

background investigation on Livingstone. In an interview report discovered in Livingstone's file, Sculimbrenne quoted then-White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum as saying Livingstone owed his job to the first lady.

Among those notified after Shapiro's call to the White House about the item were Hillary Clinton, her chief of staff and communications director, two lawyers for Nussbaum, deputy White House chief of staff Harold Ickes, senior policy adviser George Stephanopoulos and spokesman Mark Fabiani.

"We behaved appropriately," Fabiani said. When Clinger made Sculimbrenne's account public, "we were able to respond quickly."

Nussbaum denied making the remarks attributed to him. Hillary Clinton said she had nothing to do with Livingstone's appointment.

By July 16, when Clinger's investigator went to inspect the interview report, Shapiro and his top deputy, Thomas A. Kelly, had dispatched two agents to Sculimbrenne's home to question him about the Nussbaum interview. Sculimbrenne has decided to resign from the FBI, sources said yesterday.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bob Livingston (R-La.), who had been watching the hearing on C-SPAN, charged that the agents' visit was "absolutely intended to intimidate" Sculimbrenne and "constitutes, in my view, obstruction of justice." He told reporters that Shapiro "should immediately resign" and the Justice Department should begin an investigation "to determine whether a criminal charge can be brought."

In his statement last night, Freeh said he was "satisfied that none of Howard's actions were done in bad faith or for partisan purposes. . . . Howard has been instrumental in every major investigation and issue handled by the FBI over the last three years."

[From the Washington Post, Aug. 2, 1996]

CLINTON LOSES COMPOSURE ON TRAVEL OFFICE
(By Adam Nagourney)

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—His eyes narrowed in anger, President Clinton today punctured what was supposed to be a Rose Garden ceremony celebrating good economic news by heatedly renouncing a White House promise to pay the legal bills of travel office employees who had been dismissed.

"Are we going to pay the legal expenses of every person in America who is ever acquitted of an offense?" Mr. Clinton said, his voice even and steely as he plunged his hands into his pockets, rejecting a suggestion that he urge the Senate to proceed on stalled legislation that would reimburse the employees.

When a reporter reminded him that his own press secretary had previously pledged Mr. Clinton's support to the Senate legislation, Mr. Clinton shook him off:

"Well, he didn't talk to me before he said that," Mr. Clinton said. "I didn't say that. I said, 'I don't know what's going to be in it.'"

At that, Mr. Clinton turned to his questioner, a Washington Times reporter, and said: "I don't believe that we should give special preference to one group of people over others. Do you? Do you?"

Mr. Clinton is renowned among staff members for his fast and frequent outbursts of anger, and, typically, equally fast cooling downs and apologies.

In this case, Mr. Clinton later called aside one of his targets, Bill Plante, a CBS White House correspondent who asked the initial question that The Washington Times reporter followed up, and apologized. Mr. Plante said the President attributed his fit of temper to fatigue and the stress he was feeling because of the destruction of T.W.A. Flight 800.

Still, the exchange came over an issue that has caused Mr. Clinton much difficulty in

the past two years, the dismissal of seven employees of the White House travel office by Mr. Clinton's Administration shortly after he took office. The Washington Times has closely followed the situation involving Billy R. Dale, the director of the White House travel office, who was dismissed and then acquitted of embezzlement charges brought against him by Mr. Clinton's Justice Department. The reporter who asked the question today, Paul Bedard, said this afternoon that Mr. Clinton had not offered him an apology.

Within hours of the televised news conference, aides to Mr. Clinton's likely opponent this fall, Bob Dole, who have customarily had to deal with questions about Mr. Dole's temperament, pounced on this incident to raise questions about the temper of the man in the White House.

"We have to assume that in anticipation of Dole's pro-growth economic plan coming out next week, Clinton is coming unglued," said John Buckley, Mr. Dole's communications director, referring to Mr. Dole's pending release of an economic plan that has caught White House attention over the past few days.

"But there is the larger issue of the President's ability to control his temper in public. And they're going to have to monitor that very carefully at the White House."

Mr. Dole's aides asserted that Mr. Clinton's exchange in the Rose Garden was the public relations equivalent of Mr. Dole's televised confrontation with Katie Couric, the host of the NBC News "Today" program, over Mr. Dole's ties to the tobacco industry.

"On the Katie Couric interview, Dole was asked several questions on the same subject and he showed a glint of testiness," Mr. Buckley said. "But there's a far cry between that and the leader of the free world having a meltdown at a news conference."

George Stephanopoulos, a senior adviser to Mr. Clinton, said in response to Mr. Buckley: "Valiant spin. What else do you expect him to say in the face of historic economic growth?"

□ 1730

I think there is a real question as to the propriety that Mr. Shapiro has taken. I for one will wait and see what will be done with regard to that. Because we cannot have a situation whereby the general counsel of an agency that has such a long and distinguished record does something like this that can bring blemish and concern with regard to the objectivity in the minds of the American people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELDON of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

A WAR ON THE WEST

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

Mr. COOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House today to discuss something I think is very, very

important in concept and also to the American people.

We see something in the West that is happening to us. We like to refer to it many, many times as a war on the West, and it is a war. But I want to tell the people of America and the people here in the Chamber, a Member of this House, that if it can happen to us in the timber industry, it also can happen in other industries as well. I want my colleagues to think about this when they hear about what goes on and what is happening to us in the West, because this might be an issue now that is not addressed, does not concern others, but, remember, this lesson can be applied to any issue that we may see coming before you concerning your private property, your interest, your educational systems, and even your self-governing systems.

This is not a fault of any political attitude, it has nothing to do with the executive branch, although I will point out what is happening, but it has to do with the concept of America.

We have a cultural battle going on, a battle of self-determination, of individuality, of being responsible against a culture of liberalism and to a one-world conflict or a big national social government. In this body, if people examine this body, they will see that there are not Democrats or Republicans in this body; there are conservatives in this body and there are liberals. I think that is what the ultimate goal will turn out to be. Who will win this conflict, I think, will be determined in the very, very near future. We are starting to have some very, very serious problems concerning the attitude of a one-government, big-brother-knows-all continuous responsibility for everything that everybody does with no self-responsibility for the individual or the local control by the local communities.

We passed a timber salvage bill, and here is a good example of what is happening in my district, and I want to be able to point this out. We passed an emergency salvage bill in 1995 on June 7. On June 8, the President vetoed it. Between June and July, 1995, there was negotiation between Congress and the administration and a letter from Dan Glickman implementing the program. The President signed the legislation in a rescission bill.

The bill was signed on July 21, 1995, revising the salvage measure and passed by Congress. On July 27, the President signed this bill. What this bill did in very simple terms is that it would allow the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to salvage dead and dying and burnt trees.

At the same time, a law that was passed in 1988 which was referred to as rule No. 318, had to do with green-cut sustainable yields in the Northwest. At the same time the salvage bill went through the process in the U.S. Senate, we added the 318 section to the salvage bill, which was actually passed by Congress, and signed by the President of

the United States back in 1988 but had never, ever been awarded.

Remember, these contracts were awarded following all the environmental laws, but because of the way our litigation is set up through the appeal process, many contractors who had put their down payments down, their bonds down to cut these trees, were not allowed to do that through litigation. This lasted from 1988 to 1995.

By the way, I want to tell my colleagues that people who put their bonds up in the U.S. Government collect no interest, and some of these bonds ran into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In August 1995, the President writes the Cabinet members expressing his reservations about the measure that he signed on July 27. The reason for that is that there was a national uproar by the extreme preservationists that this was a terrible thing, that it was logging without laws, and going on and on.

The President at the time started feeling the political pressure, so he writes a letter. On August 10, the undersecretary, Mr. Lyons, says the program is on track. That was a report to Congress. In late August, the President publicly recants his position on the legislation saying: I really did not know what I was doing, I am sorry I did this, it was not prudent of me and I should not have done it.

The White House on October 28 issued a statement that they will pursue legislative remedies to change the program.

In November, Chief Thomas reaffirms the commitment of the Forest Service and BLM to carry out the goals of the program. We are not sure if the goals of the program were the original goals of the program or the legislative goals of the program, as the President said that he wanted to change and remedy the legislative procedure process.

In November, Chief Thomas reaffirms the commitment of the Forest Service to carry out the goals. In March there is a letter from the President, Mr. Clinton, asking the Senate to repeal the salvage bill, which is Public Law 104-19.

In May 1995, Chief Thomas takes an inspection and tour and announces implementation of the program is excellent. In other words, we are following the proposed cuts as required under the salvage program.

On July 1996, the Secretary issues a directive to significantly modify the implementation of the program. On July 16, 1996, acting under the Office of Management and Budget, the Director Writes Congress urging the repeal of the program.

I want to tell my colleagues what is happening specifically now. This is the kind of flip-flopping and things that are going on concerning just a minor piece of legislation that has to do with the Northwest.

Between 1980 and 1990 sustainable yield harvests in the Northwest forests

were running at about 4.5 billion board feet. The forest plan by the U.S. Forest Service was 4.1 billion.

In 1993 the President came to Portland, OR they developed a forest plan called the President's forest plan. He authorized under that in order to handle any kind of objections from the extreme preservationist group that we would cut 1 billion board feet. In 1994 we cut 1.9 billion feet. In 1995 we cut 340,000 board feet. In 1988, we had 480 mills operating in the Northwest. Today we have 310. At that time we cutting about 10 billion board feet on private and public lands. We are down to 1.9 billion board feet.

We are losing jobs in the Northwest which is drastically affecting our ability to function as a community. It is requiring more and more people to go onto the welfare programs and it is creating havoc economically in the area.

I do not know if you are able to see this, but here is a typical example of Malheur Forest of dead and dying trees that are beetle-killed. These trees do not contribute anything not only to the forest, to the environment, to wildlife or anything else. These are dead and dying and they contribute nothing. If we want to have perpetual forests, in perpetuity, we need to go in and clean these out and replant as under the Forest Practices Act under Public Law 104-19, we should go in and harvest this material out of there while it still has some value and require under law to replant so we can have forests in the future not only for this generation but for generations to come. This is not happening. This still stands like this today.

Here is an example of the Sunrise timber sale in Malheur County where a fire went through. As you can see in this fire, the trees are black, the ground is brown, and nothing is growing in that area. Yet with the President's flip-flopping back and forth, we cannot even go in and salvage this program. We are letting this forest die for lack of any kind of management whatsoever. Bad management.

Here is an example of a 30-inch diameter tree. The blue line, if you can see this on television and you in the audience, is a Douglas fir; the red line is a Ponderosa pine; and the lighter green here is a white fir. After we have a fire, this is a logical thing by the U.S. Forest Service of how long the wood still has some salvageable interest and some monetary return. If we wait under the programs that are presently in place, if we wait from 3 to 4 years before we can go in and cut, we are going to lose as much as 60 percent, down to 20 percent of the value.

Remember, this is an asset, an asset that we all own. This is public land. If we allow this asset to deteriorate, we should absolutely criticized for this. Yet we are allowing to do this under this guise that if we go in there and touch these dead and dying trees, as I showed here previously, dead and dying trees, if we go in and remove those,

that in some way we are destroying the environment. These are assets, moneys that could be used in communities around every area where this is involved.

In most areas, and let us go back specifically to in my particular area, the Second Congressional District, 75 percent of all revenue gained from dead and dying or salvage or cutting in the trees goes into road funding and 25 percent goes into the school funding portion of these country revenues.

Specifically let us look at some of the counties and what has happened to our yearly receipts. The black county here is Crook County, and the white county here below us is Wheeler County. Crook County is larger than about six States in the United States alone because I have a very large district. But the population of that county is 15,700.

The principal industries in that county are livestock, timber and some recreation. The total budget to run that county is only \$33 million. The timber receipts in 1991 and 1992 before the strict restrictions that came in were \$5.1 million. In 1996 and 1997, it had dropped their portion of the timber receipts, to \$688,000 an 87 percent drop in revenue.

The Federal Government owns 49 percent of that total county. With a population of 15,700, remember, this takes in women, children, how are they expected to raise enough revenue in order to meet the common needs of a county of this size of land mass with the \$33 million that they have to raise when they have been getting from timber receipts on sustainable yields \$5 million and that has dropped down to \$688,000?

Their schools and roads are suffering. Their social programs are suffering. We have high unemployment, and we have a high problem socially with people that are distressed. In this county here, you cannot sell a home because there is no job. So a person who is locked into this is literally enslaved into these counties. Either that or they have got to take their family and walk away from it and hope someday that somebody will come along. And if people out here in the East want to find a home, a nice home, for under \$50,000, come out to my part of the country because there are a lot of them available.

Let us go to a worse situation. Let us go down to Wheeler County. Wheeler County is larger than two or three States on the East Coast. Its population is 1,550. Its total budget, though, is only \$5.9 million a year, and its chief principal industries are agriculture, timber and a little tourism. Total receipts from 1991 were \$1.6 million. This year the receipts were \$269,000, or an 86 percent drop in revenue.

This particular county has the highest unemployment rate in the Pacific Northwest, and it is running anywhere between 30 and 40 percent of everyone living in this county does not have employment.

□ 1745

I want my colleagues to all think about what happens in these situations. We have allowed outside interests to be concerned with local problems to a point where they do not care any more. These counties are literally going to go bankrupt or dry up; 1,550 people. Who cares? Fifteen thousand five hundred. Who cares?

This the backbone of America. We here, as legislators in this body, do not want to take the responsibility to understand that we cannot allow outside interests to determine the productivity and the culture of particular areas, and we have done that because we do not have the courage.

These people are good stewards of the land. They want the trees there in perpetuity. They are even agreeing not to cut the green trees, but allow them to harvest the dead and dying and beetle kill. Remember that this has nothing to do with man-made problems. This beetle kill that we see here in this dead forest has to do with the lack of managing these forests as we had in the past.

In the past, when we had beetles, we could do some spraying and some other preventive efforts to combat that kind of devastation. But because of certain laws, which I agree with many of them, we cannot do that any more. But at least we should have enough incentive to go in and reap some of the profits out of that dead and dying forest so it can be used for the counties and provide some revenues, and also be able to go back and replant and make sure that we have a healthy forest in our future generations.

I think this principle has been pointed out enough, but I want all Americans to understand that this concept could happen to them and other industries. I think we need to send a strong message to Congress and to the administration and to the agencies that we need to have good management, we need to have sound business practices, we need to have a good environment. But we need to manage our environment, and we are not doing that and it is literally cutting us to pieces.

We do not have anything in this society that we do not grow or mine. Stop to think about it. If we cut this back to where we can no longer harvest the sustainable yields, we can no longer harvest the sustainable yields, we can no longer harvest a renewable resource in a managed way, we are going to devastate our civilization on progress. Remember, we do not have anything that we do not grow or mine in a modern civilization.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a message that should be spoken loud and clear and should be understood by everybody. It is just not a timber problem, it is a problem with other industries across this country when we have special interest groups that have the power and the influence to shut down logic, shut down rational behavior, shut down basically the growth of civ-

ilization through different types of laws and political pressure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the remainder of my time to my colleague here from Maine.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELDON of Florida). Without objection, the gentleman from Maine is recognized for up to 40 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. LONGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to build on my remarks, and again I appreciate the gentleman from Oregon yielding this time to me. I appreciate that very much.

Mr. Speaker, I want to build on some earlier remarks I made tonight marking the introduction of H.R. 3950, the GI bill of health. As I indicated, it is a measure authorizing the Department of Veterans Affairs to begin to receive third-party health insurance reimbursements, as well as to incorporate concepts of innovative managed care principles which could provide for increased medical care options for eligible veterans and their dependents.

I indicated that we have seen up to \$1 billion in increases in annual veterans affairs medical care funding in the last 2 years. At the same time, just in the past 2 weeks we have seen the passage in this Chamber of H.R. 3118, the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996, designed to simplify the very complex eligibility rules of the veterans affairs eligibility system; and just within the past day the passage of H.R. 3103, the Health Coverage Availability and Affordability Act, which is designed to improve access to health insurance for all Americans.

What do these three facts have in common? They have in common the fact that we are attempting as a Congress to deal with health care issues through existing health care delivery systems, by finding ways to deliver medical care in a more efficient, more practical, more cost effective fashion.

I am introducing the GI bill of health to build on these three phenomena, to focus on the next step in the progression of our health care system, which is to move to a seamless system of access that includes veterans of military service, where the first priority will become health care and not whether or not one is eligible under any one of a number of the very complex VA eligibility rules.

What is truly dynamic about our proposed GI bill of health is that it will expand choices available to veterans, it will integrate Medicare and those Veterans who are eligible under Medicare or other health insurance coverage reimbursement plans into the existing health care system. This will be a tremendous plus for veterans and a strong financial shot in the arm to the VA hospital system.

What this in effect means is that a veteran who is qualified for Medicare could, in effect, choose to have that medical care delivered at the local VA hospital or at a veterans facility, if that is what he or she chooses.

Having been actively involved in the future of health care for all Americans, including veterans, I am excited that this bill is coming to the table so that we can continue to address the fundamental question of how to best provide quality health care for those who have served this Nation in our Armed Services.

As I mentioned, the plan incorporates enhanced funding concepts, including third-party VA reimbursement and Medicare subvention to the financial soundness of the Veterans' Administration. The plan assures continued access for those currently eligible under the current system due to service-connected illness or disability at current or possibly even reduced charges.

The GI Bill of Health will reverse recent restrictions imposed on the VA system because of lack of funds. The GI Bill of Health will fundamentally change how the VA is reimbursed for the health care it provides. The GI Bill of Health will change not only how health care is provided and who can receive care but how it is paid for.

The Bill of Health is a prescription that will reduce pressures on the VA health care system, pressure that comes from an aging veterans population, a growth in population that is placing increasing demands on an already strained system, more pressure which can come from Government funding and the difficulties of addressing medical care needs through the existing structure when we recognize that funding alone will not keep up with the rising health care costs that we are experiencing as a society.

When we look at the VA we need to understand, how can this underfunded system meet these challenges? The Bill of Health is designed to reduce the system's dependency on tax dollars by opening it up to funding from individual health benefit plans. It will allow veterans, and this might be controversial, and possibly their families, to use the system to stay healthy, a form of preventive medicine.

Most importantly, what the bill attempts to do is to bring these questions to the table, so that when we examine what we are doing with the VA system we can consider any conceivable option that will protect the integrity of the system for the benefit of veterans, and that might include providing access to their families. Again, allowing the VA system to benefit from the third-party reimbursements that various health insurance coverages, including Medicare, might bring to the system.

We all know that a health care revolution is underway in America. At the heart of that revolution is the desire to contain escalating health care costs. The GI Bill of Health calls for the VA system to use managed care principles to provide medical care for veterans and their families. It will allow additional options for veterans to choose the VA as their primary health care provider, if that is the choice they wish to make.

This plan will, in my opinion, reduce the overall cost of health care and still maintain the quality of health care. The GI Bill of Health will assure all veterans, those with service-connected illnesses or disability ratings of 50 percent or greater, continued access to the same VA services that they are eligible for right now at no charge.

The GI Bill of Health will assure access to VA health care either at no charge or at a reduced charge for several other types of veterans, including special category veterans, poor or indigent veterans, or veterans with a service-connected disability that might be rated at less than 50 percent.

The GI Bill of Health assures access to the system for all catastrophically ill veterans. The GI Bill of Health will allow veterans, military retirees and their dependents to pay for VA services with existing health care plans, including plans available to DOD, Department of Defense, retirees.

And individual would be able to use Medicare, Medicaid, CHAMPUS, Tri-Care, a third-party payer or an employer plan to pay for care at a Veterans administration medical facility.

The GI Bill of Health offers veterans and their dependents the opportunity to enroll in various health care plans. It allows the VA system to collect and retain payment for the services it renders, a provision that it currently is not allowed to do.

If this were to be facilitated, it would be a big step forward in the direction of enhancing the financial soundness of the Veterans' Administration system.

I think we all know there is a better way to handle the medical needs of people who serve their country. Americans veterans and their families need an improved health care delivery system, one that is more in tune with the times, one that can bring them into the 21st century.

Retirees, who, as we all know, have been suffering the loss of medical services through base closing and realignments deserve a system that can help address their needs in an improved fashion. The GI Bill of Health will meet those needs. It will make a vital health care system more accessible to more people and it will take a load off the backs of the taxpayers. We could not ask for a better deal than that.

The VA's hospitals are worth saving. They uphold a health care covenant between veterans and the Government and the country that they have served. But those VA hospitals do more for the country than most people realize. There are aspects of the VA medical care system that many Americans do not understand, including the fact that VA hospitals are currently teaching and research centers for many major medical schools.

VA hospitals play a significant role in medical research advances. VA hospitals back up the military health care system in times of war, and VA hospitals provide medical support for the Federal emergency management agen-

cies when disasters strike, disasters such as hurricanes and floods.

These hospitals serve a variety of purposes and we do not want to do away with them. We must ensure that VA hospitals do what they are supposed to do, but we must also consider opening up new funding streams that will allow the VA health care system to better serve existing veterans.

There are a series of principles, Mr. Speaker, that were developed by the Partnership for Veterans Health Care Reform. This partnership includes the American Legion, the American Veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, otherwise known as AMVETS, the Blinded Veterans Association, the Disabled American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans of the USA, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the USA, the Non Commissioned Officers of the USA, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.

The partnership is designed to enunciate the key principles that we must look to when we evaluate the need for veterans health care reform.

No. 1, reform eligibility. Provide access to a full continuum of care and improve the efficiency of services for all currently eligible Veterans.

Mr. Speaker, we did that in the past week when we passed H.R. 3118 designed to reform the eligibility system for veterans.

□ 1800

No. 2, is the need for guaranteed funding, that we provide adequate funding for the provision of health care services. As I indicated, I think we have made substantial increases in the funding available for VA medical care, but yet we are continuing to see, despite the fact that we have increased funding by up to a billion dollars a year on top of a \$16 or \$17 billion VA medical care budget, we have increased it by a billion dollars here in Washington, I still see nothing but talk of cutbacks and layoffs back in my own district. Something is wrong with the system, something that I think we need to pay attention to.

By carefully considering the principles of the GI Bill of Health, we may find that we can make the changes that we need to provide the stable funding that the VA needs as well as maintain the continuous services, including valuable services provided to veterans in my State.

Mr. Speaker, No. 3, protect the VA's specialized services. VA has a number of specialized health programs which include spinal cord injury medicine, blind rehabilitation, advanced rehabilitation prosthetics amputee programs, posttraumatic stress disorder treatment programs, extended mental health and long-term care programs, many of which are service unique and veteran unique.

Again we need to protect those services, and by providing stabilized fund-

ing and hopefully a reformed system we are going to protect their existence in the future.

No. 4, advance the VA's unique missions. In addition to the specialized services that I discussed, we need to preserve the VA role as a backup to the Department of Defense in a time of emergency to advance the Veteran Administration leadership role in award winning research and health professions education, and again I think we are taking steps in that direction.

No. 5, retain alternative funding sources and, No. 6, streamline the bureaucracy, are both issues which we are attempting to address in H.R. 3950, the GI Bill of Health. By allowing local facilities to retain third-party reimbursements and Medicare payments, I think we can provide for more efficient and more sensitive provision of health care to veterans.

At the same time, by decentralizing the VA's management operations, we can improve efficiency and empower local managers and increase their responsiveness to veterans health care needs. Deregulating, contracting, resource sharing, and personnel management function are issues that can be addressed.

Consider what I said earlier about giving something and expecting something in return. As I mentioned, 6 years ago today we saw the invasion of Kuwait, and 31 years ago today we saw the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which sent hundreds of thousands, if not millions of Americans to serve their country in Vietnam and over 50,000 to give their lives.

There was a commitment, and in exchange for that commitment there was an expectation of care, particularly for the sick, the disabled, those who needed the help, those who were injured or wounded in the course of serving their country.

Veterans and their families have sacrificed for the benefit of all Americans. Allowing veterans to use a health care system that is designed to serve them is the right thing to do. It is a choice that we cannot ignore.

I have a proposition for you, Mr. Speaker. Support this plan. I call on other Members to support this plan. Put the issues on the table so that we can begin a full and healthy debate and discussion about the future direction of our health care system. I urge others to do the same. Let us give the VA health care system a clean bill of health: The GI Bill of Health.

The GI Bill of Health is a vision for change. It is a vision for progress. It is a vision for excellence in veterans health care. The GI Bill of Health, in my opinion, is the right thing to do for those who sacrificed for this great Nation, and considering the need for reform of the VA system in the context of the other steps that we are making to improve access to health care for all Americans, as well as for veterans, I think it is the right step to make and it is the least that we can do for those

who have served our country and those who have sacrificed for our great Nation.

AMERICA ON THE BRINK OF SELF-DESTRUCTION

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

Mr. DORNAN. Mr. Speaker, I do not know why it has turned out this way in the last few periods before we went on a long district work period. It turned out that I would be the last speaker and adjourn the House. And I think this is more exciting than most periods because both of our two major parties are going to have their big conventions, one in San Diego for the Democrats; it is a return to Chicago from a scene that I covered as a television talk show host and news reporter, the madness of that week in Chicago in 1968, which overlapped the ugly and last, until Chechnya, Soviet invasion with tanks of a nation, in this case the sovereign nation of what was once the sovereign nation and is now the sovereign nation of Czechoslovakia.

In this last moment before we adjourn and when we come back in September, it will be to finish up our work in the fastest two years of my life, the 104th Congress. And 94 days from today, we will determine whether this country continues on its road toward self-destruction. That is the description of Reverend Billy Graham in our Rotunda when this Chamber and the other body awarded him unanimously the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award of this Congress. And we do not make awards to military people, although we have founded them and authorized them. They are made by the military itself up to the Commander in Chief. And it is a tough process that people go through to win a Medal of Honor, loosely but wrongly called the Congressional Medal of Honor and other high designations, Air Force Cross, Navy Cross, and the pre-eminent Army, because of its older existence, the Distinguished Service Cross. But the highest award we can give anybody, any civilian is the Congressional Gold Medal. And we gave it to both Billy Graham and his wife. Struck the beautiful image of Ruth Graham, his wife of 53 years at his side through all of his ministry to spread the good news of our savior Jesus Christ, and at his acceptance speech in the Rotunda on May 22d, he said this is a Nation on the brink of self-destruction.

Now, have we averted that path in the 104th Congress? Can we do anything to turn that disastrous path around in the month of September and two or three days in October before we adjourn sine die without any more days in the 104th Congress? Well, hardly. Will we do much to turn it around in

the 105th Congress? It is all on the line in 94 days.

If we elect an administration that I believe to be utterly and thoroughly morally corrupt and financially corrupt, then we may be approaching the point of no return. Another four years of Clinton, and I do not know how we are going to turn it around once we are a year into the 21st century.

Now, I come to the floor with as much sadness tonight as I have ever felt about a betrayal of American middle-class families, the families who sent our young men, their sons, we were not sending daughters into combat and into the violence of the battlefield in those days of Korea and Vietnam, but middle-class families sent their young people just a half a decade after World War II, the second great cataclysm to make the world safe for democracy, but it seemed to make the world stronger for communism, we sent our young men, mostly farm kids but a lot of college kids and young professionals that were called away from their careers because we did activate the Reserve and the National Guard and the Air National Guard, we sent them to the Choson Peninsula, the Korean Peninsula, a place many of them had never thought of other than a passing reference in high school or grade school geography.

We did teach about such faraway places when I was in high school and college. And they died in those filthy human manure ditches in the freezing cold of Ch'osan Reservoir or the baking hot of the Korean summers of 1951, 1952, and 1953, and we left behind, Mr. Speaker, thousands of live Americans in their prison system. Some may be alive even to this day.

There was our first no win war. We had rejected MacArthur's battle cry, "There is no substitute for victory," and we relived this nightmare with an even worse outcome in the Vietnam war. At least in the Korean War we kept a ragged, much changed but general outline of the 38th Parallel on a different angular river and rugged course. We kept the southern half of that peninsula free, but in Vietnam we forsook our allies. We left them to the cruel agonies of the communist government out of Hanoi.

Some Senators and a few Congressmen licked the boots of the likes of war criminals like General Giap to this day, the architect of only the successful battle of Dien Bien Phu that was fought about honor until the ignoble disgrace of holding back thousands of French and French Moroccan and other foreign legion troops for years, until many died or they were traded for money or traded in their bones, what we are doing disgracefully now. In Vietnam we walked away from one war and betrayed our allies in Laos and Cambodia and South Vietnam to concentration camps euphemistically referred to as reeducation camps. 60,000 were executed, almost three-quarters of a million died on the high seas, and

the communist killers are entrenched in Hanoi to this day.

I find out this afternoon that in the foreign ops portion of our appropriation process there is a section involved that we are going to take our taxpayer dollars from our farm and working families and lower middle-class families and their grandchildren, my grandchildren, many they have not even earned yet, and we are going to give it to Vietnam to rewrite their trade rules and their code so that we can start funneling next year foreign aid with borrowed money to the communist conquerors out of Hanoi.

Absurd. What brings me here sadly is, I want to say inadvertently, but a 7-year POW Congressman SAM JOHNSON from Texas and this Member from California gave people warnings for two weeks that we were betraying last night the POW-MIA families by voting for a defense authorization bill, all in all a fine bill with some shortcomings, hard trading with the Senate, but we passed it with only 36 Republicans saying no and some of them for different reasons, even though SAM JOHNSON of Texas had sent around what I thought was to me the saddest handout during a vote that I had ever encountered on this floor.

It says, "A plea from former POW Sam Johnson. Support our MIA/POWs and their families. Vote no on fiscal year 1997 defense authorization conference report."

Now, I have said many times that I was going to read excerpts from Sam's book on this House floor to let the 86 Members of the freshman class know just the caliber of unqualified hero that Sam Johnson of Dallas was that they were serving with. And now I find out that people on the payroll at the defense missing persons office have tried to obfuscate the horror and the terror of Cuban, Cuban involvement with the torture to death of some of our prisoners in the prison system in and around Hanoi from 1963 to February and March of 1973. Unbelievable story.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how to warn children away from the television screens, assuming that children too young to not be frightened and absorb torture stories, why they would be watching C-SPAN anyway, I do not know unless they are watching with their parents, but I would recommend to any mother and father they owe it to the men who died for our liberty and freedom of speech to stay with us a few moments this evening, but tell the children to go outside and play.

Here is this book that I promised to read excerpts from in a last special order. "POW," by John G. Hubble in association with Andrew Jones and Kenneth Y. Tomlinson. Subtitle: "A Definitive History of the American Prisoner of War Experience in Vietnam: 1964 to 1973."

When I read these words, Mr. Speaker, I hope people will wonder why this body and the other Chamber have