

general of the U.N. forces in Bosnia—had made a statement that if America gets involved and sends troops over to Bosnia, we will lose more lives than we lost in the Persian Gulf war, which was 390. I asked the question to all three of these top officials representing the President of the United States. I said, "Is that mission worth the loss of 400 or more American lives?" Secretary Perry said, "Yes." Secretary Christopher said, "Yes." General Shalikashvili said, "Yes."

I think there is the honest difference of opinion, and we need to see how that opinion is shared by the American people and by both Houses of Congress.

I certainly admonish the President if, during this period of time, if the temptation comes to deploy troops, to think of the troops going over there without the American people behind them.

A HISTORIC TIME

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, this is truly a historic time. Some of us have been working on this idea of balancing the budget for many, many years. When I look over and see the two very distinguished Senators from Nebraska, I want to remind them of another great Senator from Nebraska in years past. His name is Carl Curtis.

Carl Curtis, back in 1972, came to me as a member of the Oklahoma State Senate and he said we want to get a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution passed. He said, of course if that happens we have to have the States ratify it.

He had an idea. This came from the genius from the State of Nebraska, I say to the two Senators from Nebraska. He said we should preratify a balanced budget amendment. Go to the States and get two-thirds of the States or three-fourths of the States to preratify a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

I introduced a resolution in the Oklahoma State Senate. It passed. We became the first State to preratify a balanced budget amendment.

I remember the argument at that time. At that time the total national debt was \$400 billion and there were radio and TV ads and they were stacking hundred-dollar bills up—at that time I believe the Empire State Building was the tallest building—and they were stacking \$100 bills up and they said that is the size of the national debt.

Of course we know today that was just a drop in the bucket. That is how significant this thing is. That is how long many of us have been working on it. This is truly the opportunity that we have to do it.

The Senator from Indiana just a few minutes ago made a statement that rang a bell. He said this is a moral issue. I think we should look at what we are faced with and what the President is faced with, his temptation to veto this Balanced Budget Act of 1995, to look at it as a moral issue.

I had occasion to be at the national prayer breakfast where we had several foreign visitors coming in, and one from Moldavia, a former Soviet State, came in very proud. He was smiling. He said: "Senator INHOFE, how much in America do you get to keep?"

I said, "I am sorry, I do not understand what you are saying."

He said, "Well, how much in America do you have to give the Government so you can keep something?"

Then I knew what he was talking about. He was talking about how much do we pay in taxes. I gave an answer I would be embarrassed to share on the floor because I am not sure how accurate it is, because he said in all pride they have a system over there in Moldavia where they work for about 3 months and they have to pay the Government—he said, "We pay the government 80 percent of what we make," and then with the pride showing through in this new-found democracy and free economy he thought they had, he said, "We get to keep 20 percent."

We look at that in this country, how could they be so proud of being able to keep just 20 percent? But the fact remains that someone born today, such as my three grandchildren, if we do not do something to change this course, then that person is going to have to pay 82 percent of their lifetime income just to support Government.

Mr. President, I will conclude by sharing an exciting experience I had a year ago yesterday, November 17, 1994. I was sworn in as a Member of the U.S. Senate. That happened to be my 60th birthday. I thought a year ago, how in the world could I ever top this? What do you do for an encore? You are sworn in as a Member of the U.S. Senate on your 60th birthday.

I say, what are we going to do for the 61st birthday? Yet, something much more exciting happened on my 61st birthday yesterday. We passed the Balanced Budget Act of 1995. This is the act that is going to take our kids out of bondage.

As difficult as it is, and I heard it demagogued around this Chamber that we will be slashing programs. We know we will not slash programs. We know we will be increasing Medicare, for example, at a greater rate of growth than the President himself had suggested before.

I think clearly right now the ball is in the court of the President. We have passed it in the House. We have passed it in the Senate. It is now up to the American people, because we know one thing about our President, he does listen very carefully and watch the polls. If it becomes very evident to him that this is the last opportunity we have to commit ourselves in America to a balanced budget, as I believe this is our last chance, then, I think he may not be doing as he said, and will sign the Balanced Budget Act of 1995.

I thank the Senators from Nebraska for allowing me to move ahead.

I yield the floor.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Oklahoma for his history lesson on Nebraska politics. My colleague from Nebraska and I know a great deal about the history of politics in the State of Nebraska.

I simply say to him one of the great experiences of my lifetime has been service in the U.S. Senate with Henry Bellmon, two times elected Governor of his State. Some of the lessons that I have learned were at the knee of Henry Bellmon when I came here as a freshman after two terms, 8 years as Governor of the State of Nebraska, so I also know something about the political history of that State.

THE BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I have been listening with great care to the speeches that have been made here. I noticed on two occasions my Republican colleagues have brought the name of Thomas Jefferson into the discussions.

It was somewhat amusing to me. I do not know what position Thomas Jefferson would take if he were on the floor of the U.S. Senate today, but as the founder of the Democratic Party I suspect that he might not appreciate too much the Republicans invoking his name in the support of the proposals that they are making.

Facetiously, it kind of reminded me, Mr. President, of my own dad. As a very young lad, brought up in a very traditional Democratic household with Franklin Roosevelt the new President of the United States, whom my mother and father and grandfather thought was an outstanding individual, and I was thoroughly brought up in the Democratic traditions.

After going to school one day, I came home and I told my dad we had studied a President by the name of Abraham Lincoln, and I asked my dad what he thought of Abraham Lincoln. I did not tell dad that I discovered that Abraham Lincoln was a Republican.

My dad said, "Jim, Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest Presidents that this Nation ever had or probably ever will have. He was a truly outstanding American."

I said, "Yes, dad, but he was a Republican."

Dad paused for a moment, and he said, "Well, yes, Jim, but if Abraham Lincoln were alive today he would be a Democrat."

Now, maybe that is the reverse of what my Republican colleagues are arguing today. But at least I loved my dad and my dad said that to me in jest.

So when we start instituting the names of great leaders, Presidents, political leaders of the past, sometimes we take license that probably we are not entitled to.

Mr. President, there has been a lot of talk about balancing the budget here. I hear the Republican cry today and I think they are talking about saving the children and saving the grandchildren.