

by. The people on the Republican side of the aisle argued that these tax breaks for wealthy people would somehow fuel the economy. If you just give the rich more money, they sense that somehow this economy will move forward. Well, President Clinton disagreed with that, I disagreed with it, and many Democratic leaders did as well. What we have to show for that decision to veto the Gingrich plan is an economy that truly is moving forward. We have seen 10 million new jobs created since President Clinton was elected as President. One might say, "Well, I'm sure every President does something like that, don't they?" Take a look back at the years of President George Bush. Over a 4-year period of time, we created 2 million new jobs in America, the slowest job creation in 50 years, and the slowest economic growth in half a century. Fortunately President Clinton's plan to reduce the deficit and get the economy moving forward again worked very well in creating jobs and bringing down interest rates.

For a lot of families across America, my own family included, we were able to refinance our home mortgage which meant a lower monthly payment. In fact we now find that we have the highest home ownership rate in 15 years in the United States. If we are talking about realizing the American dream and moving the economy forward, certainly job creation and home ownership are two things that are part of it.

Let me add one other element, reducing the deficit. The Republicans like to talk about being fiscally responsible, reducing the deficit. They tend to overlook the fact that under Presidents Reagan and Bush we had the most dramatic increases in the national deficit in the history of the United States of America. President Clinton came in and said, "I'm going to push a plan that's going to bring the deficit down and yet not strangle the economy." And it worked. We are now about to see the fourth straight year of deficit reduction in Washington, with no thanks to the Republican side of the aisle which did not give the President one single vote in the House or the Senate for his deficit reduction plan. Because of the deficit plan by the President, we have seen the deficit come down 4 straight years. The last time that occurred was the 1840's, over 150 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, things are moving forward. But there are things that this Republican Congress has failed to do which should be done in the closing weeks. There will be a lot of speeches, a lot of efforts by Members on the other side to somehow paint a pretty picture about the days of NEWT GINGRICH and Bob Dole and TRENT LOTT. They want to erase the image out of people's minds of this gridlocked Congress with the two longest Government shutdowns in our history. They want to try to get this image out of their minds of petulance and arrogance and say that perhaps we have accomplished great things.

Let us hope that beyond the speeches, they will do a couple of tangible things: First, pass the increase in the minimum wage. How in the world can we say to 500,000 people in my home State of Illinois who got up this morning, went to work, got the kids off to day care or to some summer program, went to a tough job, making \$4.25, \$4.50 an hour, that that is as good as it gets in America? Over the years we have increased that minimum wage so that young people starting out, so that families working to try to keep things together have a fighting chance. But the Republicans tried to stop us here in the House, they have tried to stop us in the Senate, and that bill even though it has passed both Chambers now, because a few Republicans defected and joined the Democrats, is still stalled. Why in the world have we not passed this minimum wage increase? We owe it to these working families.

Health care. If you talk to families across this country, one of their biggest single concerns is health insurance. The Kennedy-Kassebaum bill, a bipartisan bill by Senator KENNEDY and Senator KASSEBAUM, passed the Senate by a margin of 100 to 0. What it says is you cannot discriminate against people because of preexisting medical conditions when you sell insurance and you ought to be able to move your insurance from job to job and not be afraid to lose it. Simple, honest principles. We should see something positive come out of this Congress for working families across America.

FOREIGN POLICY

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, the editorialists of the Omaha World Herald have prepared, I think, a thorough and telling critique of the Clinton administration foreign policy. I would like to share with my colleagues that editorial.

The document referred to is as follows:

[From the Omaha World Herald]

NATION HAS BEEN LUCKY TO AVOID SERIOUS TEST OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Americans have been lucky. The president they elected in 1992 displayed little expertise or interest in foreign policy. Still, he has held office during a time of relative stability. His administration has had to deal with few international crises.

However, the relative stability that came with the end of the Cold War may not continue. President Clinton's foreign policy is an important basis for judging his qualifications for re-election in November.

Events of the past few days have demonstrated why concerns about the president's judgment continue.

In Saudi Arabia, the monarchy has withheld evidence from U.S. investigators about a terrorist bombing in which 19 American servicemen died. The Saudis have also dismissed the suggestion that U.S. forces in that country ought to be moved into safer

quarters. Saudi Arabia has been called America's closest ally in the Arab world. This is not the way a resolute United States government would allow itself to be treated by its friends.

In Israel, the voters repudiated Clinton's preferred candidate, Shimon Peres. They elected as their prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who promised to pursue a more confrontational policy toward the Palestinians and neighboring Arab nations.

In the former Yugoslavia, the administration has quietly distanced itself further from its promise to remove U.S. troops by the end of the year. A pullout anytime soon would cause the region to erupt once again in civil war.

The administration's bumbling efforts to eliminate the influence of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic have been painful to watch. Moreover, it has been disclosed, the White House looked the other way as Iran's Revolutionary Guards established a strong presence, with guerrilla troops and a supply pipeline, in Bosnia. The administration informed Congress two weeks ago that the Iranians were gone, but indications are that some of them remained behind.

Riots in Northern Ireland call attention to the seemingly irreconcilable divisions that exist there. By swinging U.S. prestige to the side of the Irish Republican Army, Clinton injected the United States into a dispute in which America had no vital interests. In the process, he offended the British government. Then he made the administration look inept when the IRA broke its own cease-fire.

A contributing editor at Reason magazine, Michael McMenamin, has written that the IRA's strategy, which Clinton has aided by pressuring the British government to grant concessions, is to force the British to unilaterally withdraw from Northern Ireland, leading to sectarian war in the north.

"Any American government that doesn't understand this doesn't know Ireland, doesn't know the IRA, doesn't know the Ulster Protestants, and is helping to bring an Irish Bosnia closer," he wrote.

Clinton has presided over an unprecedented reduction in America's ability to use force as a foreign policy tool. More shrinkage lies ahead. George Melloan wrote in The Wall Street Journal that projected military spending in the next five years will be \$50 billion to \$100 billion short of what will be needed to achieve even the reduced force and procurement levels that Clinton military strategy envisions. Melloan noted that Bob Dole would arrest the slide in preparedness, as well as pushing promptly for a missile defense and expanding NATO.

China now has the ability to hit the U.S. mainland with intercontinental ballistic missiles. Yet Secretary of State Warren Christopher has been to Damascus 17 times and Beijing only once, Georgetown University diplomatic scholar Casimir Yost pointed out.

Concerns exist about how careful and competent this administration would be in a dangerous situation such as Presidents John Kennedy and George Bush had to face in the Cuban missile crisis and Gulf War, respectively. It's difficult to observe the Clinton approach without becoming seriously concerned about how effectively this administration would handle a major and sudden threat to vital U.S. interests.

MEDICARE

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 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to devote my 5 minutes to the issue of Medicare, but I could not help but just briefly comment on the previous speaker whom I greatly admire. When I was home in my district in New Jersey this weekend, I was at a church service on Sunday. As I was coming out, a couple of people commented to me, one on Medicare which I will go into soon, but the other said something about the President. He said, "You know, one thing I admire about the President is the fact that we are at peace. We are at peace throughout the world." I think that kind of says it all. I frankly think that President Clinton's foreign policy has been a major success. In fact, he has kept us out of many wars around the world and has brought peace to many parts of the world that were not at peace before. I think that says a lot about his foreign policy and its success.

I just wanted to also comment on one of my previous colleague's statements, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. WELLER], when he berated the fact that President Clinton had vetoed the Republican Medicare legislation. All I can say is thank God that President Clinton was there and did veto that legislation. The Democrats basically in this Congress have prevented the Republican leadership from devastating Medicare. The Republican leadership has proposed major cuts in Medicare that would primarily pay for tax cuts for wealthy individuals and they have tried to change a program substantively so that essentially what would happen is that Medicare would disappear as we know it. Democrats prevented the Republican leadership last year from doubling Medicare Part B premiums and from any attempts to eliminate doctor choice which is very important to the average senior citizen. They prevented cutting Medicare premium assistance for low-income seniors, something that I actually tried to accomplish in the Committee on Commerce. A lot of people forget that the Republican leadership wanted to eliminate the current program where for low-income seniors Medicaid pays for Medicare part B premiums. We also stopped the Republicans from repealing Federal nursing home quality standards. Medicaid is a very important part of the overall program to provide quality health care for senior citizens as well. The Republican leadership tried to eliminate and gut Medicaid as well. They wanted to repeal Federal nursing home quality standards, they wanted to put homes and family farms of elderly couples at risk for nursing home care, and they wanted to force adult children to be financially responsible for their parents nursing home bills because two-thirds of Medicaid goes to pay for senior citizens who are in nursing homes. If that aid is eliminated or cut back significantly, we were going to see elderly relatives or also children having to pay for their parents or their grandparents in nursing homes.

All of this I am mentioning today because now we see the Republicans trying to basically rewrite history and say that they were not trying to devastate and eliminate Medicare. Most significantly we have gotten some criticism on our side of the aisle because we constantly quote a statement by Speaker GINGRICH. I just want to read that statement again. Speaker GINGRICH said, and this was last year on October 26:

We don't get rid of it in round one because we don't think that that's politically smart and we don't think that's the right way to go through a transition period. But we believe it's going to wither on the vine because we think people are voluntarily going to leave it.

As many of my colleagues know, the AFL-CIO, the labor international organization, has been putting on ads where they have actual pictures, video, if you will, of Speaker GINGRICH making this quote about Medicare. Now the Republicans are trying to take it off the air because they are afraid of the truth.

Let me tell my colleagues, what could be more appropriate, what is more significant than the kind of cuts and the kind of changes in Medicare that the Republicans were trying to achieve? If those had been accomplished, if President Clinton and the Democrats had not stopped those major changes in Medicare, then indeed Medicare would have withered on the vine which is exactly what Speaker GINGRICH says that he wants to do.

For those who think that the Republicans have changed, they have not changed. In this session of Congress, I should say in this year, they have already proposed another budget that makes significant cuts and changes in Medicare. Their current plan, a little different maybe than last year, but still tries to do the same thing: It would eliminate doctor and hospital choice by forcing seniors into Medicare managed care plans, it would allow doctors to charge extra out-of-pocket costs to seniors who remain in Medicare fee-for-service, it would severely cut Medicare and Medicaid hospital funding, forcing many hospitals to close their doors on seniors, it would eliminate coverage guarantee for over 4 million elderly Americans who need nursing home care, that is the Medicaid aspect again, and would further erode Medicare solvency by creating wealthy healthy plans leaving many seniors with higher costs and less care.

What the Republicans are doing once again is cutting the amount of money that is available for Medicare which ultimately will translate into less quality care and less services for senior citizens.

TWA FLIGHT 800

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say parenthetically that the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] knows that that quote is out of context. In fact most of the television stations across this country are not longer running their (Democrats) ads because they know it is not the truth. The Speaker was talking about the Health Care Financing Administration, not Medicare. He was talking about trying to downsize it. Who else, Mr. Speaker, said we should scrap the Health Care Financing Administration? President Clinton and Vice President Gore in their Putting People First book. They outline exactly the same thing that they are accusing the Speaker when he talked about getting rid of the bureaucracy here in Washington with the Health Care Financing Administration. I think we need to establish the truth.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share my thoughts today about the crash of TWA Flight 800. But before I do so, I wish to say to the family and friends and loved ones of the passengers and the crew who were aboard that ill-fated flight that our prayers here in the House, in the Senate and Congress are with all of you at this very difficult time.

The tragic ending of over 230 passengers on this flight is a grim reminder of another flight, Mr. Speaker, Pan Am 103, which went down over Lockerbie, Scotland. It has yet to be established whether sabotage played a role in the crash of this flight.

Unfortunately, an overwhelmingly difficult and grim task has been made even more difficult by the inclement weather. However, when additional fuselage has been retrieved from the ocean, the antiterrorist experts that have been called in to investigate will be in a better position to render a judgment.

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Chemical residue has been detected by the EGIS machine which was developed in the mid-1980's, which is specifically designed to detect plastic explosives. In time, we will know the cause of this disaster and if it is, as suspected, an act of terrorism, I pray to the Almighty God above that the perpetrators are caught and dealt with and the punishment will fit the crime.

Even if we find it was not an act of sabotage, the time has come for this country to treat acts of terrorism for what they are: An assault on Pan Am Flight 103 was a direct attack on this country. Mr. Speaker, Government must treat American aviation security as a national defense issue and not as a regulatory issue.

That is why I am here and I am talking about drafting a bill, a piece of legislation to do just that. One cannot help but hearken back to the tragedy at Lockerbie.

After officials, in channeling of the investigation of the Pan Am flight, determined that the plane was carrying plastic explosives which blew the plane