the budget; reducing the size and scope of Government.

The fascinating thing for us to do was to juxtapose the speech in 1992 that was given by the President through his campaign and then look at the State of the Union Messages that we have gotten before. In 1993, we heard about the importance of increasing taxes on the middle class. We got that in 1993, the largest tax increase ever.

Then I will never forget seeing the President deliver his State of the Union Message in this Chamber, and he held up a card. That card was going to be designed to ensure that every American was part of a national health care system, a program that would usurp one-seventh of our entire economy into a package like that.

The speech last night got back to the basis of that 1992 campaign. I hope very much that during this 2d session of the 104th Congress, we will be able to govern just the way he talked.

A GREAT STATE OF THE UNION

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, last night, in his State of the Union Address, President Clinton spoke about the "age of possibility." He focused on the real issues affecting our Nation's families. Perhaps most importantly, the President extended his hand to the Republican majority and asked them to work with him, to lay down partisanship, to build a better America.

Yes, President Clinton's budget has created almost 8 million new jobs in the last 3 years and the lowest combined rate of unemployment and inflation rate since the 1960's. Yes, the Clinton budget has cut the deficit in half.

And yes, the crime rate, the poverty rate, and the teen pregnancy rate are all down. But, President Clinton knows there is still more to be done.

President Clinton has offered a balanced budget which protects the Democratic priorities of Medicare and Medicaid, education, and the environment.

Last night, President Clinton asked the Republicans to join him to help build a better America. I hope they will heed his call.

NO DEFAULT

(Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, last evening President Clinton held out an olive branch to all of the people of this country to say it is time to heal the fractures which have divided us as Americans.

I reached out some years ago to Republicans to say that we ought to have a balanced budget in this country. I was delighted to see that we got to a point where Democrats and Republicans agree on the fact that we need to balance the budget.

We have very different ideas about how to get that budget in balance. But that does not mean that either party has the right to drive this country for the first time not only into debt but to drive it to a point where we default on our obligations that have been made by generations before us.

I ask the Republicans and Democrats to come up here to this desk and to sign a discharge petition to make certain that we have a clean debt ceiling provided for the people of this country. People have fought and died for the United States of America, for our Bill of Rights, for what this country stands for. Let us not think we are so important that we have the right to turn our backs on what this country has stood for for 250 years. Let us sign a clean discharge petition.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 1124, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 340 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 340

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (S. 1124) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1996 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina). The gen-

tleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas [Mr. FROST], pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. DIAZ-BALART asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks and to include extraneous material.)

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 340 is a rule providing for the consideration of the conference reports to accompany S. 1124, the fiscal year 1996 Defense authorization bill.

The rule waives points of order against the conference report and against its consideration and was reported out of the Committee on Rules by a unanimous voice vote.

As Members will recall, Mr. Speaker, the previous Defense authorization bill was vetoed by the President. In his veto message the President cited a handful of objections. We believe they have been accommodated in this legislation and, thus, it is hoped that the President will, therefore, now sign this bill.

It would be ultimately shortsighted and inexcusably reckless, Mr. Speaker, to underestimate the national security dangers that face the United States. Yes, the Soviet Union collapsed, but Russia remains engaged in serious internal struggles that will decide its future course of behavior in the world community. China is acquiring wealth at an extraordinary rate. Some project that it may surpass the United States in gross domestic product by early in the next century. And with wealth inevitably comes vast military power.

North Korea. Though the Clinton administration is providing massive amounts of oil and technical assistance to North Korea, that regime remains an enemy of the United States. The regime in Tehran is a deadly enemy of the United States, Mr. Speaker, with enormous oil reserves. And there remain many other enemies of this great Nation throughout the world.

There are many who would love to see the United States on its knees, our youth destroyed by drugs, our economy shattered by debt. Here in this hemisphere the regime in Havana, Mr. Speaker, is one such implacable enemy of the American people, though many in this city and even in this House do not see it that way.

I would like to commend the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FROST] by the way, for supporting consistently strong sanctions against that regime, like we are now in this Congress trying to do against the regime in Tehran as well.

The Cuban dictator has a network of terrorists and drug traffickers at his command throughout this hemisphere, in Colombia, in Peru and Bolivia, in