

He said to me that it was not up to himself alone, but it was up to the council.

Then he made a comment that he questioned whether the Palestinian Authority had received sufficient credit for the change of its Charter eliminating the provisions in the PLO Charter calling for the destruction of Israel.

In 1995, Senator SHELBY and I proposed legislation, which was enacted, that conditioned U.S. payments to the Palestinian Authority on changing the Charter and on making the maximum effort against terrorists, so that when Chairman Arafat raised the question about whether there had been sufficient recognition given to the Palestinian Authority for changing the Charter, I told him that I thought he was probably right and that there had not been sufficient recognition given to the Palestinian Authority for that change.

He then asked me if there would be recognition given to the Palestinian Authority if it resisted a unilateral declaration of statehood.

I said to Chairman Arafat that I personally would go to the Senate floor on May 5 if a unilateral declaration of statehood was not made on May 4.

Being a good negotiator, which we know Chairman Arafat is, he asked if I would put that in writing. I said that I would. On March 31 of this year, I wrote to the chairman as follows:

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for coming to my Senate hideaway and for our very productive discussion on March 23rd.

Following up on that discussion, I urge that the Palestinian Authority not make a unilateral declaration of statehood on May 4th or on any subsequent date. The issue of the Palestinian state is a matter for negotiation under the terms of the Oslo Accords.

I understand your position that this issue will not be decided by you alone but will be submitted to the Palestinian Authority Council.

When I was asked at our meeting whether you and the Palestinian Authority would receive credit for refraining from the unilateral declaration of statehood, I replied that I would go to the Senate floor on May 5th or as soon thereafter as possible and compliment your action in not unilaterally declaring a Palestinian state.

I look forward to continuing discussions with you on the important issues in the Middle East peace process.

Sincerely,

ARLEN SPECTER.

Mr. President, I decided to make this public comment to emphasize my view, and I believe the view shared by many, if not most, in the Congress of the United States that, in fact, the Palestinian Authority should not unilaterally declare statehood, but should leave it to negotiations under the Oslo accords.

I thank the Chair.

I yield the floor.

Mr. THOMAS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. THOMAS. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would like to talk for about 10 minutes as if in morning business, if I may.

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

The Senator is recognized.

Mr. THOMAS. I thank the Chair.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, clearly the discussions on Kosovo are dominating the day and should. But I hope that we don't forget that we do have an agenda that we need to go forward with as well. So I want to talk a few minutes today about Social Security.

Specifically, I would like to talk a little bit about our efforts to protect and strengthen the Social Security system. We have talked about it for a very long time.

It is not a surprise that without some changes, the Social Security program will not be able to accomplish what it is designed to accomplish. Nearly everyone recognizes that we have to do something different than we have been doing. I will, in fact, say that there is not a consensus as to what that "something different" ought to be.

But the goal surely can be shared by most everyone. The goal is to be able to know that we can continue to provide benefits for the beneficiaries and those that are close to being beneficiaries, and at the same time be able to provide benefits in the long run for young people who are now just beginning to have deducted from their salary Social Security payments. I suspect all of us want to do that.

I have a mother who I am concerned about who has Social Security. I have 5-year-old twin grandchildren and I am anxious about their security. That is the kind of issue we have.

I notice today's newspaper expresses relief that we will go forward with Social Security. There was some discussion last week that it would not move.

I will talk a little bit about the lockbox legislation. We are seeking to push through a Social Security lockbox. What does that mean? It means we take that amount of money which comes in as Social Security now and set it aside so that it will be used for Social Security.

Over the years, we have had what is called a unified budget, and all the money that comes in—whether from Social Security, income tax, highway funds, or whatever—goes into the unified budget.

This year, for the first time in 25 years, we have had a balanced budget, but it is a unified budget. If you took Social Security out of that balanced budget, it would not be balanced. Indeed, it would be somewhat in deficit.

We need to understand what that is. Now that we are close to having a unified budget in balance and close to having it without Social Security, now we have an opportunity to do the things with Social Security dollars that I believe we need to do.

The lockbox is designed to guarantee that all Social Security surplus funds will be reserved for Social Security alone. This, of course, has not been the case. It is difficult to do, frankly. We have never had a place to put it. When we have a life insurance program or an annuity program, there has to be somewhere to put those funds so they draw interest. Of course, under the law, the only place they can be invested is in government securities.

They are set aside here, but they are spent. Of course the President is suggesting he would raid the Social Security to the tune of about \$158 billion, after having talked for 2 years about saving Social Security.

I am concerned that the current debate is going to become very difficult: How do we pay for Kosovo? How do we pay for increasing the support of the military? How do we pay for the emergency funds that are in the process of being provided for Central America?

We have budget spending limits which I think are key to keeping a smaller Government, to keeping a responsible Government. When we go outside of those spending limits with emergency spending, it goes from Social Security. Last year, for example, the President insisted, with the threat of closing down Government, that we had to spend \$20 billion in emergency funding. I suppose no one would argue if emergency funds are a genuine emergency, such as weather disasters or taking care of our troops in Kosovo, we are going to do that, by all means. When we start talking about how we build up the Armed Forces, I think we ought to take a look at whether that comes as an emergency or, in fact, comes out of our budget.

We are trying to move to some kind of financially sound lockbox. In 2014, Social Security begins to run in a deficit. Social Security started about 60 years ago, I think—in the 1930s. People paid 1 percent of \$3,000—\$30—into Social Security. There were 31 people working for every beneficiary. Of course, now that has changed. Now we all pay 12.5 percent of our earnings up to \$70,000 or more, moving up. There are, I think, fewer than three people working for each one drawing benefits. In the near future, it will be fewer than two. That is the sort of dilemma with which we are faced.

I suppose there are many considerations to look at, but there are three that are obvious.

One, you could reduce benefits. Not many are prepared to do that; even though Social Security, of course, is not a retirement program, it is a supplementary program. For a high percentage of people, that is, indeed, their largest income requirement.

Two, you could increase taxes. I don't think there is a great deal of excitement about that. I do not think it is a great idea. Social Security taxes are the largest tax that most Americans pay.

Three, increase the rate of return on the money that is in the trust fund.

That is one of the things we are talking about doing, trying to put together a personal account—not to take all of the 12 percent but to take, say, 3 or 4 percent out of the 12, about a third of the money. Let it be your account, your personal account. If, unfortunately, you were not able to live long enough to get all of your money out of it, it would go to your estate.

How is it invested? By private investors, similar to the Federal savings program. Once a year, members get a sheet of paper asking how they would like this invested. The choice would be in equities, bonds, or in a combination of the two. So members would choose one of those options. It is invested for you—not invested, as the President has suggested, where he takes trillions of dollars and has the Government invest it. Then the Government would basically control the marketplace. None of us want that.

Personal ownership, it seems to me, ensures that the Federal Government can't come back later and reduce your benefits. That is a way to secure those dollars. They are not then in the Government ready to be spent for some other reason.

Depending on your view about the size of government—and there is a legitimate difference between those who are more conservative and those who are more liberal. There are always ways to spend more money. To control the size of government, as has been our goal over the last number of years, you can't have a lot of surplus money lying around or else it is simply spent and government grows. We have to do something to secure Social Security. Then, hopefully, when there is excess money, we can look for some kind of tax relief.

It has been a long time since we started on this. Quite frankly, I think the sooner we make a change, the less abrupt that change will have to be. I am hopeful we do get back. We started out this year wanting to do this. Now the President is reluctant to take any leadership. Some of the leaders in the Congress were saying we ought to set it aside. I don't agree.

Certainly, we need to focus on Kosovo, but it doesn't mean we don't do the other things that are before the Senate. It is time to design a first-class system that fulfills the needs of everyone—our older citizens, our younger citizens. We need a permanent fix, not just tinkering around the edges. People have thought for years that Social Security was the holy grail of politics—touch it and you are dead. I think it has changed, because people understand if it is not changed, Social Security will be dead.

I hope we move forward.

SENATOR ROMAN L. HRUSKA

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to recall a towering public servant, Senator Roman L. Hruska, who spent 22 years of his life in this

body and who died yesterday at Omaha, NE, at the age of 94. Senator Hruska served with my friend, the distinguished Senator from South Carolina.

In a day when some might question the morality of public service, the civility of public service, the genuineness of public service, and the goodness of public service, they did not know Senator Roman Hruska. Senator Hruska was one of 11 children, born in David City, NE, 94 years ago. His father had emigrated from Czechoslovakia, and moved his family to Omaha where he felt they would have a better opportunity to get an education and a better opportunity for a better life.

Senator Hruska's father was a teacher. Senator Hruska went on through public schools in Nebraska, attended a number of graduate schools, the University of Chicago, and obtained his law degree in Nebraska. He started a law practice in south Omaha.

When there became a vacancy on the Douglas County board of commissioners in Omaha, NE, his fellow citizens came to him and said, "Will you serve for one term?" That one term began in 1944.

A year later, he became chairman of the Douglas County board of commissioners, and until 1952 he served the Greater Omaha area and the State of Nebraska with great distinction.

In 1952, a House seat opened up. It was the seat of Howard Buffett. Mr. President, that name "Buffett" may ring a bell. Howard Buffett was the father of Warren Buffett. Howard Buffett decided not to run for reelection.

Again, Roman Hruska's friends and colleagues said, "Will you run for Congress?" Roman Hruska said, "Well, I will do that for a short period of time." Roman Hruska was overwhelmingly elected to the Congress in 1952. Two years later, the Senate seat opened and, again, the same people asked Roman Hruska to serve. He ran for the Senate in 1954 and never looked back. He retired from the Senate in 1976.

I recall my first exposure to Senator Hruska as a young chief of staff to Congressman John Y. McCollister in the early 1970s. I would come to the Senate once or twice a week to get a delegation letter signed by Senator Hruska and then Senator Curtis. Senator Hruska would see me occasionally standing outside a hearing room and would never fail to accord me not only some recognition, which as we know around here does not always happen with junior staffers, but he was beyond gracious. He always had time for young people, always had time to talk a little bit about what we thought and what was on our minds.

I really came to cherish those times when I had an opportunity to come over and see Senator Hruska. Senator Hruska was often in meetings, I say to Senator HOLLINGS, with some of Senator HOLLINGS' favorite colleagues, such as Senator Goldwater, Senator Eastland, Senator Long.

As a young staffer, I would be invited in to the outer ring of those distinguished United States Senators and would stand and watch and listen. Senator Hruska would never fail to introduce me to his colleagues and make me feel not only welcome but a part of Government, a part of what he was doing.

The dignity that Senator Hruska brought to his service is something well remembered by not just those of us who were privileged to have some relationship but all who served with Senator Hruska. He made this body a better body. He made America stronger. He believed in things.

Senator Hruska did not believe in governance by way of calibration of the polls. You knew where Senator Hruska was and why. He was always a gentleman—always a gentleman. He would debate the issues straight up. He won most of the time; he lost his share. But the relationships that Senator Hruska developed and the respect that underpinned his service is rather uncommon. We are all better for it. America is stronger for it. Nebraska loses a very wise counselor. America loses a great public servant.

When I ran for the Senate in 1996, one of the first people I went to see was Senator Hruska. The advice he gave me was consistent with his service and his life. He said, "Chuck, I would not feel competent to judge or give you counsel on the issues of our day, but I will tell you this: Play it straight, say it straight, respect your colleagues and respect yourself, but most important, respect the institution of the U.S. Congress and always understand the high privilege it is to be part of that great body."

He was much too modest to go beyond what he gave me as good, solid advice on issues, but I can tell you that on the big issues over the last 3 years, not only I, but many of my colleagues, have constantly gone back to Roman Hruska and asked for his judgment and his thoughts.

He will be greatly missed. I say to Senator HOLLINGS, I will leave these remarks on behalf of your former colleague and friend and my friend, Senator Roman Hruska, by referring to Senator Hruska the way your former colleague, Everett Dirksen, once referred to Roman Hruska, and that is: A salute to the noblest Roman of them all—Roman Hruska.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Nebraska, Mr. HAGEL, reminds me of a happier day. I say a happier day most sincerely in the sense that we had not become subject to all the consultants, all the pollsters to the point whereby today, in large measure, we more or less are marionettes to the consultants' hot-button items and issues and not the needs of the people.

There was a tremendous respect on both sides of the aisle. I was elected in 1966. At that time, Senator Hruska was the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and Senator Jim