

I am concerned, because it seems to me that we are increasingly moving away from basing our views on those fundamental decisions and we get engrossed in all the short-term kinds of things that we talk about. This administration, frankly, has done more to seek to blur issues than any administration that I have ever seen. It is fairly easy to do that. It is fairly easy to say, "Yes, I am for that, too." I think the best example that I have seen over the last number of years—and particularly in this session—is where we have spent a great deal of time talking about balancing the budget and a balanced budget amendment to ensure that that in fact happens. I don't think there has been a soul that has risen and said: "I am not for balancing the budget." They have said, "I am for balancing the budget, but. . ." So we establish that initially, at least in rhetoric, and don't do that. We haven't balanced the budget in 25 years.

So it is very easy to blur the issues, very easy to make it difficult to ascertain where people are on these issues. And issues is what elections are about. Those are the choices that you and I have to make as November comes. I think it is more and more difficult to really identify where people are, where parties are, where candidates are, for a number of reasons. It is almost an irony that—just imagine, 50 years ago, 100 years ago, how little information we all had about what went on in our Nation's Capital or around the world. Now, because of technology, we know instantly. If we fire a rocket at Iraq, we know about it right away, and we actually see it. Despite that technological opportunity to know more, it seems as if it is more difficult for us to clarify the choices that we have. One of the reasons, of course, is the media. We get much of our information—most of our information and, indeed, almost all of your information—through public media. I don't think it is any secret that the media most often tries to pick out those things that are controversial and emotional, and those things that create debate rather than the ones that clarify the issues. I understand that. That's the way it is. But it makes it difficult.

More and more of our decisions and our choices and our information come from advertising, political advertising, which is generally designed to skew issues in one way or another. It is not the exclusive province of either party, but it is something that is done, almost entirely, in almost all the ads we see. So that does not help to clarify issues.

We see right here in this Chamber all kinds of amendments. Yesterday was a great example of amendments designed simply for some kind of political statement, which really had nothing to do with the bill we talked about. Frankly, it had very little to do with the prospect of it passing. But it was something thrown out there to create an image. It makes it difficult to decide

on choices. We even find, Mr. President—like yesterday—a delay tactic going on here. Instead of moving forward, because we have a couple more weeks to finish a lot of work, we spent 25 hours on one bill, with 100 amendments. Why? I think simply to delay. I think simply to increase the potential—frankly, the possibility of a shutdown of the Government and Congress would be blamed for that. So, when you're dealing with things like that, it is very difficult to really come down on the bona fide choices and directions that will guide this country into the future.

There are differences. There are choices. There are legitimate choices and, frankly, they are fairly clear. It is a legitimate choice, but there are those who want more Government, who think there ought to be more taxes, who think that money collected in taxes and spent by the Government is better spent. I don't happen to agree with that, but I agree that it is a legitimate choice.

Indeed, if we can make it a little more clear between those kinds of things, then people could choose. The other choice, of course, is less Government, moving Government closer to people through the State and local governments, and actually having tax relief so people spend more of their own money rather than collecting it and spending it out through the Federal Government. Those are choices. Those are quite different, and that is what elections are about—to decide which of those directions we want to take.

Imagine, for a minute, that you have a ballot. You go into the polling booth and the ballot has on it a number of issues. You check those issues that you agree with. What is your choice on the issue of a balanced budget amendment? Do you want that? You go down a series of questions of that kind, and then, rather than selecting a candidate, because of what you have selected with the issues, the candidate is automatic. The ones who represent what you most nearly represent is your choice. That would be an interesting exercise, wouldn't it?

I suppose you could talk about the size of Government—smaller, larger? Federal Government—smaller, larger?

Cost? Do you think the cost is too much? Do you think the Federal Government costs too much as it increases, or should it be less? It is possible to be less.

Tax relief? If we pay nearly 40 percent of our income on average in taxes, should we have tax relief, or have the system continue like it is? Yes or no?

Welfare reform? We have talked about that for the last 2 years. The President had it in his campaign in 1992. Finally, after the third time, it was passed and signed. Now, of course, the same people who said they were for welfare reform are now saying, "Well, as soon as we get back in Congress, we will change it. We will take out some of that stuff. We really do not want

this welfare reform." So welfare reform ought to be one of the questions for voters.

Do you want welfare reform? Regulatory relief? We talked a lot about that. We tried to do that this year. Lots of people are not for regulatory relief. Many of us on this side of the aisle are. They are legitimate issues, and legitimate choices.

So, Mr. President, I simply want to say that I hope as we move on in this election that each of us has a responsibility to vote, each of us who has the responsibility in this kind of Government to participate in the decision as to where we go in the future, take a look at the issues and choose, because there will be fairly clear choices, but it may be hard to determine that.

I guess that is the essence of what I am talking about this morning—that we need to have choices. I believe that we have two pretty different philosophies—one for more Government, more taxes, more regulations; one to reduce the size of Government, have tax relief, reduce the regulations so that we have more jobs and more economic growth. Those are the clear choices.

Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by the Senator from Minnesota, who also wants to comment on some of the choices that are available to us as part of today's Freshman Focus.

I yield to my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. GRAMS. Thank you, Mr. President. I thank, very much, my colleague from Wyoming.

#### OUR AMERICAN AGENDA

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, my freshman colleagues and I have come to the floor this morning to share our thoughts about the future. It is a vision for tomorrow not bound in political partisanship, because ours is not a Republican agenda, but an American agenda: A message every citizen can embrace, whether they are just starting out on the job, a new parent, an executive working their way up the ladder, a long time employee in a union shop, a student, a senior citizen. Anybody who is searching for something better, and the freedom to achieve it, is welcome.

And our message for the future can be spelled out in just six words: Lower taxes, less Government, more jobs.

The vision those six words embodies contrasts sharply with the reality that has been imposed on the American people by their own Government.

Instead of making real achievements on behalf of America's families, the last Congress, the 103d, was most noted for enacting the largest tax increase in American history. The \$265 billion in new taxes it demanded from the middle class could not have been further from what the taxpayers wanted or deserved.

This Congress heard their calls and we have pointed Washington in a new direction by seeking dramatically lower taxes for working Americans.

We heard the people when they told us that they, not some tax collector or career bureaucrat in Washington, know what is best for their families and how to spend their money which they worked so hard for.

The Government has never raised a child—it does not pay the dental bills when the kids need braces, or buy the groceries for the dinner table, or write the checks for the college tuition.

Parents make those decisions, and with more of their own money in their wallets, parents will be empowered to raise their children as only parents can.

Unlike the preceding Congress, which built its reputation by attempting to expand the reach of Government into our lives, the 104th Congress has made middle-class tax relief the centerpiece of our American agenda of returning power to the people.

And we have pledged to continue our efforts—to strengthen our efforts—in the 105th.

We offered middle-class families the \$500 per-child tax credit.

Under the blueprint for economic renewal proposed by our former colleague, Bob Dole, the child tax credit would return more than \$1,800 to the average Minnesota family of four. With a Republican President in the Oval Office, we will enact the \$500 per-child tax credit into law.

Congress cut the capital gains tax, too, to protect small investors, seniors, farmers, and families from having their savings and investments unfairly penalized.

With a Republican President, our reduction in the capital gains tax will become law as well, and so will tax credits for families caring for elderly relatives and an end to the marriage penalty in our IRS Tax Code.

Here is the bottom line, Mr. President: By enacting each of these ideas today, we have the power to inspire dramatic change for tomorrow's families. Cutting taxes puts money back into the community and directly into the hands of working Americans, where it belongs in the first place, and where it ought to stay.

It stands to reason that once we train the Federal Government to run itself more efficiently, it will need fewer tax dollars to accomplish the people's work.

The public's desire for less interference from Washington, therefore, translates into a smaller, more efficient government, reduced bureaucracy, and, ultimately, less waste of the Nation's precious financial resources.

When we achieve that, we can begin fulfilling what I consider to be our most solemn obligation: erasing our deficit and finally eliminating our cancerous national debt. The future we envision for our children and grandchildren is one free of debt imposed by this generation. No generation before in this country has left the next generation a debt. This generation will be the first to do that, and we should take

every step possible to make sure we eradicate that responsibility.

With our eye on that promise, Congress has made great progress, cutting spending by more than \$50 billion over these past two years, eliminating more than 270 wasteful programs, and privatizing four major governmental agencies.

Most importantly, our budgets balance—a sure sign of our commitment to ushering in a new era of fiscal responsibility.

Still, Americans say we can do better, and my colleagues and I agree. We must do better.

But I am not sure the people understand that if we are going to fully carry out their agenda, it will likely take a different President to lead us there.

Our third goal for the future—more and better jobs—will follow once we have energized the economy by freeing America's families and job providers from the burden of high taxes and once we have reduced the mountains of regulations and overhauled the Tax Code to forever end the IRS as we know it.

Without a Federal bureaucracy blocking the path to success, wage earners and investors will find the freedom to do what a free-market economy encourages them to do: spend their own dollars, stimulate growth, and create new, better-paying jobs.

When my colleagues and I think to the future, we envision a hopeful, vibrant place. It is an America where any citizen who wants to achieve prosperity for themselves and their families—whatever their background and however they define that prosperity—is given the opportunity to succeed.

It is an America where government enables their success, and does not stand in its way. Mr. President, I am proud of the progress we have made in this Congress toward opening those doors, toward fulfilling the American agenda of lower taxes, less government, and more jobs.

I can say with certainty that our work is not finished. But I say with equal certainty that we have not wavered in our commitment to seeing it through. We will make every attempt as we enter the 105th Congress to finish the job we have started in the 104th.

I thank the Chair. I see there is no other Senator in the Chamber so I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS IN IRAQ

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, a week ago, I was the only Member of this

body to vote against a mild resolution of support for our military operations in Iraq last week. I did so, Mr. President, because it seemed to me that our response fell between two more appropriate responses and, as a consequence, was totally ineffective and inappropriate.

Mr. President, I felt last week—and I continue to feel the same way today—that we could have determined that in a civil conflict between two groups of fighting Kurds, one backed by Iraq and the other by Iran, that we had no interest, simply that we had no dog in that fight.

On the other hand, by reason of the protection that we have provided for Kurds, however uncivil in their conduct to one another, we could also have responded militarily. Almost without exception, however, Mr. President, thoughtful academics, military scholars, and national security experts have felt that the United States should not use its Armed Forces in combat in response to a challenge from another nation without doing so disproportionately.

What does that mean, Mr. President? It means that we should make absolutely certain when we use our Armed Forces that the cost exacted of an aggressor, of an enemy, is considerably greater, measurably greater, than the gains sought by that aggressor. If we don't use it with that philosophy, we almost certainly will be disappointed in the results of the use of our armed services and, of course, with respect to our national prestige.

I was convinced, Mr. President, that what we did last week was 5 cents worth of damage in response to a dollar's worth of gain on the part of Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi forces.

We launched 44 cruise missiles against Iraq last week in response to military adventures on the part of Iraq in a northern protected zone in Kurdistan. The act, as I have said, came in the midst of a civil war between two Kurdish factions, one backed by Iran and one by Iraq. We responded not only inadequately, but we responded in the south part of Iraq, while the fighting and the brutality was occurring in the north. The result, according to the administration, was a U.S. victory. As one administration official described it, "We really whacked him." Now, a little more than a week later, the reality is considerably different.

Saddam Hussein has regained control over the northern part of his country. After many years of oppression of its people, whom he has bitterly oppressed, thousands of whom he has killed, he is continuing to fire at U.S. warplanes in the south. The administration is in the midst of a review of its policy. Under most circumstances, Mr. President, when you are victorious, when you really whack them, it is the other guy who changes what he is doing—not us.