

no. And what did Congress do right around October 1? It went home for a 5 day weekend, and then it went home the next week for a 5 day weekend, and then the next week.

How did they get away with that? Well, the president, as I said, being, unfortunately, a little too lenient with the other side of the aisle, allowed them to go home with their work undone by giving them longer term continuing resolutions.

I voted against every one of them. I felt they should have been held to a one day standard at the beginning. I think they should be held to a one hour standard now. If Congress has to stay in session 24 hours a day to get the work done, get it done.

Now, they say, well, it is the President's fault. Well, gee, how can it be his fault, when you have not even sent two of the largest spending bills downtown yet? He has not seen them. The Senate has not passed them. He has not even had an opportunity to veto them, if he is going to.

No, that is awfully strange creative rhetoric. It reminds me a lot of teaching a class, and the kids come in, and they knew all along there was a term paper due, June 1. Well, excuse me teacher, we just did not get it done.

Well, gee, I am sorry, someone sick in the family, you sick, death in the family or something?

No, we just did not get it done. We would like another week.

If the teacher gives them another week, what are they going to say the next week?

Hey, Teach, it was really nice; it was early June, the weather was great, we did not get it done. Give us another week.

You cannot do that, and that is finally what the President is doing here. He is telling the Republicans, get your work done, one day at a time. You are going to stay here until the work gets done.

It is inexcusable to be almost on the first of November. I mean, if they want to score their political points, they can send down defective bills that the president will veto, but they will not even do that. They will not even allow him to veto the bills with the concerns he has. They are just holding them here.

So if anybody is holding them hostage, the Republican majority in Congress is holding itself hostage and whining about it. That is kind of pathetic.

I heard some awfully interesting things about prescription drugs. Let us get one thing clear: The Republican plan that passed this House gives a subsidy to insurance companies in the hope that they might, might, offer a prescription drug only benefit plan to seniors. However, the head of the Health Insurance Industry Association has already said they are not interested in that. They cannot make enough money on something like that, and, if they did, besides that, the drugs would be really expensive.

So the Republican plan not only provides subsidies to the insurance industry, it provides subsidies to the pharmaceutical companies. This is a great plan. But, guess what? If does not put any cap or set any conditions on the premiums that might be offered to seniors if plans were offered under their grand plan.

It is a way to shovel more billions into the insurance industry and more billions into the obscenely profitable pharmaceutical industry at the expense of America's seniors, while pretending to address a real concern of America's seniors.

That is outrageous. We take a program that is successful, which the Republicans opposed, Medicare, and add an optional, optional, prescription drug benefit. And then, God forbid, they do not like this part at all, we use the market power of Medicare, with 33 million seniors in it, to bargain down the price of drugs. We use the market. The Democrats use the market.

That is not price controls. The VA is doing that take today. Blue Cross-Blue Shield is using that today. They use their market clout. They drive down the cost of prescription drugs by saying, hey, we have millions of people in our plan. We want a discount.

But they are saying we should not do that. In fact, they are saying we should give subsidies to the pharmaceutical companies. God forbid we should bring down the prices in this country.

The prices on pharmaceuticals are more expensive in the United States than any other country on Earth. That is why Americans go across the border to Canada to buy American manufactured drugs for half the price, why they go across the border to Mexico to buy American manufactured drugs for half the price.

What do they want to do? They want to give a subsidy to the pharmaceutical industry and a subsidy to the insurance industry. That solution is outrageous.

NATIONAL SECURITY AT A LOW EBB

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

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker. In answering my colleague with respect to getting out of town, I think a lot of us, Democrat and Republican, have come to the conclusion that the president will not take "yes" for an answer until it is politically expedient to do so. You can make an agreement in 5 minutes or 5 days or 5 months, and we obviously have great resistance at the White House right now.

Madam Speaker, let me talk about an aspect of this administration which needs addressing in a very short period of time after the new President takes office. Today, national security is at a low ebb. I reflect back on Vice Presi-

dent GORE's new invention that he came up with in the last debate, in which, along with inventing the Internet and various other American inventions, he invented four Army divisions. He stated that when he came in as vice president, the Army had gone down, but that he increased the number of divisions.

Well, in fact in January of 1993, when Vice President GORE took office, there were 14 divisions in the United States Army. A division is a big group. It is a large number of people, a lot of equipment, in some cases upward of 20,000 personnel.

Today, after the Clinton-Gore administration has run down national security, I might say, for 6 years, there are only 10 divisions in the United States Army. So when Vice President GORE came into office, there were 14 divisions. He claims he increased the number of divisions, but today it is down to 10 divisions. So somewhere along the line the vice president has invented four Army divisions, which is not an insignificant thing.

Now, if you look across the array of military equipment shortages and ammunition shortages, a number of things jump out at you. One thing we need to know is that since the vice president and President Clinton took over in 1992, we have cut the military almost in half. We have gone down, as I said, from 14 Army divisions January 1, 1993, to only 10 today, so we have cut the Army by a good 30-35 percent. We have cut the Navy from 546 warships to only 316 warships, so we have cut the Navy in numbers by about 40 percent. We have cut our fighter air wings from 24 fighter air wings to only 13 fighter air wings. So we have cut air power almost in half under this administration.

Now, the interesting aspect of that, and I think the real tragedy of this slashing of national defense, is this: Usually when you cut an organization, whether it is a sports organization or a business organization, when you decrease it, when you cut it back in size, Americans presume that the core that is left after you have made these cuts is going to be well-trained, well-equipped and ready to go. The sad facts are that the small military that is left after Vice President GORE and President Clinton have taken the action to it, the small military that is left, this half a military that is left, is not as ready as the big military that we had that won Desert Storm in the early 1990s.

Let me give you some examples. They are tragic examples. A few weeks ago we had the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Shinseki, testifying to us. He had to report to us that the Army is \$3 billion short of critical ammo supplies. Ammunition. Now, you may not agree with the B-2 bomber, you may not agree with the F-22 fighter. Every American feels that it is good for our troops to have ammunition, because they may need it.

This \$3 billion shortage was not measured against any requirement

that Congress laid on the administration, it was not measured against what the Senate or the House felt we needed in ammunition, it was measured against what the administration itself analyzed that we needed to be able to fight the so-called two regional contingency conflict. That is the kind of conflict where we might get involved in a Desert Storm operation against Saddam Hussein, or we might have a Kosovo operation, and, at the same time, the North Koreans, for example, might take advantage of that and try to come south on the peninsula, so American forces might have to deploy to two different areas of the world. We feel that to be safe and to give our service people the best chance of returning alive, we need to have the equipment, the ammunition and the capability of handling those two conflicts at about the same time, because it could happen. Well, that \$3 billion ammunition shortage that General Shinseki spoke about is with respect to the two MRC contingency.

So let us rebuild national defense. Madam Speaker, I think help is on the way.

PROVIDING HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, let me follow my colleague. It is interesting though if our armed services are in such bad shape, they have received more funding every year, and it has passed overwhelmingly. In fact, we have a lot of appropriations bills that have not been sent to the President yet, but the Department of Defense was the first one and has had the big plus-up every year compared to other Federal agencies.

Madam Speaker, after sitting here and listening to my colleagues this morning talk about it, I heard that the Department of Education could not be audited. Well, when is the last time the Department of Defense was audited successfully?

Madam Speaker, I think that is a good topic for debate, but this House and this Senate and the President signed the Department of Defense appropriations bill, the first one, and it is there, and it passed overwhelmingly on both sides. So I do not think the United States is going to hell in a handbasket on the Department of Defense, because we make sure we try to provide that funding.

Here we are October 30, and Congress is still in session, and we have heard my colleagues blame the President or blame different folks, Republicans. But it is interesting, because next Tuesday the voters all over the country will go to the polls and make some decisions.

Now, they will look at lots of issues, but one of the ones I wanted to talk

about this morning, one of the most major issues, is providing prescription drugs for our senior citizens under Medicare.

Prescription drugs have always been a problem, not just for seniors, but for everyone. When those of us go buy pharmaceuticals for ourselves or our children, we realize how high the cost is. But it seems like in the last 3 years, it has gone up dramatically.

I know senior citizens do not always have the choices we have. Sometimes, if we are working, we can earn more overtime, we can cut some other areas, we can actually increase our income. But seniors do not have that option. Seniors do not have that option, if they are required to take so many prescriptions and they just cannot go out and work more overtime.

I was worried earlier this year, and I am glad the House passed it, that between 65 and 70, I was cosponsor of the bill, let seniors work for those years. I was worried that was only going to be our effort this session, let seniors be able to go out and work and pay for their prescription drugs that are not covered under Medicare.

I know this is my fourth term and in 1993, 1994 and 1995 at our town hall meetings and community meetings, we have dozens every year, we would have one or two people come up and talk about prescription drugs. But in the last 2 or 3 years, it seems like I cannot have a town hall meeting or community meeting without either a senior citizen or someone my age saying, my parents cannot afford it, or even someone my children's age saying, my grandparents cannot afford their prescription drugs.

So, you know, in the early nineties you would only hear one or two, but in the last 2 or 3 years, because it seems like the cost of escalation has been so much, and it hits seniors so much more than it does anyone else.

We asked 2 years ago, and our Committee on Government Reform staff, the minority staff, actually conducted studies around the country for a lot of members of Congress. One of them they did in my own district in Houston, and we did three of them starting about 2 years ago.

One, we compared prices for large purchasers, for example, whether it is Blue Cross-Blue Shield or the Veterans, what can they do if the average citizen goes down compared to what the larger purchaser can do. We found out the large purchasers actually save about half of what my seniors going to their local drugstore would pay as compared if they could get it through some large purchaser.

We also, because I am in Houston, Texas, and it is a 6½ hour drive to Mexico, what it would be for seniors who can drive to Mexico, who can both lower their prices by bulk purchasing, but they have also price controls. So we found out that people can drive from Houston to Mexico and save half, at least, on their prescription drugs.

These are studies conducted not by my office, but by the minority office of the Committee on Government Reform. So, again, seniors could save half.

The last thing we did this last spring is we picked out certain pharmaceuticals that are also used for animals. I remember very well in East End Houston at the magnolia Multipurpose Center, we had a good crowd of seniors there, and we had a young lady, I guess in her early 20's, and she had a beautiful German shepherd.

She had that dog, and we started listing pharmaceuticals that my seniors in Houston take, like seniors all over the country, and animals take. Well, it just so happened this dog, this German shepherd, also had asthma, and so did one of my seniors. She talked about how it was tough.

I looked at that dog and I thought it was a purebred German shepherd, Madam Speaker, but it turned out she got it real cheap at the SPCA, and it was a beautiful animal.

But this senior citizen came up and said, I know this dog has asthma, and this is what I pay for my asthma medicine, and it was outrageous. Again, it was more than double for seniors as compared to what we do for our own animals.

That is why it was frustrating that this House has not addressed it, except for one bill that passed earlier. We compare the House plan and the Democratic plan and Governor Bush's plan and the House plan, and it just looks like it is giving more money to insurance companies who, under our current HMO system are not even covering seniors.

Madam Speaker, I know next Tuesday a lot of people, no matter what their age, will go to the polls. I know prescription drugs are important, and I hope they look at the Democratic plan.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 45 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEASE) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

At the beginning of a new work week, Lord God, be with us. Fill us with a freshness and a renewed energy as we face the tasks here set before us today.

May our minds be bathed in the light of Your spirit and our hearts be set free to discern clearly the ways of justice and integrity.

Bring to this Nation a true sense of purpose as it interprets the signs of the