

This situation is unacceptable.

And yet, despite all the Turkish abuses, the Government of Cyprus continues to reach out for a peaceful solution.

The Greek Cypriots want peace. Recently, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolutions 1217 and 1218, calling for a peaceful, just, and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem. The United States Government wholeheartedly supports these resolutions and is committed to taking all necessary steps to help in its achievement.

In the final analysis, only the parties to a dispute can settle it. Ultimately, it will be Cyprus and Turkey who will have to agree on a settlement.

The Government of Cyprus is willing to come to the negotiating table.

I urge our Government to continue to press ahead to persuade Turkey to comply with the Security Council resolution and to come to the negotiating table to work out a solution to this nettling problem.

There is no quick fix to the Cyprus problem. But we must persevere.

A solution can only benefit the entire Mediterranean region.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MORELLA addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TAX CUTS

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

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to speak about our most recent tax cut that was put in place, and also to discuss what I think was the key element of that passage, that is, the trigger that was added in on the last round of amendments that were put in place.

Mr. Speaker, we have had projections that are almost mind-boggling when we look at the dollar amount of these surpluses we are projecting into the future. If we do not count the Social Security surplus, but just in our other accounts, we have nearly \$1 trillion worth of surplus projected. Now, with that number being projected, our tax cutters looked at it and said, well, we would like to give 80 to 90 percent of that back to the American public in the form of a tax cut.

I, for one, fully agree with giving back tax dollars that are that much in surplus to those needed to run our government functions. However, when it is

done on a 10-year forecast, there is risk involved in how accurate that forecast may be. And as I looked at that, I said we need to do something to protect the tax cuts and, at the same time, ensure that we continue this path of paying down public debt.

In doing so, we came to a triggering mechanism. And the trigger works in the fashion that if we are not continuing to pay down the debt, we will not take the tax cut that year. It is a simple mechanism. Just how much interest are we paying on the debt? If that number does not get smaller each year, then we will pay more down on the debt and not have a tax cut that year.

The trigger mechanism is very important because it allows us to very responsibly manage the affairs of this government's finances by paying down our debt and reducing taxes, but not doing one at the exclusion of the other.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KUYKENDALL. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman for yielding to me, because a number of us were instrumental in helping to write this trigger.

On Friday, Mr. Speaker, I was reading the Wall Street Journal and there was a story in there and in it apparently Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, was asked before the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services what he thought about this trigger and he said this: "I think that the notion of using a potential trigger is essential," Greenspan said. He further went on to add that using the surplus to reduce the Federal debt is "an extraordinarily effective force for good in this economy."

He signed onto this. In essence, what the trigger is, it is a stoplight. If what the OMB and the CBO folks say is correct in terms of the expectations of where we are going to be with the budget surplus, things happen the way they say, and the debt, in fact, is coming down, \$5.5 trillion is what it is today, the tax cut goes forward.

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But if, in fact, something happens, if interest rates go up, if spending goes up, and, in fact, the amount of money needed to service the Federal debt goes up rather than declines, the red light goes on. So it is a safety valve. And it also is going to serve as a break on additional spending as well.

So I think that this was a very important measure that a number of us fought for. And furthermore, today I know a number of us communicated to our leadership that we are hoping that the Senate certainly adds this provision in their tax bill that they are debating this week. And if they are not able to get it included, then at least maybe in the conference, when we iron out the differences between the House and the Senate, that certainly the

House would prevail on this making sure that the taxpayers are protected by making sure that this trigger device stays in effect.

I applaud the leadership of my colleague on this. It was important as a number of us met with Republican leadership and others. It is a trigger with real teeth. It is going to do the right thing, and that is what we are here for.

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I appreciate that comment.

I think the important part of this is, I have used the phrase "responsible." I think it is also discipline that it imposes upon us as a Government.

I came from local governments and State governments where our budgets had to be balanced, and we could not issue debt unless we were asking the voters to approve it. But we do not do that here. We play that role ourselves.

In this case, we have imposed a discipline with this particular triggering mechanism that I think it is essential that it come back in the conference version of this bill. And it is important, I think, that our colleagues on the Senate side hear that, as well.

We have a mechanism now that will impose discipline, give us responsible Government, control the debt, and still allow almost \$800 billion worth of tax cuts.

ON ROBERT M. TOBIAS,
PRESIDENT OF NTEU

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, in 1995, the National Treasury Employees Union, along with other Federal employee and retiree organizations, defeated the first attempt by the 104th Congress to raise Federal employees' retirement contributions and reduce their pension.

At a press conference celebrating the victory, the NTEU national president, Robert Tobias, is quoted as saying, told over 500 Federal employees in attendance, "You promised to serve the public with honesty. You promised to work hard. You promised to serve the public. And in return, you were promised fair treatment and fair pay. It sounded like a fair deal. You kept your word. Now we're asking Congress to keep its word."

Bob Tobias has spent the last 31 years making sure that the executive branch and Congress keep their promises to Federal employees. He has used lawsuits as a way to further Federal employees' causes and to escape the narrow confines of Federal collective bargaining.

He has testified before the Subcommittee on Civil Service on behalf of the 155,000 Federal employees NTEU represents on numerous cases.

Mr. Tobias is a leading authority on Federal employees' issues and by extension has expanded his union's lobbying power on Capitol Hill.

In the last 20 years, Mr. Tobias has been involved in the development of a Federal employees retirement system, FERS, protecting Federal employees' health benefits program, restructuring the Internal Revenue Service, advocating for closure of the pay gap for Federal employees, and he worked with Vice President GORE to create labor-management partnership councils across the Government.

Mr. Tobias is leaving the NTEU to embark on a second career, writing, teaching, and educating a new generation on public policy. Given Mr. Tobias' history, this is probably an attempt to train future politicians on how to vote on Federal employees issues before they get to Capitol Hill.

As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Civil Service and on behalf of all Federal employees in my congressional district and throughout this wonderful country, I wish you the best, Mr. Tobias, in your future endeavors.

ROBERT M. TOBIAS

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

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker I rise today to observe the retirement of Mr. Robert M. Tobias. Mr. Tobias will retire as National President of the National Treasury Employees Union when his term expires in August.

Mr. Tobias has been the NTEU's president for the last 16 years. Prior to his service as president of the NTEU, he served the union as its executive vice president and general counsel. Mr. Tobias worked successfully to expand the NTEU's membership from 20,000 to 155,000. His tenure has also been marked by major steps forward in the treatment of federal employees. As a result of his efforts NTEU has negotiated alternative work schedules, flexplace work arrangements, monetary performance awards, and on-site child care arrangements for federal employees. He was also involved in the successful court battle to overturn the ban on speaking and writing honoraria for federal employees. Mr. Tobias also helped to create innovative labor-management partnerships which resulted in greater productivity and customer satisfaction at the Internal Revenue Service.

Mr. Tobias was also appointed to serve on the Federal Employees Salary Council, the National Partnership Council, the Commission to Restructure the IRS, the Federal Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health, the Executive Improvement Team at the U.S. Customs Service, and, most recently, the IRS Oversight Board. I had the honor to serve with him on the IRS restructuring commission in 1997, and I can vouch first-hand for the hard work and dedication that he put into the commission's efforts to provide Congress with recommendations for improving IRS organization and management. Mr. Tobias has also testified many times before the House Ways and Means Committee, on which I

served, and I can honestly say that his testimony was always informative and helpful to the Committee in its efforts to improve the operations of the IRS.

My constituents in Pittsburgh who are part of NTEU's Chapter 34 are pleased to have worked with Mr. Tobias as well.

Mr. Tobias serves on the board of directors of American Arbitration Association and is co-founder and treasurer of the Federal Employees Education and Assistance Fund.

On behalf of my constituents, my colleagues on the IRS restructuring commission, the House Ways and Means Committee, and myself, I want to thank Mr. Tobias for his many years of service and wish him all the best as he pursues new challenges and opportunities in the coming years.

TRIGGER FOR DEBT/TAX REDUCTION

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I wish to make comments today on the importance of not only a tax reduction but a reduction in the Federal debt and the trigger that we imposed within the tax bill to help assure that both happen.

America's tax burden is the highest in the history of the Republic, not only in nominal terms but in actual percentage of income.

Our Government has grown so large that if we repeal the entire income tax today, the total income coming into the Federal Government would still be as large as it was just 10 years ago. If we did away with the total income tax, other revenue coming into the Federal Government would be as much as the total revenue in 1990. It is past time for Americans to receive some relief from their ever-expanding tax burdens.

Now on the issue of debt. At the same time, our Nation's debt stands at 5 trillion, 600 billion dollars. The interest expense on the debt last fiscal year was larger than the entire Federal budget in 1972. Interest on the Federal debt last year was larger than the entire Federal budget in 1972.

A reduction in the debt would reduce interest rates and encourage economic expansion. It would also reduce the chances that our kids are going to have to pay huge taxes to make up for the over indulgence of their parents and grandparents as we spend and spend a bigger and bigger Government.

While the need for both tax reduction and debt reduction is obvious, a major difficulty facing Congress is the proper mix. Economists from the time of David Ricardo in the 19th century to today disagree on the relative effect of tax reduction and debt reduction on the economy.

However, the important thing is to keep Government from turning into what Thomas Hobbes called a "leviathan," an ever-hungry monster gobbling up the Nation's resources.

Last week it became apparent that a conflict of opinion about the size of the

tax cut relative to the debt reduction jeopardized the passage of any tax relief.

It was at that point that I recalled experience that the State of Michigan has had in allowing both sides of an issue such as this to get their way.

Back in 1983, I was part of an effort, a tax rate reduction, that we would gradually tie to a certain target to make sure that tax reduction occurred. This year in Michigan, we tied a tax cut to economic conditions in a manner nearly identical to what I proposed in this House last week.

What I proposed and what the gentleman from California (Mr. KUYKENDALL) proposed and what the past House passed was tax reduction tied to our efforts to reduce the debt. Specifically, income tax rate would be reduced gradually in stages over 10 years. But if the interest expense on the Federal debt is not less than the prior year's interest expense, then the next stage of the reduction would be postponed.

The concept is that those who are afraid that tax cuts may lead to greater debt and, thus, greater interest expense would have an automatic hold on further tax cuts until interest expenses went down.

Those who felt and predicted tax cuts are going to spur greater economic growth and, therefore, bring in more revenue and pay down that debt and, therefore, lower the interest rates would get the full tax cut proposed in the original bill.

While the trigger is probably not the perfect trigger, it accomplished the goal of moving the process forward both on reducing the debt and reducing taxes. The concept of using a trigger to allow both sides of the issue to really put your money where the other person's mouth is is a concept of win-win.

It may be crucial to the final passage of this bill that will be acceptable to the White House as well as this House as we review what comes out of conference committee.

I will continue to work this week on perfecting the trigger mechanism since this House, the Senate, and the President must agree on the final outcome before it becomes law.

Debt reduction is important to strengthen the economy and taking the pressure off our kids and grandkids, and tax reduction in a system that has the highest tax rates in history is in need very desperately of the kind of tax cuts that leaves money in the pockets of the people that earn it.

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

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