are looking at an explosion in the cumulative deficit of Medicare because we guaranteed two generations of Americans medical coverage during retirement, and nobody ever set aside any money to pay for it. Now the baby boomer generation is headed into retirement, they want these benefits, and there is no money to pay for them. That is the crisis.

Let me give an idea of how big this is. If we reform Medicare right now, and change the system by improving efficiency, thereby bringing the cost of Medicare down to the general inflation rates, even under the best of circumstances, to pay off this debt to baby boomers, we would have to borrow $2.6 trillion. If we wait 10 years, it goes up to $3.9 trillion. If we wait 20 years, it goes up to $6.1 trillion. Now, the whole debt of the country today is less than $6.1 trillion. So this is a crisis. This is a crisis that is happening right now.

We have made two changes in the Finance Committee which produce savings that are dedicated, every penny, to strengthening the hospital insurance trust fund. One is raising the eligibility age for Medicare as we have done for the retirement age under Social Security. I can guarantee you that is going to have to happen sooner or later. Within 10 years we are going to vote to do it. If we wait 10 years, we will have Americans who literally are on the verge of retiring who are going to find out they cannot retire. That is not fair, and it is not right. If we do it today, we will catch the political heat today but people will have 30 years to adjust to working 2 years longer. So it will be unpopular in the short run, we will be criticized for it in the short run, but within 10 years when people fully understand this, they are going to be very grateful that we did it, and it will be the right thing to do.

Second, asking very high-income people in a voluntary program to pay more of the cost of providing that benefit is not unreasonable. Nobody is required to participate in part B Medicare. No one pays a penny in the part B Medicare during their working life. It is a voluntary program. I have been stunned when listening to the criticism of this that somehow there is something wrong with asking people who have income of $100,000 a year in retirement to pay a $1,700 deductible for the best medical care policy that money can buy. I do not think that is unreasonable.

Let me tell you something. We are going to have to do it. But do we have to wait until our seniors are scared to death because they are not sure Medicare is going to be in place next month? Do we have to wait until the wolf is at the door, until the house is on fire, to make a tough decision? Can't we make the decision while there is time to adjust to it so that we can prevent the system from going broke? Does it have to go broke for us to have the courage to do something that we know has to be done?

So, we are going to be debating these things next week, and we will have Members of the Senate standing up and saying we are breaching an agreement by asking people with $100,000 a year income to pay $1,700 for a voluntary health insurance program.

We are going to have a lot of people say the world is going to come to an end because we are asking people to pay more if they can to save a system that is critical. I am ready to debate it. I don't know if we can save these reforms. But we are going to be awfully embarrassed some day if we don't.

I yield the floor.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

AMENDMENT NO. 422

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is the Grams substitute for the Cochran amendment.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I consider this a matter of national security and, therefore, I support the efforts of the Senator from Mississippi to require export licenses for computers—in short, supercomputers to tier 3 countries, such as Russia, China, India, and Pakistan.

For several years, both the Strategic Subcommittee and the Acquisition and Technology Subcommittee, chaired by the Senator from New Hampshire, Senator SMITH, have conducted hearings on the administration's export policies on dual-use technologies with military applications. The concerns expressed by Senators COCHRAN and DURBIN is one of the issues which Senator SMITH was concerned about, and which he explored during his hearings.

The export of the high-performance computers to countries of concern could have a significant and potentially detrimental impact on United States and allied security interests.

The alleged export of the high-performance computers to Russia and China recently causes me great concern. The computers are more capable than any computer known to have been in use in those countries. The export of these computers was accomplished without export licenses. Evidently, the Russian Government told the companies that sold the computers that they would be used for modeling of Earth water pollution. However, subsequent to the sale, officials from the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy stated that the computers would be used to maintain its nuclear weapons stockpile, to confirm the reliability of its nuclear arsenal, and to ensure the proper working order of the nuclear stockpile under the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Mr. President, according to U.S. export policy, the sale of high-powered computers that would directly or indirectly support nuclear weapons activities is prohibited.

Mr. President, I believe the Senator's amendment to require a license to export high-powered supercomputers with a 2,000 million theoretical operation range is appropriate.

I ask unanimous consent that I be added as an original cosponsor of the amendment offered by the Senator from Mississippi.

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

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Grams and Cochran amendments be temporarily set aside and it be in order for Senator COVERDELL to offer an amendment No. 423 to the bill on behalf of himself and Senators INHOFE and CLELAND.

I further ask that following 2 minutes for explanation by Senator COVERDELL, the amendment be set aside, and further, that the call for regular order with respect to the Inhofe-Coverdell amendment only be in order after the concurrence of the chairman and ranking member and Senators from the following States: Georgia, Utah, Oklahoma, California, and Texas.

Mr. LEVIN. No objection.

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

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

AMENDMENT NO. 423

(Purpose: To define depot-level maintenance and repair, to limit contracting for depot-level maintenance and repair at installations approved for closure or realignment in 1995, and to modify authorities and requirements relating to the performance of core logistics functions)

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I call up amendment 423.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Georgia (Mr. COVERDELL), for himself, Mr. INHOFE and Mr. CLELAND, proposes an amendment numbered 423.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title III, add the following:

SEC. . DEFINITION OF DEPOT-LEVEL MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR.

(a) DEPOT-LEVEL MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR DEFINED.—Chapter 146 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by inserting before section 2461 the following new section:

"§ 2460. Definition of depot-level maintenance and repair

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In this chapter, the term 'depot-level maintenance and repair' means materiel maintenance or repair requiring the overhaul or rebuilding of parts, assemblies, or subassemblies, and the testing and reclamation of equipment as necessary, regardless of the source of funds for the maintenance or repair. The term includes all aspects of software maintenance and such portions of interim contractor support, contractor logistics support, or any similar contractor support for the performance of services that are described in the preceding sentence.

''(b) EXCEPTION.—The term does not include the following:

''(1) Ship modernization activities that were not considered to be depot-level maintenance and repair activities under regulations of the Department of Defense in effect on March 30, 1997.

''(2) A procurement of a modification or upgrade of a major weapon system.''

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting before the item relating to section 2461 the following new item:

''2460. Definition of depot-level maintenance and repair.''.

SEC. 320. RESTRICTIONS ON CONTRACTS FOR PERFORMANCE OF DEPOT-LEVEL MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR AT CERTAIN FACILITIES.

Section 2469 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsections (a) and (b), by striking out ''or repair'' and inserting in lieu thereof ''and repair''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d) RESTRICTION ON CONTRACTS AT CERTAIN FACILITIES.—

''(1) RESTRICTION.—The Secretary of Defense may not enter into any contract for the performance of depot-level maintenance and repair of weapon systems or other military equipment of the Department of Defense, or for the performance of management functions related to depot-level maintenance and repair of such systems or equipment, at any military installation of the Air Force where a depot-level maintenance and repair facility was approved in 1995 for closure or realignment under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (part A of title XXIX of Public Law 101–510; 10 U.S.C. 2687 note). In the preceding sentence, the term 'military installation of the Air Force' includes a former military installation closed or realigned under the Act that was a military installation of the Air Force when it was approved for closure or realignment under the Act.

''(2) EXCEPTION.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to an installation or former installation described in such paragraph if the Secretary of Defense certifies to Congress, not later than 45 days before entering into a contract for performance of depot-level maintenance and repair at the installation or former installation, that—

''(A) not less than 75 percent of the capacity at each of the depot-level maintenance and repair activities of the Air Force is being utilized on an ongoing basis to perform industrial operations in support of the depot-level maintenance and repair of weapon systems and other military equipment of the Department of Defense;

''(B) the Secretary has determined, on the basis of a detailed analysis (which the Secretary shall submit to Congress with the certification), that the total amount of the costs of the proposed contract to the Government, both recurring and nonrecurring and including any costs associated with planning for and executing the proposed contract, would be less than the costs that would otherwise be incurred if the depot-level maintenance and repair to be performed under the contract were performed using equipment and facilities of the Department of Defense;

''(C) all of the information upon which the Secretary determined that the total costs to the Government would be less under the contract is available for examination; and

''(D) none of the depot-level maintenance and repair to be performed under the contract was considered, before July 1, 1995, to be a core logistics capability of the Air Force pursuant to section 2464 of this title.

''(3) CAPACITY OF DEPOT-LEVEL ACTIVITIES.—For purposes of paragraph (2)(A), the capacity of depot-level maintenance and repair activities shall be considered to be the same as the maximum potential capacity identified by the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission for purposes of the selection in 1995 of military installations for closure or realignment under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, without regard to any limitation on the maximum number of Federal employees (expressed as full time equivalent employees or otherwise) in effect after 1995, Federal employment levels after 1995, or the actual availability of equipment to support depot-level maintenance and repair after 1995.

''(4) GAO REVIEW.—At the same time that the Secretary submits the certification and analysis to Congress under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall submit a copy of the certification and analysis to the Comptroller General. The Comptroller General shall review the analysis and the information referred to in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (2) and, not later than 30 days after Congress receives the certification, submit to Congress a report containing a statement regarding whether the Comptroller General concurs with the determination of the Secretary included in the certification pursuant to subparagraph (B) of that paragraph.

''(5) APPLICATION.—This subsection shall apply with respect to any contract described in paragraph (1) that is entered into, or proposed to be entered into, after January 1, 1997.''.

SEC. 321. CORE LOGISTICS FUNCTIONS OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

Section 2464(a) of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking out ''a logistics capability (including personnel, equipment, and facilities)'' and inserting in lieu thereof ''a core logistics capability that is Government-owned and Government-operated (including Federal Government personnel and Government-owned and Government-operated equipment and facilities)'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting ''core'' before ''logistics''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following: ''Each year, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report describing each logistics capability that the Secretary identifies as a core logistics capability.''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(3) Those core logistics activities identified under paragraphs (1) and (2) shall include the capability, facilities, and equipment to maintain and repair the types of weapon systems and other military equipment (except systems and equipment under special access programs and aircraft carriers) that are identified by the Secretary, in consultation with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as necessary to enable the armed forces to fulfill the contingency plans prepared under the responsibility of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff set forth in section 153(a)(3) of this title.

''(4) The Secretary of Defense shall require the performance of core logistics functions identified under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) at Government-owned, Government-operated facilities of the Department of Defense (including Government-owned, Government-operated facilities of a military department) and shall assign such facilities the minimum workloads necessary to ensure cost efficiency and technical proficiency in peacetime while preserving the surge capacity and reconstitution capabilities necessary to support fully the contingency plans referred to in paragraph (3).''.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, amendment No. 423 is language in the DOD authorization bill that would have the effect, in the judgment of the Senators that coauthored it from Georgia and Oklahoma—and I am pleased that Senator CLELAND, my colleague from Georgia and a member of the Armed Services Committee, has coauthored the amendment—this language would, in our minds, have the effect of concluding and carrying out what we believe were the findings of the last round of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Because of the structure of the unanimous consent, it is designed to encourage the Senators of the States so enumerated in the unanimous consent to work arduously to try to resolve the differences that currently exist between our separate views of what the final Base Realignment and Closure Commission was and how it was carried out. It is a strong statement, following the lead of the good Senator from Oklahoma, who has been in pursuit of this issue for an extended period of time. Of course he is the principal author of the amendment.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, according to the unanimous consent agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me ask just one question. In the last unanimous consent it was agreed amendment No. 423 would be set aside, subject to all of the unanimous consent requirements. Has it been now set aside?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment has been set aside.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Thank you, Mr. President. I do not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. FORD. I understand we are in a period of morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in a period for morning business.

Mr. FORD. I may take a little longer. I don't see anybody here to object—excuse me, the Senator from Pennsylvania may, but we will start.