

have nearly 8 million new homeowners. That is a million more families each year that have achieved homeownership. That has come about, obviously, because we have made the right decisions with regards to our budget since then. We have lower mortgage rates and higher employment, and new policy has helped in many areas for first-time homeowners, minority homeownership and, of course, dealing with senior citizens and reverse mortgages contracts.

But we have much work to go before we are done. Many of our cities, for instance, have less than 50 percent homeownership. And by, of course, establishing a stake in these communities, we can be very helpful to changing the success of these urban areas. But we have to keep programs like CRA and HMDA in place, the FHA program, which has been so important, to continue the progress with regards to homeownership. These policies work hand in hand with the partnership approach involving the private sector, home builders, realtors, mortgage bankers, title insurers, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and, of course, financial institutions, banks, not for profit roles like the community reinvestment act and a myriad of national policies that are tailored to respond in today's marketplace.

I urge my colleagues and citizens across the country to celebrate this great event, National Homeownership Week. Homeownership the American dream is alive and well, Madam Speaker.

820TH RED HORSE COMBAT ENGINEER SQUADRON

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, the Air Force has a motto of "service before self." That is a fitting description of the 204 members of the 820th Red Horse Combat Engineer squadron from Nellis Air Force Base, who will be departing for Albania very soon.

Their mission will be to repair critical roads and bridges to help prepare the way for a safe and expeditious return of the Kosovar refugees who were displaced from their homes in this unfortunate conflict.

Having seen the environment that they will be working in firsthand, I can tell my colleagues that their work will be challenged. However, I am very confident that their skills, training, and motivation will be equal to the task.

As the struggle for a peaceful solution to the Kosovo conflict is played out on the TV and in our newspapers, it is the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who continue to work hard in the background, focused on accomplishment of their mission.

I want to say thanks to all our troops deployed in support of Operation Allied Force and to the men and women of the

820th Red Horse Squadron, their families and loved ones. Good luck in your deployment. Godspeed. A quick return. But most importantly, thank you for your service and sacrifice for this nation.

GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I think in the next couple of days we will have an opportunity to do what is right for America and do what is right for our young people.

Although we are not marking up the juvenile justice crime bill in the House Committee on the Judiciary, of which I am a member of the Subcommittee on Crime, we will have an opportunity to come to this floor.

I do not believe that we should pass any juvenile justice crime bill that does not have provisions for mental health services to enhance and give to our children the kind of resources they may need. We should not pass a bill that does not have parental responsibility and parental education about how to help with raising our children to the extent of giving them resources when our children are troubled. And we should not pass a bill that does not have real gun safety, with an ammunition clip restriction, with a restriction on gun shows, and the instant check and the waiting period.

We should realize, Madam Speaker, that we now can stand collectively as Americans and confront this issue not in an attacking mode but a collaborative mode. We must stand up together to respond to the crisis of school violence not only in rural America and urban America but the longstanding concept that this whole country has too many guns.

I do not believe our hunters in the far west or the far east would argue against gun safety and responsibility.

Let us all stand against the negatives of the National Rifle Association and collectively as Americans for safety for our children.

IN APPRECIATION OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF OKLAHOMA STORM

(Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my heartfelt appreciation to all of the radio and TV stations that provided around-the-clock coverage during the recent storm that ravaged the State of Oklahoma.

The advanced emergency weather warnings provided by these stations and their employees allowed Oklahomans to find safe cover before tornadoes struck their neighborhoods and communities. This outstanding service saved countless lives.

Not only did these local broadcasters provide early storm warnings, but they continued to offer accurate and useful information to their audiences during the chaos that followed the terrible storm.

I know I speak for all Oklahomans as I thank them for their tireless efforts during this tragedy.

WHERE DOES DEMOCRAT LEADERSHIP STAND ON TAXES?

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, President Clinton ran on a middle-class tax cut back in 1992. However, once in office, he raised taxes by a record amount; in fact, the largest tax increase in American history.

The tax increase would have continued, but in 1994 the American people elected the first Republican majority in the House of Representatives in 40 years. Republicans then forced the President to accept a tax cut, a tax cut he did not want and a tax cut that was ardently opposed by his folks here in the House, the Democrats.

So where does the Democratic leadership, who so desperately want to take back the House of Representatives, stand on taxes? Well, on a tour promoting his new book, *A Better Place*, just the other day, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the leader of the Democrats in the House said, and it has been quoted before but I think it bears hearing it again, "You've got to have a combination of taking it out of the defense budget and raising revenue." In other words taxes. "We can argue about how to do that, closing loopholes or even raising taxes to do it."

Well, there it is: Cut defense and raise taxes. That is not my idea of a better place.

PARTY OF THOMAS JEFFERSON IS DEAD

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Madam Speaker, how is it that the party of Thomas Jefferson, who was a champion of the common man, has become the enemy of middle-class families? How is it that the party of Jefferson, champion of freedom from oppressive government, now rushes to embrace expansion of government and every conceivable encroachment on human liberty?

Just consider the evidence. "New Democrat" Bill Clinton won office in 1992 by promising a middle-class tax cut. He then promptly passed the largest tax increase in our history. And now we have the leader of the Democrat Party in Congress, the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) who is on record saying just over a week ago, and I have the quote

here, and since repetition is the soul of learning and I am an old school teacher, why, it bears repeating: "You've got to have a combination of taking it out of the defense budget and raising revenue. We can argue about how to do that, closing loopholes or even raising taxes to do it."

Yes, the party of Thomas Jefferson is dead, long dead, deader than Elvis. A weaker and weaker military and higher and higher taxes on average middle-class Americans, that is apparently the Democrat way.

PATIENT RIGHT TO PEDIATRIC CARE ACT OF 1999

(Mr. SHERWOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SHERWOOD. Madam Speaker, a long journey must begin with a single step. I rise to tell my colleagues that we have taken a small but important first step towards improving health care access for children.

I introduced the Patient Right to Pediatric Care Act this week to assure parents that they can choose a pediatrician as their child's primary care provider. I am not a doctor, but I am a father. And one of the things I have learned as a parent is that the health care needs of children differ greatly from those of adults.

Some health care groups prudently limit access to certain specialists. But a pediatrician's skill in caring for children is unique. I believe that parents must be allowed to decide if their child's routine health care should be provided by a physician who specializes in pediatrics.

My legislation is one of several bills which will make up the Health Care Quality and Access Act, a responsible approach to health care reform, which Members on both sides of the aisle can and should support.

MILITARY IS LOW PRIORITY FOR CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

(Mr. SCHAFER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHAFER. Madam Speaker, if my colleagues look at this chart which shows the extraordinary decline in defense spending under the Clinton administration, they might be alarmed at just how low a priority the military has been given in recent years.

But this chart does not tell the whole story. This chart shows the cuts in procurement spending, the kind of spending that impacts military readiness years down the road.

Here we see the very cuts of our military capabilities have been slashed, especially during the first 2 years of this administration, when antimilitary Democrats controlled Congress.

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The scary part about these cuts is that future Presidents will have to

worry about them long after the current President is out of office. Spending on new weapon systems, modernizing old ones and upgrading the state-of-the-art equipment have all taken a back seat during this administration to new Washington programs that mainly benefit special interests.

Republicans want the best military possible. Military strength tends to guarantee the peace. Weakness invites aggression. When will the other side learn this lesson?

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN MAKE KOSOVO LOOK LIKE A SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC

(Mr. TANCREDO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TANCREDO. Madam Speaker, the day before yesterday I returned from the Sudan where I had gone with a group of other congressmen to bring attention to the plight of the south Sudanese, to bring attention of the country of the United States to the horrible abuses that are going on in Sudan. In a nutshell, Madam Speaker, Sudan makes Kosovo look like a Sunday school picnic in terms of the human rights abuses being perpetrated in that country.

We have heard from the President for the last several months about all of the reasons why we had to go into Kosovo, but I assure my colleagues that for every reason he gave us regarding Kosovo I could give 10 that pertain to the Sudan. The human rights abuses there are far greater; 2 million dead so far in their Civil War, true genocide going on, true slavery being undertaken by the north, raids into the south.

It is amazing, Madam Speaker, that the attention of the United States is so easily drawn to Europe and so difficult to draw to the African continent.

LET US GET THE COMMUNIST CHINESE OUT OF OUR NUCLEAR LABS

(Mr. HAYES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HAYES. Madam Speaker, 2 weeks ago the long-awaited Cox report was released. I keep this chart because I think it is important for the American people to realize that while this administration was drastically cutting our defense budget, we were giving away our nuclear secrets to the Chinese. This should not, cannot and must not happen as we begin the debate on the all important defense budget today in that bill.

Because the administration leaks to the New York Times, we have come to know one of the most stunning bombshells about theft of our sensitive nuclear secrets by the Communist Chinese at our nuclear lab. We also know that the other side of the aisle is in marked contrast to the statements of the

gentleman from California (Mr. Cox) in this unanimous report. The partisan statements have begun while pleading with Republicans not to be partisan.

Let us go back to the Vice President's reaction to the loss of our most sensitive nuclear weapons information. First words out of his mouth were to blame someone else, Ronald Reagan, and the Secretary of Energy, Bill Richardson, has cautioned over and over again let us not over react.

Madam Speaker, let us do react. It is time that we got the Communist Chinese out of our labs, protected our secrets and protect this country. We find out the absolute worst possible case has come to pass, the Communist Chinese penetration of our nuclear laboratories is total. We knew about it since 1995. We have done virtually nothing about it.

Madam Speaker, let us do something now. Our future is at stake.

DEMOCRAT LEADERSHIP STILL OUT OF TOUCH AND STILL CLEARLY ANTI-MILITARY

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, today we have before us the defense re-authorization bill, and it is a very important bill in that it reverses the trend of massive defense cuts.

Now it is interesting, as we go into the debate, actually on the eve of the debate, we have the Democrat Majority Leader speaking basically the Democrat policy on defense which was we have got to have a combination of taking money, and I am going to paraphrase it, but when he says taking it out, taking money out of defense and raising revenue, raising taxes. We can argue about how to do that, closing loopholes or even raising taxes to do it, but the point is here we have a defense, and I will show my colleagues another chart which traces defense spending under the Clinton administration, particularly since 1993, how it has been cut massively during the period of time that we have had increased deployments, we have had equipment that lacks spare parts, we need modernization, and we are losing lots of good soldiers because the quality of life has gone down so much. But despite this decrease, the Majority Leader of the Democrat party is saying again we need to squeeze it out of defense, we need to cut defense spending, and this in the face of a President who is selling missile technology to China.

Madam Speaker, it does not make sense.

I hope people will support this bill, and I hope that we can get the Democrats to join us. I believe that we will get a lot of Democrats with us, but it is too bad that the Democrat leadership is still out of touch and still clearly anti-military.