

an opportunity for our employees to have subsidized Metro passes.

I am, however, continually embarrassed, as I know most Members of Congress are, when the reports come out, as they did last week, about our abysmal record of recycling here on Capitol Hill. In the 3 years I have been a Member of Congress, the total proceeds from all of our recycling effort for over 8,000 employees on Capitol Hill has been less than \$27,000. I am sure that there are Boy Scout troops in my community that have raised more money from recycling Christmas trees, bottles and cans than the entire U.S. Congress did in those 3 years. For the year of 1997, the net proceeds was \$7.51 for recycling high-grade paper. There are homeless people around Capitol Hill that make more than that in a day recycling bottles and cans.

Mr. Speaker, I hope as we have a lot of rhetoric around Congress that we want to live by the rules that we apply to other people. I hope that in the final analysis we will apply that to our individual offices, and step up to behave the way we are asking the rest of America to behave in terms of recycling. I think our record ought to be something that we ought to be proud of, not something that makes us cringe, and I hope that each Member of Congress will dedicate themselves this Earth Day to make it a record that we can, in fact, show to the American people and be proud of.

SOCIAL SECURITY DEBT LIMIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, there is good news in terms of this Congress, this President, acknowledging that we must solve the Social Security problem.

Social Security was started back in 1935 with the anticipation that there would be a continuing growth in the labor force. What has happened with this pay-as-you-go program where existing workers are paying in their Social Security taxes, and that tax is immediately sent out to existing retirees, is the demographic changes. The number of individuals working and paying in that tax in relation to the increasing number of retirees is creating a situation where Social Security is becoming insolvent. It cannot be sustained.

Let me just give a couple of examples. In 1940 we had 41 individual workers paying in their tax for every one retiree. By 1950, it went down to 17 workers paying in their Social Security tax for every one retiree. Guess what it is today. Today there are three workers paying in their Social Security tax to pay the benefits for every one retiree.

The estimate is that by the year 2030 there will only be two people working. So we can see a huge problem in con-

tinuing to ask the fewer and fewer number of workers to pay in a higher and higher tax to accommodate every retiree. Taxes have already significantly increased over the last several years.

Since 1971, Social Security taxes have been increased 36 times. More often than once a year, we have increased the rate of the base for Social Security taxes to accommodate the increased requirement to pay benefits for existing retirees from a fewer number of workers.

So the question that we are now faced with is how do we change the Social Security system to keep it solvent? How do we either increase revenues coming into the system or reduce benefits so that the Social Security system can last for tomorrow's retirees and not put a huge burden on future generations to pay more and more taxes for Social Security?

I think the President suggesting that we have to put Social Security first has increased the awareness that something has to be done. In the next several days and weeks, I will be introducing my Social Security bill. It will be the third Social Security bill I have introduced that will keep Social Security solvent. Other Members, such as the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), will be introducing the bill that they worked up to keep Social Security solvent. Some are suggesting only temporary solutions.

I see problems in temporary solutions. I see even greater problems in solutions such as those proposed by some Democrats, the President, that have suggested that we simply add a new giant IOU to the Social Security Trust Fund and therefore somehow it is calculated that that is going to keep Social Security solvent without any changes in the program. It cannot happen. It will not work. Simply adding another IOU to the Social Security Trust Fund, in effect mandates that taxes will be increased on our kids and our grandkids to pay future benefits.

Mr. Speaker, we can only raise taxes so high, and right now taxes in this country are the highest in history. Partial solutions divert attention for long term solutions and also increase the likelihood of future tax increases.

Both Republicans and Democrats have suggested that until we come up with a long term solution, the Social Security Trust Fund surplus be used to pay down the public debt. However, some people in Washington want to replace the current public debt limit with two debt limits, one for Treasury securities held by the public, and one for IOUs held by the Social Security Trust Fund. This is a bad idea that would send a message that debt owed to the trust fund is less important than the debt owed to Wall Street.

Some want the new statistics so that they can brag about reducing the debt held by the public. That is true, but it does not matter because the total gov-

ernment debt would continue to increase. Others suggest that we could consider writing off the debt owed to the trust fund because really that is just what government owes itself. That is wrong and dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to fight against any proposal that simply adds a new giant IOU to the trust fund but does not change the system to keep it solvent. I ask my colleagues to oppose temporary solutions which again just demand a tax increase in some future years. Let us step up to the plate, let us do what is necessary to solve Social Security now and keep it solvent for future generations.

A STRONG U.S.-ARMENIAN PARTNERSHIP IS NEEDED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, among the international dignitaries coming to Washington this weekend to take part in the NATO summit will be President Robert Kocharian of the Republic of Armenia. Although Armenia is not currently a member of NATO, President Kocharian, like other leaders of new democracies that were captive nations under the Soviet bloc, has been invited to Washington as part of the Partnership for Peace program.

As NATO celebrates its first half century, and particularly now, with NATO forces involved in the first combat operation in the history of the alliance, it is important for us to consider how we can make NATO a meaningful force for peace and security in the next century. We recently took our first major step towards changing the composition of the alliance to recognize the realities of the post-Cold War by admitting three former Warsaw Pact nations: Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. We need to continue this momentum by identifying other democratic nations whose security is important to the United States, who may wish to join NATO in the future.

While Armenia may be a small country, its importance as a strategic asset for the Western alliance should not be minimized. In the months and years following the summit, I hope we will see greater efforts to build on the U.S.-Armenian relationship, and along these lines, I will be circulating a letter among the Members of the House asking the President to devote greater attention to establishing a strong U.S.-Armenian partnership.

□ 1245

Mr. Speaker, Armenia would be a logical candidate for future NATO expansion, and in the short term, as a closer partner on a wide range of security issues. Armenia is a pro-western Nation, despite its years as part of the Soviet Union. President Kocharian is a legitimately elected head of state who

must answer to a democratically-elected parliament and be held accountable to a free press.

Despite a lack of experience with democracy and despite the security threats posed by hostile nations, Armenia is moving rapidly to establish the institutions of civil society and democratic governments.

On the domestic economic front, Armenia has moved aggressively with a privatization campaign. Small businesses are blossoming. Armenia's success as a free democracy in a region of the world where both of these qualities are lacking makes it a notable example of an emerging Nation that has embraced many of our values against very daunting odds.

On the security front, Mr. Speaker, NATO Secretary General Javier Solano has already met with Armenia defense and national security officials. Armenia's central location at the crossroads between Asia and Europe has been recognized by American officials and our allies, but we need to pay more attention.

Armenia has also earned increased respect from the United States and the Western alliance for its constructive role in the Nagorno Karabagh conflict.

As I have mentioned in this Chamber on several occasions, Nagorno Karabagh is an Armenian-populated region that has declared its independence, but is still claimed by the neighboring Republic of Azerbaijan. A bloody war was fought earlier in this decade, with the Karabagh Armenians successfully defending their homelands. A ceasefire was accepted by both sides in 1994, but a political settlement has not been reached.

Under the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United States is a cochair of the negotiating group formed to resolve this conflict.

The United States and our OSCE partners have put forward a peace plan to resolve this conflict. Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh have both accepted the American-supported plan as a basis for negotiation, and Azerbaijan unfortunately has rejected the approach. Considering how policymakers in Congress and the administration have identified an establish the Caucasus region as a vital interest, we should do more to reward those countries which are willing to work constructively to resolve longstanding differences.

Mr. Speaker, President Kocharian's visit coincides with an important and tragic date. April 24 is solemnly commemorated as the anniversary of the unleashing of the genocide by the Ottoman Turkish empire of 1915 through 1923 that ultimately claimed the lives of 1.5 million Armenians.

There will be a reception tomorrow evening in commemoration of the genocide, as well as a series of speeches by Members of Congress. We cannot allow the world to forget the genocide. The lesson of the Armenian genocide should not be lost on us as we witness the heartbreaking TV images from

Kosovo. Truly, a major justification for the NATO campaign is to try to ensure that the 20th century, which began in genocide, not end in genocide.

Back in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire, when Armenians were being murdered and deported, and their homes and communities burned and destroyed, and all record of the Armenian presence erased, there was no Western alliance of democracies like NATO committed to stopping aggression, brutality and genocide.

I just want to say in conclusion, I want to take this opportunity to express my admiration for our men and women in uniform who are fighting to stop the horrible ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians. At the same time, I urge the administration to assert far more pressure on Azerbaijan to constructively participate in the Nagorno Karabagh peace process.

As we remember the martyrs of the Armenian genocide, and as we witness the tragic events unfolding today in the Balkans, we must do all in our power to prevent another genocide in the mountains and valleys of Nagorno-Karabagh.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to comment on the upcoming celebration this weekend of the 50th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and, of course, on the ongoing military operation against Yugoslavia.

The NATO allies will also meet for its annual summit and formally welcome the three new members, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republics.

I was watching Nightline on Friday evening, Mr. Speaker, and the subject was NATO and its 50th anniversary. In one segment of the program, they went around Washington, D.C. and actually asked different citizens what they believed the role of NATO should be.

Most answered that NATO should be "peacekeepers for any conflict," or that NATO "should protect humanity," or they should stop genocide. With all due respect to their opinions, each of these Americans were not correct about what NATO's initial responsibility should be.

NATO was created to be solely a collective security arrangement for the Western allies against Soviet and Eastern Bloc aggression. NATO came into being 50 years ago when the U.S. joined its allies in signing the treaty on April 4, 1949. The U.S. Senate went on to ratify the treaty on July 21, 1949.

I am concerned with the current operations against Yugoslavia as a NATO operation. NATO does not have the authority under the current treaty terms to engage in the actions against Yugo-

slavia. By doing so, the stakes have been raised dramatically high. The President has allowed NATO to be put into a position that in order to prove its validity and effectiveness in a post-Cold War world, NATO has to win this war at all costs. This rigidity has prevented the administration and our NATO allies to take the sensible steps on seeking diplomatic solutions.

In fact, the administration last week flatly refused to consider a possible diplomatic opening that Germany was trying to seek with Yugoslavia.

Again, the President is intentionally raising the stakes in this engagement that makes anything less than our all-out victory a defeat. This strategy places U.S. prestige and ability to carry out our will in the world at tremendous risk. As stated before, this operation also brings into question the purpose of NATO in today's world.

The current operation against Yugoslavia is draining our military capability. There are some reports that the Navy was down to 200 cruise missiles in the theater of operation.

Nightline reported last night that out of over 6,000 sorties flown in the last 28 days, only 1,700 have been bombing missions. After 6 years of stretching our military too thin, the administration has placed our Nation's military abilities at dangerously low levels.

The shrinking cruise missile supply, combined with our military having to convert our nuclear-tipped missiles to conventional warheads, places our abilities in a global scale at hazardous levels. If our Nation is faced with a second conflict, the security of the world is at great peril.

During this weekend's NATO summit, the NATO leaders will discuss changing the strategic concept of NATO from a defensive organization towards a more proactive force to combat new global risks such as proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. The administration seems to want NATO to be a global force ready to tackle any trouble in the world.

If this administration seeks to change the basic concept of NATO, it would violate the U.S. Constitution. Here is why. The treaty signed in 1949 was to provide for the defense of Western Europe. Any change to that treaty would require a new treaty, and therefore confirmation by the U.S. Senate by a two-thirds majority.

Mr. Speaker, it seems this administration is out to conduct a military action here. Secretary Madeleine Albright recently stated, "The military are our regulars now, so this is their job. What else would they be doing if we didn't give them their battles to fight?"

Secretary Albright also recently testified before Congress and said, "I would rather be up here defending myself for not having a plan than having to defend myself for not doing anything."