

avoided the present situation. What did my grandparents do when faced with the perils of pioneer life at the turn of the century? What did my parents do when they were faced with hard times prior to and during the depression of the 1930s?

The accounts of their struggles are fresh on my mind. I listened intently as they described how drought, rust and low prices nearly pushed them over the edge. Only hard work, hope, determination and a strong faith sustained them. Faith in God and in a society that would ultimately rescue America from a bad situation. They endured and persevered. And with the help of federal farm programs at the last, even prospered.

This came at a time when the world seemed to care about its food supply and those who produced it. As time passed and a degree of prosperity continued some became frustrated with the aspect and methods of supply management. A bit of arrogance told some that we no longer needed any help from the federal government and that we could handle things now.

The commodity traders, food processors and exploiters of the ag sector of our economy could now have their way. Congress listened to the wrong people—those whose interests were not supportive of farm families. A non farm bill called "Freedom to Farm" was crafted and passed over the objections of our rural congressional delegations. This, along with the years of crop disease, bad foreign trade policies and apathetic citizens, all contributed to our present situation.

Our country has never experienced overall hunger. Many European countries have, and they appreciate and protect their agriculture producers. We have been scolded for not being efficient. We have been told to produce more—we have. We have been told to market smarter—we have. We have been told to expand—we have.

None of this helps without an equitable price. In the Legislature we have attempted in a small way to address the problems with the proposals forwarded by the Commission on the Future of Agriculture. Nearly all proposals have been defeated by the Republican majority.

What now? Do we in the North Dakota Legislature turn our backs on the No. 1 industry in our state and let what is left crumble further? Or do we put some plans forward to help solve the problems at the state level? It may already be too late to ask Congress for help given the demographics of our rural/urban population split. Are we going to offer any hope that we are willing to save agriculture as we know it?

It is too late for some of us. But it is still not too late for North Dakota. We must use what we have left of this session to get to the business of supporting rural families and communities.

THE PRESENCE OF SQUALENE IN SICK GULF WAR VETS SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to address an issue of critical importance to many of our constituents. Over a year ago, my office was contacted by several veterans and others who were concerned about reports that the presence of antibodies for squalene had been discovered in blood samples of sick Gulf War veterans.

How could squalene antibodies show up in the bodies of Gulf War veterans? Squalene is a component of adjuvant formulations used in some experimental vaccines but not in any licensed vaccines. It has not been licensed.

An adjuvant is a toxic substance incorporated into a vaccine to accelerate, enhance or prolong specific immune responses.

After my initial inquiries, I determined that it would be prudent to ask the GAO to conduct an investigation to determine the facts surrounding these disturbing reports.

With over 100,000 of our Gulf War era veterans suffering, I believed it was imperative that we provide them with the truth regarding this issue. If there was nothing to substantiate the assertions, then we should be able to report those findings back to the veteran's community and move on with the search to provide them with the best possible treatment for Gulf War illnesses.

GAO's report, recently released to me, is very disturbing and raises an increased number of serious questions. Its title, "Gulf War Illnesses: Questions About the Presence of Squalene Antibodies in Veterans can be Resolved," indicates that we can get to the truth about squalene.

The GAO report's conclusion is troubling and demands immediate attention. The GAO recommended that the Department of Defense should act now to expand on the research already conducted. The GAO found that independent research had been undertaken using valid scientific measures, which has found the presence of squalene in sick Gulf War vets.

They interviewed the dedicated immunologist who headed the project and the respected lead researcher from Tulane University in New Orleans who developed the test which provided these results. Their inquiry led them to vaccine experts who confirmed the validity of the methods used.

After a thorough investigation, the GAO determined that the quality of the independent research demands, demands that the Department of Defense aggressively pursue these findings.

Specifically, the report states that DOD should conduct research designed to replicate or dispute the independent research results that revealed the presence of squalene antibodies in the blood of ill Gulf War veterans. If DOD's research affirms the presence of these antibodies, additional research must be conducted, designed to assess the significance of that finding.

The Department of Defense response to these recommendations has been unconscionable. They have stated that since they did not use squalene as an adjuvant during the Gulf War, there is no reason to test for it at this time. That is ducking the issue completely. They are willing to wait possibly for a year or more until the research is published to determine whether or not it warrants further review.

Considering the suffering of so many of our brave men and women who are living daily with the painful consequences of their service to our Nation, I cannot comprehend the DOD's reluctance. Over \$100 million, \$100 million, has been spent on investigating Gulf War illnesses, with little success. Surely, we can find a few thousand dollars to replicate or dispute the research results. We owe the veterans the truth.

Recently we have seen journalistic investigations examining this issue. Additional concerns have been raised by Gary Matsumoto in *Vanity Fair* and Paul Rodriguez of *Insight Magazine*.

We must exercise our constitutional oversight role to unravel this mystery and provide a clear presentation of the facts.

I have asked the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE), the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP), the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to hold a joint hearing regarding the results of the GAO report. I believe it is essential to hear firsthand from the GAO investigators and obtain answers from DOD officials and others under oath to many of the questions that remain outstanding.

It is imperative that DOD cooperate. We must find the truth wherever the next step leads.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SNYDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take a few minutes tonight. I know via C-SPAN that this is going to be very hard for the people at home to read but I think it shows a tremendous problem that we have in our foreign policy and how that policy is being carried out.

I want to just read it verbatim. What this is is listings taken directly from the U.S. Department of State's 1998 Human Rights Practices Report.

The Department of State is required by law to assess human rights violations ongoing in countries that we have dealings with.

There are two countries here that are listed, and we have significant involvement, ongoing today, with these two countries. If I may, under country A, this government's human rights record worsened significantly and there were

problems in many areas, including extrajudicial killings, murders, disappearances, torture, brutal beatings and arbitrary arrests and detentions. Country B, the government's human rights record deteriorated sharply beginning in the final months of this last year with a crackdown against organized political dissent. Abuses included instances of extrajudicial killings, torture, mistreatment of prisoners, forced confessions, arbitrary arrests and detention, lengthy incommunicado detention and denial of due process.

Second area, country A, the government infringed on the citizen's right to privacy. The same thing, country B, the government infringed on the citizen's right to privacy.

Number three, under country A, the government severely restricted the freedom of speech and of the press. The same thing, country B, the government continued restrictions on the freedom of speech and of the press.

The fourth area of concern, discrimination and violence against women remained serious problems. Discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities worsened during the year. Country B, discrimination against women, minorities and the disabled, violence against women, including coercive family planning practices which sometimes included forced abortion and forced sterilization, prostitution, trafficking in women and children and abuse of children are all significant problems.

Fifth area, the government infringed on the freedom of worship by minority religions and restricted freedom of movement. Country B, serious human rights abuses persisted in minority areas where restrictions on religion and other fundamental freedoms intensified.

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The sixth area, Country A, the police committed numerous serious and systematic human rights abuses. Country B, security police and personnel were responsible for numerous human rights abuses.

What kind of countries are these? The first is a constitutional republic, the second is an authoritarian state. Country A happens to be Yugoslavia. Country B happens to be China.

We are bombing Yugoslavia as I speak. We are courting China to the World Trade Organization. We give them MFN, most-favored-nation status privileges, in trading with us.

Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, I call on you to have some consistency in our foreign policy. The human rights abuses are atrocious for both these countries. Our policy has to be consistent.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

Now I would like to spend some time tonight talking about the problems that really face us. Today we did pass a budget. It is the first honest budget. I have been here, I am in my fifth year. I am a term-limited congressman. I have one year to go.

This is the first budget that the Congress of the United States has considered that is honest in comparison with the numbers for the people of this country. It is honest about what our problems are, it is honest about what the real numbers are in terms of money, and it speaks honestly about what our situations are financially.

The social security trust fund is a definite problem for us. I think it is important that we understand how it works, because most of the people in my district still think there is real money in a trust fund. That is what it was intended to be, but in fact we have not used it that way, and it has not been done for 40 or 50 years. In fact, the money actually has been taken to use on other programs.

What happens now is when we earn a salary, the money that is paid in by our employer or us directly, if we are self-employed, comes to the Federal Government. Excess money coming into social security that is above that which is paid out in social security benefits is used to pay for more spending, or pay off publicly-held debt.

We have heard today a lot of people talk about paying off debt. If we pay off publicly-held debt by borrowing money from the social security, we have not changed our debt at all, we have just changed who we owe it to. We also change who is going to be supplying the repayment of that debt. So we put IOUs in the trust fund that bear interest.

We are not paying any of that back. As a matter of fact, we are actually creating a larger quantity, and doing so at a greater rate than we ever have in our country's history.

In the year 2014, which is the latest, just this last week, the Social Security Administration came out with revised numbers that in the year 2014 there will not be a surplus of payments coming into the social security system. In fact, what that means is the money that will be paid out to benefits, to social security recipients, will exceed the amount of money that the people working are paying into the system.

What is going to happen? We are going to have to get the money somewhere, so we are going to either raise taxes or borrow the money by creating additional obligations and reshifting the debt back out of the social security to publicly-held debt.

What we are doing, we have the little peanut in the shell game that has been going on for the last 50 years in this country. The budget that was passed today specifically addresses the problems associated with this. All social security trust funds will be moved off-budget and not used for anything except retiring debt: no increased spending, no tax cuts, nothing except reserving them for future use for social security.

So you can get an idea of what is actually happening in the social security trust fund balance, the year 1999 is this year. We are going to have about an \$80

billion, maybe \$90 billion surplus in social security payments in excess of what we are paying out.

But as we can see, by the year 2014 what happens is that we start going in the red. We have to borrow money to pay social security, or we have to cut spending somewhere else, or we have to issue new instruments of debt, which is the same thing as borrowing money, or we have to raise taxes. We are going to talk about that in a minute.

It is interesting to note a mere 30 years from now we will have \$700 billion worth of underpayment in the social security system, \$700 billion that we are either going to have to raise the taxes on our children or grandchildren just to meet the obligations for the social security system.

By the way, these numbers come from the social security trustees' report. None of these are opinionated numbers made up by a Congressman. They either come from the Office of Management and Budget, the Congressional Budget Office, or social security.

So what are our options? There is one fact that is true: In the year 2014, social security will pay out more than it takes in. That has not changed. It has moved one year in the last 2 years.

The first thing we can do is save 100 percent of the social security surplus and transition to a system with individually-controlled investments. We can repay the money from the trust fund by raising income taxes on ourselves now, or our children or our grandchildren, or we can delay the date by raising the retirement age or reducing benefits. None of those are of value to anybody that is paying taxes today. They are not of value to our seniors. We have to fulfill our commitment to our seniors.

So we only have three options: raise taxes, decrease benefits, or make social security a system that will work. The most interesting thing about social security, had we put the money that was put into our account for social security in a passbook savings account, we would have earned on compounded interest four times what is going to be available to our account under the government's auspices. The average annual interest earnings on social security trust funds is 1.2 percent.

Another way of looking at what is going to happen with social security taxes is to look at what the tax rate is now on the employee and employer share. Right now it is 12.5, 12.6 percent that is paid, half of that out of your salary, half out of your employer's salary, or if you are self-employed, you pay it all.

We can see the green line shows that that is the rate. If we continue at that same rate, the red line shows what we are going to have to have. So we can see that by the year 2029 we are going to have to go all the way up to 18 percent. We are going to have to have a 50 percent increase in social security taxes, just to meet the demands that are going to be on the system.

It is not any wonder that when people are polled in this country, that they have more confidence in the fact that there are UFOs out there than that the social security system will be viable for them. Here is why. If your current age is 5, you have an average life expectancy of 82.5 years. If you earned the average wage in 1998, you would have to live an extra 5.1 years over your expected life expectancy just to get back the money you put in, with interest paid on that. If you earned the maximum, which is \$70,000, or \$68,400 in 1998, it is higher than that now, you would have to live an extra 14.9 years.

Let us say you are 34. Your life expectancy if you are 34 years of age today is 83.8 years, on average. If you earned the average wage during 1998 and you did that for the rest of your working period until you were eligible for social security, you would have to live to be 100.5 years, almost 101 years old to ever get back even what you put into the social security system.

If you earn the maximum, \$68,000, you have to live to be 172 years old to get your money back out of the social security system. Why? Because the money is not invested properly, it is not achieving daily compound interest, and the money has been spent for things other than what it was intended to.

Why is social security important? If we do not fix social security, if we do not quit stealing social security money, if we do not make social security a viable retirement system, our grandchildren will have a much poorer standard of living than what we have today. We are stealing opportunities from our children and our grandchildren by not being responsible over the past 50 years.

That is why the budget that passed today was so important. For the first time it recognizes that money for social security is intended to be for social security, and that that money is not intended for tax cuts, that money is not intended for increased spending on anything except social security.

Each citizen's share of the debt, in 1997, \$19,898; 1998, \$20,123; 1999, at the end of this year, September 30th of this year, every person, man, woman, and child in this country, will be responsible for almost \$21,000 of debt.

More importantly, substitute the politicians' surplus that they have been talking about the last couple of years, and we do not have a real surplus. What we have is an excess payment of social security monies over what is paid out. There is not a true surplus projected until the year 2001.

What is happening daily? Every day the debt that our children and grandchildren must repay goes up by \$275 million. In 1998, the national debt rose by \$120 billion. Yet, the politicians said we had a surplus of \$69 billion. Something does not add up. We will never have a surplus until the debt stops rising. That is how you measure a surplus. If the debt is rising, we cannot possibly have a surplus.

If any business, any homeowner, any group of individuals managed their books the way the Federal Government manages theirs, first of all they would be going to jail. Number two, if they rob from the pension plan the way the Congress through the years has robbed from the social security plan, they would be in jail already.

The most important aspect of putting social security back and building its integrity is the fact that we will start a new process that recognizes that if the Congress makes an obligation to the American people, they have to keep that obligation. It is called truth in budgeting. There is no surplus. There is a politician's surplus. We will talk about that a little bit.

Here is what has been publicly said by both the politicians in Congress and the administration about surplus: in 1998, a \$69 billion surplus. But how did the national debt go from \$5,340 billion to \$5,440 billion if we had a surplus? It is because we really did not have a surplus.

When we say we have a surplus, then it is easier to spend more of our tax dollars, it is easier to cut taxes because, oh, we have extra money. We have no extra money. As a matter of fact, we owe \$1.6 trillion to the social security system now. The money is not there. It has already been spent on something else.

When we hear the word "surplus," if we ever encounter that, if we read it in the newspapers, it has to be an on-budget surplus. We use two sets of numbers, one for political purposes, for people to get reelected, and the other that is a real true number that we end up making hard decisions on.

The politicians' surplus is a lie. There is not a surplus. If we apply these numbers carefully, we can look at what President Clinton has proposed and the actual spending and what is proposed in this budget, and we can see big differences in the numbers.

If we totally exclude social security money from all spending and we keep the budget caps that were agreed to in 1997, that the President and the Congress agreed to, then a couple of things are going to happen.

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In 1998, if we restrain spending, the real deficit was about \$30 billion instead of \$69 billion surplus. If we can restrain spending and live within the caps, based on the Congressional Budget Office's projections of what will happen in terms of revenue and costs, what we will see is that we will get a real surplus, a citizens' surplus. More money, we will actually have more money in than we have obligations to meet, not touching any Social Security money.

Why is that important? Because in the year 2014 when we have to start paying out this large amount of money to Social Security payments, we are going to have to get that money somewhere.

We can do two things. We can borrow the money, which just delays the price of that to a future time, or we can change the system. We can cut the benefits. We can delay the age. We can say one cannot have Social Security until one is 75 and one has to continue to work.

The problem with that is we have made a commitment to the American people in terms of the Social Security retirement system. The other problem with it is that the Social Security system today is not a livable retirement wage.

So if we want to meet the obligation to the senior citizens of this country, and I am soon to be one, I now have an AARP card I am proud to say, that we have to make the hard choices, we have to be honest about what our budgeting problems are, and we have to keep our hands off Social Security.

When I talk to people in my district, I hear lots of worries about creating a system other than the system that we have now that would take a small percentage, say a third of one's Social Security payments, and allow one to put that in a restricted, highly safe investment entity that would earn interest at three or four times the rate that the government is going to earn interest.

It is not hard to figure out at compound interest, if the Federal Government is earning 1.2 percent on one's money, and the average private investment vehicle today, discounting the rise in the market the last 6 or 7 years, but pre-1992 was 7 percent, what one is talking about is a fivefold increase in the earnings power of that money.

Einstein said the most important scientific fact that he ever looked at powerwise was the power of compound interest, that if one gets paid interest daily on money that one saves, that the building power of that each day that base amount rose and one earns more interest on a higher amount each day, eventually what one will achieve is a marked reduction in the cost for any service that one would offer.

This ability to restrain spending, to stay within the caps is the most important thing that Congress can do. The budget that we passed today does exactly that. It preserves 100 percent of the Social Security funds for Social Security.

Number two, it restrains spending by staying within the budget caps agreed to between the President and the Congress in 1997. We cannot do anything any more important than that for our children and our grandchildren.

Part of being a Member of Congress is helping us fulfill our obligations, not just to our seniors, but fulfilling the obligations that we have to our children and the future generations that come after us.

I want to use an example. This is not meant to be a partisan example, but it tells very specifically what happened in 1998 with the supposed "surplus," but really spending the Social Security surplus.

We had \$127 billion more come into the budget in 1999 on Social Security than we actually paid out. Correction. That is, 1999 was projected to be \$127 billion. We have agreed to spend \$1 billion, or we think we have agreed because it is in conference now, in terms of the emergency spending bill, in terms of all of the tragedies that happened in South America. That brings us to \$126 billion.

We had a bill that spent an additional \$15 billion at the end of last year outside of the caps that we had agreed to. So that brought it down to \$111 billion. We had another billion dollars that was spent in agreement with the President in emergency appropriations.

So last year we stole \$17 billion of the Social Security surplus straight off the top.

What is going to happen this year, the expected surplus is \$138 billion in Social Security. The surplus for the general accounts is not near that. It is at actually a deficit.

If we do not accomplish what we said we would with this budget today, what will happen is we will be using Social Security money again to pay for things that we should be paying for with things other than Social Security dollars.

We will be undermining the Social Security system. We will not be honest about what we are doing here. We will have two sets of numbers again, one for the American people when we are campaigning and being politicians and trying to look good, and another that is the real world that someday we are going to have a day of reckoning when it comes to our kids.

The President put forth the budget that said, over the next 15 years, we spend only 38 percent of the Social Security surplus when we should not spend any of it. But even under his budget for the year 2000, he actually spends 42 percent of it on increased programs within the Federal Government.

Let us not spend any of the Social Security money. Another thing has struck me since I have been in Congress. I am a physician, obstetrician, family practice doctor. I delivered 97 babies last year while I was in Congress. So I go home every weekend. On Mondays, I still practice medicine, lots of times on Fridays, and every fourth weekend I am on call. So I get to talk to people about real problems, see the real issues that they are involved in.

It strikes me so peculiar that we talk so easy about these large numbers. The application is, when I have a senior citizen in my office, and they are not taking their medicine, and the reason they are not taking their medicine is because they cannot afford to take their medicine, that they are choosing between eating and taking the medicine that will extend their lives, that we have failed as a Nation under, quote, Social Security and Medicare to provide the things that we promised that we would provide.

The other thing that strikes me is that we heard the gentleman from North Carolina earlier say that the reason that we had this huge deficit was tax cuts in the future. We have two ways of affecting government funds. We can either spend more or less, that is one way, or we can raise taxes or lower taxes. It is one or the other. One is not better than the other when it comes to balancing our books. If in fact we need to cut spending, we can.

I cannot find one person in my district who thinks that the Federal Government is efficient; that it could not be. As a matter of fact, if one knows anything about the history of World War II, when this country had to improve efficiency, when we had a crisis that faced us, what we did is markedly reduce the cost of the bureaucracy of the Federal Government so that more dollars went into our ability to sustain the freedom that we all cherish.

We have that big of a crisis facing us today. It is not flashy. It is not great big. It is not in front of us all the time. But the fact is, is our children and our grandchildren, unless we have fiscal discipline, will have a markedly lower standard of living. We do not have any option to that except doing the right thing now.

I am going to close here in a minute. One of the things that I have learned in my short stint as a politician is that there is a lot of ways to look at things. There is a way to look at things if one wants to get reelected. There is a way to look at things if one wants to play ball up here with the politicians. There is a way to look at things if one wants to be able to sleep at night.

Martin Luther King in his last speech at the National Cathedral, his last major speech, said this: Cowardice asked the question, is it expedient? Vanity asked the question, is it popular? But conscience asked the question, is it right?

It is not right to steal Social Security money and use it in other things. It is not right to be dishonest with the American public about the budget numbers that we deal with every day.

It is not right to be untruthful about our situation in Yugoslavia or our trading relationships with China. They are equivalently the same in terms of the way they treat humans. They are both atrocious.

We have to live with ourselves. We have to demand the integrity and the statesmanship that is necessary for our freedom to operate.

As we spend more of one's money and we do not fulfill our obligations, we all lose freedom. I want freedom for my grandchildren. I want freedom for my children. I have three daughters, two sons-in-law, two grandchildren. My greatest dream is that they will have the opportunity to be free and succeed in a free society. That requires integrity in the Congress and requires integrity at every level in this government.

We can become much more efficient. We can do the right things. We do not

have to always be popular. We do not have to look for the expedient way. That is the way of the coward.

FARM CRISIS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as some of our colleagues discussed earlier this evening, rural America is in economic depression. Tonight I would like to ask the question of: Where is the beef? Where is the bill that is supposed to come out of this Congress that meets the needs of farmers across this country who are losing equity, increasing debt, and many, and many of them putting their farms up for sale?

Recently I stood on this floor and read to my colleagues a letter I received from a constituent who comes from a farming family of many generations. She called the American farmer an endangered species and asked if Congress even cared about saving them.

I care about saving the independent American farmer, Mr. Speaker. But the leadership of this Congress is very, very irresponsible. Where is the bill? Where is the beef?

Some Members of this Congress are doing all they can to get a bill out of here that addresses the concerns of farmers across this country. But many other Members are unaware or literally are playing politics by holding relief to our farmers hostage to other bills, literally putting a tourniquet on the credit so essential as life lines to farmers across this country.

It is awful that, while the American economy is at one of the strongest points in recent history, the benefits are not flowing to every community. In fact, the benefits are flowing out of the pockets and the bank accounts of our farmers.

They are continuing to experience significant declines in prices that began over a year ago. In fact, over the last 15 years, one would ask oneself the question: Why would one even want to be an independent farmer in America?

The price declines experienced by wheat and cattle producers over the last couple of years have now expanded across rural America to include the feed grains, oilseed, cotton, pork, rice, and now even the dairy sector at 50-year lows.

In some instances, prices are now lower than during the 1940s. Coupled with that is the increasing cost of production and farm equipment and fuel. Those prices do not go down, only up.

For the RECORD this evening, I want to submit some of these prices. Imagine how many bushels of wheat one would have to supply to a local grain company when wheat is now selling at \$2.66 a bushel. Fifteen years ago, it was selling at \$3.39. In corn, it is at all time