1980s. He was a member of the Mujahidien, and they were the freedom fighters waging a just war against the Soviet army. Of course, now he is our avowed enemy. A broad definition of terrorism outside the understanding of those who attacked the United States opens a Pandora's box in our foreign policy commitments.

If we concentrate on searching for all terrorists throughout the world and bombing dozens of countries, but forget to deal with the important contributing factors that drove those who killed our fellow citizens, we will only make ourselves more vulnerable to new attacks.

□ 1330

How can we forever fail to address the provocative nature of U.S. taxpayers' money being used to suppress and kill Palestinians and ignore the affront to the Islamic people that our military presence on their holy land of Saudi Arabia causes, not to mention the persistent 12 years of bombing Iraq?

I am fearful that an unlimited worldwide war against all terrorism will distract from the serious consideration that must be given to our policy of foreign interventionism, driven by the powerful commercial interests and a desire to promote world government. This is done while ignoring our principal responsibility of protecting national security and liberty here at home.

There is a serious problem with a policy that has allowed a successful attack of our homeland. It cannot be written off as a result of irrational, yet efficient, evildoers who are merely jealous of our success and despise our freedoms.

We have had enemies throughout our history, but never before have we suffered such an attack that has made us feel so vulnerable. The cause of this crisis is much more profound and requires looking inwardly as well as outwardly at our own policies as well as those of others.

The founders of this country were precise in their beliefs regarding foreign policy. Our Constitution reflects these beliefs, and all of our early Presidents endorsed these views. It was not until the 20th century that our Nation went off to far-away places looking for dragons to slay. This past century reflects the new and less-traditional American policy of foreign interventionism. Our economic and military power, a result of our domestic freedoms, has permitted us to survive and even thrive while dangerously expanding our worldwide influence.

There is no historic precedent that such a policy can be continued forever. All empires and great nations throughout history have ended when they stretched their commitments overseas too far and abused their financial system at home. The overcommitment of a country's military forces when forced with budgetary constraints can only lead to a lower standard of living for its citizens. That has already started to happen here in the United States. Who today is confident the government and our private retirement systems are sound and the benefits guaranteed?

The unfortunate complicating factor that all great powers suffer is the buildup of animosity of the nation currently at the top of the heap, which is aggravated by arrogance and domination over the weaker nations. We are beginning to see this, and the Wall Street Journal editorial clearly symbolizes this arrogance.

The traditional American foreign policy of the founders and our Presidents for the first 145 years of our history entailed three points: one, friendship with all nations desiring of such; two, as much free trade and travel with those countries as possible; three, avoiding entangling alliances.

This is good advice. The framers also understood that the important powers for dealing with other countries and the issue of war were to be placed in the hands of Congress. This principle has essentially been forgotten.

The executive branch now has much more power than does the Congress. Congress continues to allows its authority to be transferred to the executive branch as well as to the international agencies such as the U.N., NAFTA, IMF and the WTO. Through executive orders, our Presidents routinely use powers once jealously guarded and held by the Congress.

Today, through altering aid and sanctions, we buy and sell our ''friendship'' with all kinds of threats and bribes in our effort to spread our influence around the world. To most people in Washington, free trade means internationally managed trade, with subsidies and support for the WTO, where influential corporations can seek sanctions against their competitors. Our alliances, too numerous to count, have committed our dollars and our troops to such an extent that, under today's circumstances, there is not a border war or civil disturbance in the world in which we do not have a stake. And more than likely, we have a stake, foreign aid, on both sides of each military conflict.

After the demise of our nemesis, the Soviet Union, many believed that we could safely withdraw from some of our worldwide commitments. It was hoped we would start minding our own business, save some money, and reduce the threat to our military personnel. But the opposite has happened. Without any international competition for superpower status, our commitments have grown and spread so that today we provide better military protection to Taiwan and South Korea and Saudi Arabia than we do for New York and Washington.

I am certain that national security and defense of our own cities can never be adequately provided unless we reconsider our policy of foreign interventionism. Conventional wisdom in Washington today is that we have no choice but to play the role of the world's only superpower. Recently we had to cancel flights of our own Air Force over our cities because of spending restraints, and we rely on foreign AWACS to fly over to protect our air spaces.

The American people are not in sync with the assumption that we must commitment ourselves endlessly to being the world's policemen. If we do not reassess our endless entanglements as we march toward world government, economic law will one day force us to do so anyway under very undesirable circumstances. In the meantime, we can expect plenty more military confrontations around the world while becoming even more vulnerable to attack by terrorists here at home. A constitutional policy and informed relations of nonintervention is the policy that will provide America the greatest and best national defense.

SAFETY NETS SHOULD BE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. AKIN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, beginning the second half of our congressional session, there are a lot of items on our agenda. There is a great deal of talk about many issues, and I worry very much about the possibility that the American people will be confused if we let all of the various discussions of the various issues become a babble with no focus, a babble which does not prioritize and show us what is most important and what are the key items that we should focus on.

It is difficult to hold the attention of the constituents, it is difficult to hold the attention of the voters, and the voters need to know more than ever what is going on so they can make intelligent decisions and defend their own interests and the interests of the country when the election comes around in November 2002.

We have a lot of sensational, highly-visible problems that are getting a lot of attention; but even that attention sometimes degenerates into a babble, and it becomes confusion, sometimes deliberately so.

The Enron scandal is one of the big items that has a lot of media attention and a lot of discussion here in Congress. There are several committees investigating it, and I think Enron is one of those important things that we have to address. But as we address Enron, both the details of the Enron scandal, the Enron swindle, the conspiracy, the details are important, but we also ought to look very closely at the implications of what is going on with Enron. What are the implications for our budget. That is now a number one consideration.

The President will give his State of the Union address next Tuesday. Shortly after that he will be releasing his

budget, and what are the implications in terms of the emphasis of where Federal expenditures go at a time when we do not have a surplus? Some cuts are necessary, and some increases are necessary. And how those cuts and increases are made and who is taken care of and who is not taken care of is very important. It is very important that we understand that in the Enron conspiracy we have some examples of the worst things that can happen in our very civilized democracy.

Mr. Speaker, we have the best-run, the best-structured government probably in the world; but even within that structure, we can have bandits make off with a lot of the public's money. We saw that in the savings and loan scandal of a little more than a decade ago, which is still with us in many ways. They are still finding culprits, and they are still being prosecuted. We are still paying the debt service on the $500 billion or more that taxpayers paid out as a result of the savings and loan scandal which was less of a conspiracy than Enron. The savings and loan scandal was widespread.

We ought to look at Enron as a conspiracy, and the implications of how it operated are certainly important. There are those who say Enron is not critical in light of the urgency of the present situation, and that people are suffering from unemployment and the Nation is at war as a result of September 11, and therefore Enron is a minor matter. I say that the implications and the kind of inroads that Enron made into the decision-making and the impact on our overall economy, all of that is very important; and we have to look at those implications very closely.

I want to talk today about the safety-net principle that was introduced in our government during the New Deal by Franklin Roosevelt. The principle of safety net certainly might have existed before, but he made it an institutionalized part of government operations. He said that in a democratic society, government ought to at least stand by and help people out when they begin to fall into dire circumstances. Government ought to help people stay alive when they are elderly.

Now we have Social Security which is the most widespread and revered safety net. Social Security did not happen automatically. It was fashioned under the New Deal. I do not think that at that particular time they got any votes from the Republican Party on Social Security; but I am certain that no party, no individual in government would dare try to take Social Security away at this point. That is a safety net, people understand. It is a very tiny safety net when you look at what it costs to live even for an elderly person versus the kinds of Social Security payments that they get; but it is a vital part of people being able to stay alive with some dignity. It is a part that some people cling to.

The New Deal did many other things. It said if you have a situation where the economy is in trouble, and it was in total collapse almost at the time the New Deal was created, the government should provide jobs for people. We had the WPA which ranged across sectors, laborers digging ditches to artists who needed income, painters, writers. The WPA provided a safety net in terms of producing income. We had unemployment insurance. That came out of the New Deal, and the list goes on.

We established aid to families with dependent children, welfare in short. That safety net existed for a lot of desperate people. That safety net was much maligned. That safety net did not do what some other safety nets did. It established no political clout here in Washington.

We had another safety net which is a farm subsidy program which reached out and helped to build our agricultural industry grow into what it is today. When we compare the farm subsidy safety net to the aid to families with dependent children safety net, one wonders about whether we have not corrupted totally the principle of a safety net, and I am here to argue that we should return to a focus on making our safety nets our number one priority.

□ 1345

Unemployment insurance is a safety net. It is very important for a whole lot of people, not just people who are low-income and laid off in factories. There are a lot of people who were computer programmers at this time last year, and they have no job this year. They might have been making $60,000 a year or $70,000 a year last year, but temporarily, and it is temporary, because the economy will come back, the aspects of the economy which support high-tech industries will come back strong. So they are temporarily without a job. Temporarily they do not have the money to pay the rent or mortgage. Temporarily.

There is one case I know of where a woman was making $60,000 last year, and she is hysterical because she sees herself as not being able to pay the mortgage and maybe becoming homeless. There may be a few people already who were very well off last year at this time and already are in dire circumstances. A lot of people who were temporarily laid off will become homeless who are middle-income people, educated people; and they need a safety net.

The one safety net that we could improve right away is unemployment insurance. Unemployment insurance is like Social Security: it is not going to give you your monthly paycheck amount, but it can give you enough to sustain yourself and begin to put other pieces together with some dignity.

Unemployment insurance in many States has been eroded. The amount of the package, the amount you get, has been cut back, because we had quite a number of years of prosperity where unemployment was not an issue, and money for unemployment insurance has been diverted to other purposes, or governments have saved money by lowering the amount of money being put into unemployment insurance. We need to do something about that immediately. It should be one of our priorities for this half of the Congress.

Why is it that we do not understand and cannot act in Congress on an obvious need for this safety net? At the time of the 9–11 disaster when the World Trade Center was wiped out by the terrorists, we rushed to take care of an emergency that the airline industry had. This is a safety net that was not there already.

There was no authorization in law, no tradition of bailing out industries from these kinds of emergencies; but we rushed in, and we provided a safety net for the airline industry. That is unparalleled. We put forth large amounts of cash, put cash on the line, for the airlines that had suffered losses as a result of being grounded during the 9–11 emergency. Then we promised them $11 billion in low-cost loans beyond that.

So never before have we rushed so rapidly and provided such a great safety net for anybody. So the airline industry stands out as the number-one benefactor of the principle of the safety net.

But at the same time we passed the funding for the airline industry, we were told, and many of us fought, certainly on this side of the aisle, Democrats had a proposal in the same package that we should provide for the airline industry workers unemployment insurance, and attached to that would be health benefits, because health benefits are as important as the amount of money you take home in your salary nowadays.

So we were told at the time, next week. Come back next week and we will put the package on. Well, like Shakespeare, tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow; next week and next week and next week. Next week is still not here.

So on the agenda of this Congress this year, a number-one item must be unemployment insurance; not just for the people who suffered specifically on 9–11, not just the people who are the victims of the terrorist attack on 9–11, but also the people across the country who are suffering because the Nation is in a recession. The Nation was in a recession before 9–11. The terrorist attacks certainly exacerbated the situation and probably created a more rapidly escalating recession. All of those are facts. But whatever the facts behind the tragedy, the hardships faced by working people, certainly the need for the safety net is there.

The safety net principle is very important. We might claim it, and it is an American idea. We invented it, and it is time for us to not turn our back on a very important moral plank that was put into the functioning of government, the safety net for the elderly and Social Security, the safety net for

farmers and the farm subsidy, the safety net for children who lose their parents, who are able to get Social Security payments all the way to age 18. We have always had the safety net.

We have gone further with respect to what happened after 9–11. I think the Victims Assistance Fund, we also passed that in the same legislation where we bailed out the airline industry. The Victims Assistance Fund is another giant leap forward by the Federal Government in providing a safety net. It is a dual safety net. It is a safety net for the insurance industry, who could be sued forever and ever as a result of what happened on September 11. The State of New York, where the incident took place, says the airline industry is responsible for whoever the victims are, and the insurers of the airlines certainly would have to be responsible for the compensation of the victims if we did not pass legislation already, right away, immediately, that provides a Victims Assistance Fund. It is unparalleled.

I applaud that. I voted for the bill because that factor was in there, and I think it is important that we work it out. There are some difficulties involved in terms of a special master who was appointed. The special master said what the results are, what the formula will be for determining what people get. I think all of that can be worked out. I do not think that necessarily we should assume the special master has all the wisdom and not make some changes in what has been proposed.

One obvious change is I do not see why a person who was going to be a possible recipient of a Victims Assistance Fund has to, before they know the amount they will get from the fund, give up their right to sue the insurance companies. Why should they have to give up their right before they see what is going to be produced by the Victims Assistance Fund? Why? I see no reason why they cannot know that ahead of time. Considering all they have gone through and the complications of this whole process, I think we ought to at least certainly yield on that point.

There are many other items that are being contested by the survivors of the victims; and I will not go into that because I am not knowledgeable about it, but I think that principle is very clear. Why should one have to give up their right to sue before they know the outcome of what the process of the Victims Compensation Fund might be?

Let us not smear, let us not downgrade or trivialize the principle of the safety net by acting like bullies. We have got the money. We are the government. You take it or leave it. I do not think that that is a principle that should be applied here.

The safety net principle has been there; and the abuses of it, the misuses of it, is what I want to talk about today, because I am very troubled by the fact that as of the end of December, December 31, we have had the results of a new welfare law going into effect.

A provision of that law said that anybody who has been on welfare, anybody who has been receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children, is what Roosevelt and the New Deal called it, anybody who was receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children for 5 years would be cut off the welfare rolls and never again, regardless of their circumstances, would they be eligible for welfare. That means whole families are cut off. If you have been on it for 5 years, you are off; and whatever your circumstances are, you have got to go find some other way to survive.

Now, Aid to Families with Dependent Children gives varying amounts of money across the country. I think that generally my State, New York State, has been accused as being the most generous, or too generous, and that the Aid to Families with Dependent Children in New York has been higher than almost anywhere else in the country.

I have a chart here that says that those ''high amounts'' that were given, amounts that were considered high, turn out to be something like a family of four would be receiving between $7,000 and $8,000 a year. Aid to Families With Dependent Children in New York, a family of four would receive between $7,000 and $8,000 a year. That is considered far too generous. In many States, I assure you, they receive much less.

I think New York also has one of the largest numbers of people on welfare, and we have been criticized for that. But as we go into an era starting January 1 where all the people, 30,000 people I think were found to have been on the welfare rolls as of December 31 who had run out of their 5 years of tolerance on the welfare rolls, those 30,000 people are off now.

Let us say many of those 30,000 people were in families that receive at least $7,000 or $8,000 a year. When you compare what they were receiving to the amount of money received by the recipients of the safety net in the farm subsidy program, you will find that they were receiving pennies.

The farm subsidy program, which also started during the New Deal, pays thousands of dollars to families. There is no requirement that you get off of it at a certain point. There have been some efforts to phase it out, some efforts to sunset it. None of that has succeeded. The farm subsidy program is booming more than ever before. So the principle of the safety net is such where it goes on and on forever and gets larger and larger, and fewer and fewer people in the farm subsidy program are getting the benefits of that safety net.

The safety net principle was a great innovation, a great civilizing step forward. We ought to be applauded for it. The New Deal was a great step forward in understanding the plight of ordinary people and providing for ordinary people and providing for anybody who was facing a problem with their survival.

Later on Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society program added to that by adding Medicare and Medicaid so that the actual physical health of a person was also considered of concern to the government. Nobody should suffer and die because they cannot get adequate health care.

So given this great step forward, and there are some people who are cynics, and I am not a cynic at all, some people who say, well, civilization has really not moved forward, we still have the same old wars we had before. In fact, the 20th century had more wars than any other century. In the 21st century now there are wars raging all over the world; people have less liberties in most of the world than they had before, et cetera.

There are all kinds of actual disasters, governmental disasters, governance disasters, that can be cited to show that we have not really moved forward, that it is only an illusion. It is not an illusion. It is very much not an illusion.

During the celebration of the Martin Luther King Federal holiday and the birthday of Martin Luther King, we talked to young people about certain kinds of things that were accomplished by Martin Luther King. They sit starry-eyed wondering how could that have ever been. How could you ever have had segregation, where you could not drink at a water fountain unless you were white; where blacks could not eat at certain restaurants, stay at certain hotels? How could you have an institutionalized government-supported system like that? They cannot comprehend it. They are too young to remember.

But just yesterday in the history of our Nation, we had unspeakable injustices that no longer exist. Once upon a time we had slavery. Slavery was probably one of the cruelest crimes ever perpetuated on the face of the Earth, the American Atlantic slave trade; but that no longer exists. You can go on and on and cite the reasons why we have every reason to be optimistic about the slow, but forward, march of civilization.

In the industrialized nations of the world the kinds of things I have just talked about, Social Security, Medicare, health care, unemployment compensation, all those things are features. Pensions, and Social Security is a form of pension, but we have private pensions as well as Social Security pensions.

Getting back to the Enron case, one of the terrible things about Enron is it wiped out pensions for certain people, large numbers of people; and that ought to be a concern of government, how did we let that happen. But we will get back to that.

My point now is that civilization may move forward slower than we want it to move forward. Some folks say it is like an inch worm: it crawls forward very slowly and sometimes doubles back in circles, and it looks like it is going backwards.

We have had some terrible things happen in the last 20 years. The slaughter of nearly 1 million people in Rwanda is cited as an example.

□ 1400

The Balkan wars, going back to ethnic cleansing and Hitler doctrines, all kinds of atrocities can be cited. Pol Pot killing hundreds of thousands of people in Cambodia, and we could cite a lot of atrocities and a lot of terrible things that have happened as evidence that civilization is really not going forward. But, on the other hand, would we ever have had a situation even 100 years ago where the women who are enslaved in Afghanistan by the Taliban, who turned out to be a few thousand thugs with the guns and the tanks and the weapons to enslave the rest of their people, and certainly women in particular moved into a status which can only be called slavery, would they ever have been set free, or would they have been in that condition for 100, 200, 300 years if it had not been for a modern society responding to injustice, a modern society responding to the attack from people who had that kind of base.

Barbaric people have done barbaric things and built up tremendous amounts of power and gone on to conquer more civilized people. The history of the world is not a history where people who had the best knowledge, the most knowledge, the most sophistication, the most humanity, the best governance prevailed. The Romans conquered the Greeks, and the Huns came in and conquered an Arab civilization that was very sophisticated. On and on it goes. There is no guarantee that the most humane, most civilized, best governed will prevail.

Under the fabric of the industrialized nations, combined with the United Nations, combined with a morality that has come into being in most of the industrialized nations, it is less and less likely that a great oppressive nation could arise and be able to work its will anywhere in the world. No nation, including our own, should aspire to that, and if it were tempted, I think there is enough morality, enough common sense about where we have to go as a people, as a species, a species of Homo sapiens; human beings have to deal a certain way in order to survive on this planet, and it is not in our best interests to allow anybody to run roughshod over human life.

So we have gone forward. The United States of America took a giant leap forward when it established the principle of the safety net. Now is the time to come forward and defend the principle of the safety net. We cannot defend the principle of the safety net if the Congress is going to stand here and refuse to pass unemployment compensation laws which upgrade the amount of money available for unemployment, unemployment compensation laws which are attached to some kind of health care benefit. The principle of the safety net has to go forward instead of backwards. We must include health care benefits as well as increase the amount of money for unemployment insurance in the package and extend the amount of time that people can be on unemployment and collect unemployment. A simple safety net.

How can we defend some of the other safety nets that are being so abused if we do not operate and act on a clear and present crisis? We have a crisis in front of us.

The farm subsidies are not a crisis, but they are a good example of an abuse of the safety net principle, and we cannot, on the one hand, allow that kind of abuse to go forward and ignore, on the other hand, unemployment insurance. We cannot, on the one hand, allow the farm subsidies to continue and insist that people have to get off welfare in 5 years and we do not care what happens to them after that, and the amount of money that each welfare family takes is so much smaller than the amount of money being poured into farm subsidies every day.

So I want to get back to my original proposition, which is that the safety net principle is very important as we look at the total agenda for the last half of this Congress, this year, 2002, as we go forward.

I have a list here from the National Conference of State Legislatures on what their priorities are and I agree very much with their priorities, and we ought to address that. Election reform is a priority. I think that the National Conference of State Legislatures are rather conservative, just as the election bill that we passed here is very conservative, but at least we go forward a few steps.

Election reform will take us into exposing and taking a hard look at the procedures by which we conduct our most important democratic activity. That is the point of voting and selecting people who are going to lead us and make decisions for us. We have been very sloppy over the years in allowing our procedures to become too localized and too much left to the States, and people who are in power have been given the opportunity to maintain power by the way they operate the election process. So we shined a bright light on that. We need to focus more on it and think more about the implications, including the Electoral College, the implication of the Electoral College. Nothing is written in stone, and the fact that we established an Electoral College at the time of the founding of the country in protection of the smaller States in order to compromise and have all of the States feel that they could be part of the Union, we ought to take a look at it and see what evil does the Electoral College spawn now. It denies one man, one vote, the one-man, one-vote principle as we saw in the last election. When we do not have the one-man, one-vote principle, what other evils do we set in motion?

What does it have to do with Enron? What does it have to do with the corruption of the safety net of the farm subsidy? Can getting votes out of a particular State be guaranteed by maintaining unjust farm subsidies? Is that one of the problems that we have to look at, that some of the smaller States have power out of proportion to their size because of the fact that they are able to finance a system that does protect them and part of that system is the use of Federal dollars that come from the farm subsidy?

The Patient's Bill of Rights. That is on the agenda of the National Conference of State Legislatures, a Patient's Bill of Rights, including a concern with the prescription drug benefits. We must get back to a real Patient's Bill of Rights and we must take care of the prescription drug benefit.

The third item on the list of the National Conference of State Legislatures happens to be a reauthorization of Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant. They want to make sure that we are prepared to deal with some of the problems that are obvious from the passage of that law. After 5 years of experience, some of the exploitation of the loopholes must be dealt with.

They want a reauthorization of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, which the Committee on Education and the Workforce that I serve on will be addressing, and we hope to be able to address the Federal promise of 40 percent funding for the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act so that that money is released at the local and State level to go to some other educational activities.

They want some relief for people who are suffering from the present recession. They want an economic stimulus, economic recovery package which makes sense in terms of bringing benefits to the people on the bottom. The Progressive Caucus that I am a member of is repeating what it said 6 months ago, that we want an economic package that is big enough to really bring some relief to the people on the bottom.

We have a massive drop in overall demand, which is one of the problems of our economy. When the consumer demand drops massively, that is the factor that drives the economy and the engine of the economy is stalled. We know that. It is a fact. Nobody disputes it. So let us keep the consumer demand up by making certain that the people are the real consumers and are the ones who get the benefit of any governmental action. We will not stimulate consumption. The consumers will not come back when we give large tax cuts to people who are already rich. I assure my colleagues, they are buying whatever they want to buy at the pace that they want to buy it, and more money will only be an opportunity to use it somewhere for purposes other than consumption.

I will not get into all the economics of that. I do not know what the position of the Democratic Party is at this

point, but I certainly am in favor of tax cuts. The only difference is I am in favor of tax cuts starting with the poor guys on the bottom who have been paying too much payroll taxes. We need a big tax cut for the people who have been paying too much payroll taxes. We should go up from there to the medium people who need a tax cut. The problem is not a tax cut, the problem is who is the target who benefits from the tax cut? I think tax cuts ought to be welcome, but the problem with the President's tax cuts as they were passed last year and signed into law is that they go to the wrong people. They do not stimulate the economy, they will not stimulate the economy.

So the Progressive Caucus calls for a package that will go to the bottom and give relief to people on the bottom.

We also again are calling for a real increase, a giant increase in our unemployment benefits. One item is that we proposed a $200 billion economic stimulus package last year and probably will fashion this year something similar to that economic stimulus package. High priority programs are unemployment insurance, as I have just mentioned. First of all, extend unemployment benefits to 52 weeks, from the present 26 weeks to 52 weeks. We want to also supplement the amount of benefits available through unemployment by increasing them by $100 a week, adding $100 to the present package that they are receiving in any State, because those packages and their benefits, the amounts are far too low for the present situation.

We are calling for expanding health care coverage, job training, State revenue-sharing, a close look at TANF. That is the aid to dependent children's program that was transformed into a punitive program at this point. We want to take another look at that.

We want to take a hard look at the use of government funds for public works construction to generate jobs also, starting with school construction. We are proposing $10 billion for school construction. We proposed that last year, and we will be proposing it again this year. Another $10 billion for small business economic development programs at the local level. Again, as I said before, we need a tax cut for the people on the bottom, and that is again being proposed by the Progressive Caucus.

Just to focus first on the safety net principle being abused and misused with respect to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children, TANF, TANF has become the kind of stain on the record of our Nation with respect to safety nets that we do not want to continue. We do not want to continue to tell families who are destitute, have no other means of survival that after 5 years the government will not have anything to do with them except to find them a job, help them find a job. If they do not find a job, they are still not eligible for assistance. What do they do if they do not find a job?

In an economy which is in recession, and people, even well-educated people with a lot to offer, are temporarily finding it difficult to find jobs. How will we find jobs for welfare recipients who in many cases have very poor and limited education? So we must do something to remove the stain of TANF. We need a revision of that.

There is no great hue and cry in Congress, I must say, because people who are on welfare have no power. The poorest people in our society, part of the reason they are that way is because they have limited education, they have absolutely no capital, they do not make contributions to anybody's campaign, and it is their fault but they are not organized.

When we look at the farm subsidy, we see the fact that the farm population of America is less than 2 percent of the population, and yet the amount of money they can demand in the Federal budget is far exceeding anything that urban communities can command with much greater populations. The fact that they are a small group does not mean that they cannot in our American democratic system command the attention of Congress, but they cannot get subsidies, they cannot get a place in the budget.

□ 1415

On the one hand, welfare people are treated atrociously. On the other hand, we are bowing to the power of the farm subsidies and the people who manipulate those programs.

Today in the Washington Post, for example, there is a long story which in my opinion we might title ''An Exposé on How a Safety Net Has Been Grossly Abused.'' The safety net of the farm subsidy program has been grossly abused, and there is a discussion of that here in the Washington Post today, January 24.

The article is entitled ''More Subsidy Money Going to Fewer Farms.'' They start off with a description of one man, David B. Griffin, ''a man of undeniable means, a prominent and well-respected businessman who lives in a million-dollar home, sits on the local bank board and serves as president of a tractor dealership with sales last year of $30.8 million. He is also, by some definitions, a farmer—the principal landlord of a 61,000-acre spread known as Tyler Farms.'' This is near Elaine, Arkansas.

''But Griffin did not get where he is without government help. From 1996 through 2001, records show, Tyler Farms received more than $38 million in Federal crop subsidies for its bountiful yield of cotton, rice, corn, sorghum, soybeans, and wheat''; $38 million to Tyler Farms from the government, $38 million to a man who is already a millionaire.

''Griffin's story and others like it suggest that Federal crop programs ostensibly aimed at struggling families do not always hit their intended targets.'' In another paragraph they talk about numbers telling a story of unintended consequences.

''According to the Department of Agriculture, 47 percent of commodity payments now flow to large commercial operations with average household incomes of $135,000.'' We hear people with an average household income of $135,000 are getting subsidies from the government, with a $135,000-a-year income. Here is a family in New York of four on welfare and they get $7,000, and we say, ''You are a threat to the economy of the Nation. You can only get this money for 5 years; no matter what circumstances you and your children may be in, we will take you off.''

These farms make up 8 percent of the Nation's 2.2 million farms. Sixty percent of the American farms get no crop subsidies at all. We are allowing abuses to take place which not only hurt Americans and take our tax monies in the wrong direction, but we are also hurting farmers, the little guys out there who are probably more like the welfare mothers than like the millionaire farmers. Obviously, they do not belong to the right organizations, do not make the right contributions, and they are left out.

I am reading from an article that appears in today's Washington Post, January 24. Members may get it if they want the full article. I want to continue.

Another paragraph says: ''But new payment limits would address only one aspect of the 'Alice-in-Wonderland' system that underpins much of the Nation's farm economy—a system that Congress thought it had junked 6 years ago in favor of the free market but that has since proved impossible to kill.''

We were going to phase it out starting 6 years ago, and it has only mushroomed and gotten bigger.

''Established in 1933 as a rural antidote to the Depression, crop payments have mushroomed into a $21 billion-a-year entitlement program that almost everyone agrees is broken but that no one can agree how to fix.'' That is $21 billion a year. At the height of the welfare program, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children, I think the program for the whole country was costing less than 2 percent of the total budget; and here we are talking about a $21 billion program for 2 percent, less than 2 percent of the population that would be eligible. But of that 2 percent eligible, only a tiny percentage of those are absorbing this $21 billion a year that they are receiving.

''It is a system that reserves almost half of its benefits for just six States.'' That is important, too, when we consider the Electoral College and why we maintain that, because those States have power out of proportion to their membership, out of proportion to their size, and out of proportion to the number of voters that they have. But six States are receiving most of the farm subsidies, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

''Notwithstanding the return of budget deficits, to say nothing of its stated

commitment to free trade, the Bush administration has bowed to congressional demands for $73 billion in new farm spending over the next decade. That is almost three times the $26 billion cost of the landmark education package that President Bush signed into law this month.'' That is $26 billion from the Federal Government over a 10-year period that would deal with education.

Education is for the whole Nation. Education is the foundation for our national security system. If we do not have more educated people, if we have more high-tech weapons, high-tech weapons will become a joke. If we do not have more educated people to become the scientists to conduct the missions to build the missile system, first of all we are going to pay extravagant amounts of money bidding for the few scientists in the world who are able to deal with the problem, and we would probably fail, and at the same time a large number of foreign scientists will be educated to do the same thing.

The antidote to the defense missile system will be in development somewhere in the world before we even get it completed; and the scientists that are used to develop the opposition will probably be educated here in America, because we have not given enough money to educate all of our population that has talent to the fullest extent of their talent and their ability to contribute to the Nation's education brain power.

To get back to the article, ''More than $40 billion would go for crop subsidies, with the rest reserved for conservation, nutrition and rural development.''

But ''Congress has been more aggressive when it comes to addressing other entitlement programs.'' Congress has been more aggressive, not aggressive in terms of increasing the amounts of money, but cutting the amount of money.

In 1996, Congress passed ''a massive revision of welfare that ended the 6-decade-old cash assistance program known as Aid to Families With Dependent Children. The new law also trimmed food stamp benefits, which are funded under the farm bill.''

In other words, in 1996 we committed this horrible atrocity, and that is what it is, a legislative atrocity that was committed in 1996 when we not only cut Aid to Families with Dependent Children and laid down a mandate that you cannot have more than 5 years of assistance from the Federal Government no matter how desperate you are, but we also cut food stamps at the same time.

To continue: ''With prices for some crops at their lowest level in more than a decade, many farmers are in genuine distress, and even the harshest critics of the farm programs acknowledge the need for some form of government safety net.''

As an urban dweller from the heart of New York City, I say farmers should have a government safety net. We should help farmers the way we help everybody else, but we should not abuse the principle of the safety net for farmers because farm subsidy program advocates have special privileges here in our government and are able to manipulate certain forces and get large hunks of the taxpayers' money that they do not deserve.

Continuing with the article here in today's Washington Post, ''Congress has been trying for more than a decade to wean farmers from the Federal Treasury. The effort peaked with the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act, which provided transitional payments to farmers with the aim of phasing out subsidies by this year.''

In other words, I was here when we debated the Freedom to Farm Act. We are all capitalists; we are all advocates of capitalism. We cannot live with the socialism that has taken over the farm subsidy program, especially since the socialism is a socialism of the rich, in many cases. Everybody wanted to do something, but since 1996 and the great speeches that were made then, we have gone backwards, not forwards.

''But a combination of factors—including worldwide recession and a global oversupply of food—pushed crop prices lower, and Congress has rushed in to fill the breach with a series of 'emergency' supplemental appropriations bills.''

Now, when the NAFTA and other trade bills and world trade agreements occurred, they created a situation where factory workers were laid off, plants were closed; and we have never rushed in with a subsidy for urban workers. We have never rushed in with subsidies which would average $135,000 for a family, or $28,000 per family. We barely have been willing to give money for worker retraining. A lot of that money has gotten bogged down in the bureaucracy.

''In 2000, crop subsidies reached a record high of $22 billion. That is nearly as much Federal assistance in one year as Amtrak has gotten for the last quarter century. But in some respects, the farm subsidies have made matters worse, encouraging farmers to grow more crops without regard to market demand.''

As capitalists, we cannot tolerate a situation where we distort the free market, but we are funding at very high levels a program which distorts the free market. On the one hand, this safety net is abused greatly, all out of proportion to reality. On the other hand, the safety net set up for welfare mothers has been turned off completely.

Can we as a civilized Nation live with what we have done to the welfare mothers, one? And, two, can we, as a civilized Nation and a group of responsible Members of Congress, sit here and continue the farm subsidies, which are an abuse of the principle of the safety net?

''The outcome of debate is especially important to Arkansas, where the top 10 percent of subsidy recipients—or 4,822 of the total—received more than 73 percent of the Federal farm subsidies, with an average payment of more than $430,000 per recipient.''

Let me repeat that. In Arkansas, 4,822 farm recipients of the subsidy program, who account for 10 percent of the subsidy, received an average payment of more than $430,000 per recipient, according to an analysis of USA Data by a group called the Environmental Working Group. That is $430,000 per recipient, a safety net to help people survive and get by, $430,000 in taxpayers' money to help people survive. The principle of the safety net is wiped out completely in that kind of scandal.

The Environmental Working Group is a Washington nonprofit organization that wants more money to be shifted to conservation. ''The group has caused a stir in Congress by posting subsidy data—including farmers' names and how much they receive—on its Web site.''

I invite Members of Congress to use the Web site of the Environmental Working Group: ewg.org, ewg.org. If Members want the exact names of individuals and how much they received, how much they are receiving, Members can go to this Web site and get the information by State, State by State. We can get the information on how the safety net for farmers is being grossly abused and the process is draining away billions of dollars that could be used for people who need the safety net, the unemployed, the uninsured, with respect to health care.

I am not in favor of increasing the Federal budget at all. I think we have enough money in the overall Federal budget. But I am in favor of redirecting, redirecting the money in the Federal budget to those people who really need it, and here is a case where we can start taking from the abusive safety net to give to safety nets that really help people.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD in its entirety the article entitled ''More Subsidy Money Going to Fewer Farms'' in the Washington Post on January 24, 2002.

The material referred to is as follows:

MORE SUBSIDY MONEY GOING TO FEWER FARMS

SKEWED PROGRAM DRAWS SENATE SCRUTINY

(By John Lancaster)

ELAINE, ARK.—David B. Griffin is a man of undeniable means, a prominent and well-respected businessman who lives in a million-dollar home, sits on the local bank board and serves as president of a tractor dealership with sales last year of $30.8 million. He is also, by some definitions, a farmer—the principal landlord of a 61,000-acre spread known as Tyler Farms.

But Griffin did not get where he is without government help. From 1996 through 2001, records show, Tyler Farms received more than $38 million in federal crop subsidies for its bountiful yield of cotton, rice, corn, sorghum, soybeans and wheat.

Griffin's story and others like it suggest that federal crop programs—ostensibly aimed at struggling family farms—do not always hit their intended targets.

For all the congressional hand-wringing about the plight of the hardy souls who scrape their living from the soil, the hugely expensive New Deal-era subsidies for grain and cotton producers—which Congress only six years ago voted to phase out altogether—are funneling more money to fewer farms than ever before.

Numbers tell a story of unintended consequences: According to the Department of Agriculture, 47 percent of commodity payments now flow to large commercial operations with average household incomes of $135,000. These farms make up 8 percent of the nation's 2.2 millions farms. Sixty percent of American farms get no crop subsidies.

''A lot of these payments, the majority of them, are going to big farms, and these big farms are wealthy farms,'' said Bruce L. Gardner, an agricultural economist at the University of Maryland and a former assistant secretary of agriculture in the first Bush administration. ''This is not a poverty program in any way.''

The skewed distribution of farm benefits is sure to receive more scrutiny when the Senate next month resumes debate on a bill to chart farm programs for the next decade. Embarrassed by revelations about the amount of money some farmers are reaping from federal farm programs—information recently made available on the World Wide Web—some lawmakers are calling for much lower limits on payments to individual recipients.

But new payment limits would address only one aspect of the ''Alice in Wonderland'' system that underpins much of the nation's farm economy—a system that Congress thought it had junked six years ago in favor of the free market but that has since proved impossible to kill.

Established in 1933 as a rural antidote to the Depression, crop payments have mushroomed into a $21 billion-a-year entitlement program that almost everyone agrees is broken but that no one can agree how to fix. It is a system that reserves almost half of its benefits for just six states; lavishes subsidies on grain and cotton farmers while excluding most ranchers and growers of fruits and vegetables; and—according to the USDA's own studies—worsens the very problems it seeks to correct by encouraging overproduction, thereby depressing crop prices while driving up the cost of land.

Yet farm subsidies endure, underscoring the daunting challenge faced by those who would dismantle entitlements for groups with special stature on Capitol Hill—in this case, mostly middle-class white men and their families.

Notwithstanding the return of budget deficits, to say nothing of its stated commitment to free trade, the Bush administration has bowed to congressional demands for $73 billion in new farm spending over the next decade. That is almost three times the $26 billion cost of the landmark education package President Bush signed into law this month. More than $40 billion would go for crop subsidies, with the rest reserved for conservation, nutrition and rural development.

''We kind of hit this farm thing with a sledgehammer just by throwing dollars out without really analyzing where the dollars are going,'' said Dan Glickman, who was agriculture secretary in the Clinton administration. ''This is an area where an awful lot of members of Congress kind of view these programs as out of sight, out mind.''

Congress has been more aggressive when it comes to addressing other entitlement programs. In 1996, Congress passed—and President Bill Clinton signed—a massive revision of welfare that ended the six-decade-old cash-assistance program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children. The new law also trimmed food stamp benefits, which are funded under the farm bill.

During debate on the farm legislation in December, Sen. Richard G. Lugar (R–Ind.) proposed to double spending on food stamps by throwing out crop programs in favor of a much less costly voucher system that would help farmers buy crop insurance. Farm lobbyists rallied in opposition to Lugar's proposal, and it failed 70 to 30.

With prices for some crops at their lowest level in more than a decade, many farmers are in genuine distress, and even the harshest critics of farm programs acknowledge the need for some form of government safety net.

Farmers themselves are divided on the issue. Some, especially those on smaller acreage, want a reallocation of benefits. But owners of larger operations generally defend the current system. They say it is natural for big farms to claim the majority of subsidies, since they grow the most food with the greatest efficiency. They note that many foreign governments provide far more support to their farmers, creating barriers to American exports.

''No one would disagree that the largest farms are getting the bulk of the benefits,'' said Robert G. Serio, a colorful country lawyer in Clarendon, Ark., who makes his living setting up partnerships—including Tyler Farms—that allow farmers to maximize those benefits. ''Are you going to penalize Wal-Mart for being bigger than the Family Dollar store? In America, everyone is rewarded, supposedly, for being bigger and more efficient.''

Congress has been trying for more than a decade to wean farmers from the federal treasury. The effort peaked with the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act, which provided transitional payments to farmers with the aim of phasing out subsidies by this year.

But a combination of factors—including worldwide recession and a global oversuppy of food—pushed crop prices lower, and Congress has rushed in to fill the breach with a series of ''emergency'' supplemental appropriations bills.

In 2000, crop subsidies reached a record high of $22 billion. That is nearly as much federal assistance in one year as Amtrak has gotten in the last quarter century. But in some respects, the farm subsidies have made matters worse, encouraging farmers to grow more crops without regard to market demand. Rice is a good example.

Citing weak global demand for rice, Congress has sharply increased direct assistance to the farmers who grow it. Rice subsidies rose from $448 million in 1997 to more than $1.3 billion in 2000, according to USDA's Economic Research Service. The normal response to soft markets would be to cut production. In this case, however, farmers have no incentive to do so because Congress has guaranteed a set price for every bushel of rice they grow.

As a result, the amount of American farmland devoted to rice swelled from 2.5 million acres in 1997 to 3.3 million acres last year—the same year rice prices hit a 15-year low.

The Bush administration has sharply criticized farm programs, and Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman last year initially expressed support for Lugar's far-reaching proposal. At the same time, the largest share of farm subsidies flows to the same midwestern and southern states that Bush won in the 2000 election. That limits the administration's political maneuvering room, especially with midterm elections looming in the fall.

The administration last year ultimately threw its support behind an alternative farm bill offered by Sens. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) and Thad Cochran (R-Miss.). Among other things, the measure would establish 401(k)-style savings accounts for all farmers—not just those who participate in commodity programs—with matching government contributions of as much as $10,000 a year.

But the GOP bill is not the radical departure some had hoped for. It preserves most major subsidy programs, including one that pays farmers a set amount based on historical production, even if they let their fields lie fallow.

Farm groups hold enormous sway on Capitol Hill; the largest and most influential, the American Farm Bureau Federation, spent $3.2 million on lobbying in 2000, according to a federal disclosure report. Moreover, many key leadership positions in Congress are occupied by farm-state lawmakers, such as House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert (R–Ill.) and Senate Majority Leader Thomas A. Daschle (D–S.D.).

The politics of farm subsidies was much in evidence in December, when a bipartisan group of senators led by Byron L. Dorgan (D–N.D.) and Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) floated a proposal to reduce the ceiling on annual crop payments to individual farmers from $460,000 to $275,000. The measure has considerable support among farmers of more modest means, many of whom are in the upper Midwest. It is bitterly opposed by owners of large cotton and rice farms in southern states such as Arkansas. Both Arkansas senators—Blanche Lincoln (D) and Tim Hutchinson (R)—share that opposition.

After Daschle came under pressure from Lincoln and other southern lawmakers, the majority leader prevailed upon Dorgan to drop his sponsorship of the amendment, if not his support for the idea. Aides from both parties say they expect it to resurface next month.

The outcome of the debate is especially important to Arkansas, where the top 10 percent of subsidy recipients—or 4,822 of the total—received more than 73 percent of federal farm subsidies, with an average payment of more than $430,000 per recipient, according to an analysis of USDA data by the Environmental Working Group, a Washington nonprofit organization that wants more money shifted to conservation. The group has caused a stir in Congress by posting subsidy data—including farmers' names and how much they receive—on its Web site, ewg.org.

A number of the state's largest farms can be found in the fertile but economically depressed Mississippi Delta region of eastern Arkansas. Tyler Farms is headquartered in Phillips County, which borders the Mississippi River about 80 miles east of Little Rock.

From 1996 to 2000, the county of about 26,000 people received more than $101 million in federal farm subsidies, according to the environmental group's analysis. Farm groups say such subsidies help sustain rural communities. But the picture in Phillips County is anything but prosperous. According to Arkansas state figures, 8,319 county residents—31.5 percent of the population—received food stamps in December 2001.

Griffin is one of the county's biggest private employers. His other interests include Producers Tractors Co. (which operates five John Deere dealerships), a cotton-gin company and a petroleum distributorship, according to Dun & Bradstreet and his attorney. Griffin lives just south of Elaine, a tiny crossroads town in an ocean of flat cultivated fields, in a 13,233-square-foot mansion on 15 acres with an estimated market value of $964,750, according to county records.

Griffin did not respond to several requests for interviews, but Serio, his lawyer, said it was wrong to assume that Griffin owed his

success to government subsidies. He emphasized that Griffin merely leases his land to Tyler Farms—a complex partnership involving 39 local investors—and receives no direct government payments. Serio said Griffin owns 33,5001 acres of the farm; his father owns 14,000; and the rest is leased from other landowners.

Griffin set up the farm in 1993 with landowners and local farmers ''who were going out of business'' because they could not get financing, Serio said.

Like other large operations, Tyler Farms was structured to get the most from government programs. Its 39 owners are organized into 66 separate ''corporations,'' an arrangement that allows the farm to maximize benefits under allowable payment limits and also limits owners' liability, Serio said.

To qualify for federal payments, which are supposed to benefit family farmers, each of the owners is supposed to be ''actively engaged in farming.'' Serio said 22 of the owners perform management duties and therefore meet that requirement. Griffin puts his assets at risk, Serio said, by guaranteeing 40 percent of the farm's annual crop loan.

With crop prices so low, the lawyer said, ''farms are getting bigger for the sake of survival.''

Mr. Speaker, the Environmental Working Group will be happy to tell us all we need to know State by State what the farm subsidies are. If Members are not interested in looking at details for an individual, on that database Members will find State by State, ranked according to those who are getting the most to those who are getting the least, information on this.

Information is power, and it is power enhanced and power multiplied, depending on the way we use it. We have now information that can be put to good use in demonstrating to the American people that the principle of the safety net, which we all endorse, is being grossly abused on the one hand, and being denied to people who need it on the other hand.

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The welfare mothers who are kicked off the rolls starting December 31 deserve better treatment from our government.

There are some people who are now Congresspersons, leaders in industry, leaders in education, large numbers of people who made it because their family was able to go on welfare not for 5 years, sometimes for many more. There are some youngsters whose family was on welfare until they were 18 years old. Like Social Security pays for survivors up to 18, why do we suddenly make a mandated, arbitrary, cruel rule that after 5 years you are off.

But we do not tell the farm subsidy recipient you are off after 5 years or you are off. We can find the money for unemployment insurance by cutting the money that is going to recipients who do not deserve it in the farm subsidy program.

I do not have the statistics now, but we also have a farmer's home loan mortgage report program which, I admit, 4 or 5 years ago on one of my committees, the Committee on Oversight and Investigations, and that committee discovered that there were people receiving farmer's home loans that had not paid their interest or their principal in 4 or 5 years and that the amount of money outstanding at that particular time had reached as high as $14 billion. I asked questions about it last year and I found that it had come down. Now it is less than $10 billion, outstanding money owed because it is overdue.

So we have allowed the farm apparatus to stage a conspiracy on taxpayers' money. The Department of Agriculture needs to be investigated because many of these farmers who got their home loans, these farmer loan mortgages and were not paying them back, they sat on the credit committees. They made the decisions about who got the loans and they got the loans for themselves in many cases, and nobody was there to confront them about paying them back.

The situation is grave. It is urgent right now to move our money away from those who abused the safety net to those who need it. In New York unemployment has gone from 4.5 percent in December of 2000 up to 5.8 percent now for the whole State. In New York City it is up to 6 percent for the city, and that is not anything unusual.

In Alabama the State has gone from 4.5 percent of unemployment to 5.9 percent presently. California has gone from 4.7 percent unemployment in December 2000 to 6 percent now, and on and on it goes. There are a few States that have escaped, but they are very much in the minority who do not have high unemployment rates at this point.

The Bush administration came in in January, and I will not argue at this point whose fault it is, but since last January unemployment in New York has risen by 1.6 percent. A large amount of that unemployment took place before the terrorist attack on September 11. September 11 has only exacerbated immediately in the New York area a great jump in unemployment. We lost 109,900 jobs in New York. The economic stimulus plan that was put forth with the tax cuts for the rich would cost us money. Instead of giving us more it would cost us another $710 million.

At this point we have 134,548 more unemployed people than we had last January. They need help. The State unemployment benefits are, as good as they may be, far too small to deal with the emergency that we are facing.

We also have some examples of what unions have done to fill the gap. One example that I would like to put on record of a union filling the gap, specifically around the disaster that took place on September 11. Local 32B–J of the SEIU represents most of the workers at the World Trade Center and the surrounding buildings. Fortunately many of them work at night and they were not there when the plane crashed into the World Trade Center, so they escaped with their lives. They lost about 32 people who were on duty. Most of them escaped with their lives, but they lost their jobs.

We have about 3,000 workers who were employed with health benefits, pension plans, et cetera, and now they have no jobs. I think Local 32B–J is to be congratulated with what it has done to fill that gap. They took action immediately to provide their own safety net for their workers. The point that has to be understood is that no union, and they did this with the help of the employers, the reality board that employed these workers and served as a bargaining unit for management, they joined with the union in providing a safety net.

I want to put on record that we have the real estate industry and the union working for that industry. The two bargaining contenders came together in an agreement which provided benefits for their workers for 6 months. And that is the point. They can only do it for 6 months. They do not have the capacity to go much further than that. So the Joint Building Service Industry Emergency Preferential Hiring Program is there so each worker who lost their job is given preference in hiring.

Mr. Speaker, the text of the agreement that was made by the union and the employers to give work to the members of Local 32B–J who lost their jobs in the World Trade Center disaster is as follows:

The Union, the RAB and the Trustees of the Building Service Benefit Funds have developed a program of job placement and enhanced benefits to ease the burden on all employees working under Local 32B–32J contracts at the World Trade Center and other nearby buildings which have been closed as a result of the destruction or damage caused by the terrorist attack. The comprehensive program includes job placement without loss of seniority, supplemental unemployment insurance, extended health benefits, and an enhanced pension benefit for certain employees who wish to retire.

The following is an explanation of each benefit under this program:

JOINT BUILDING SERVICE INDUSTRY EMERGENCY PREFERENTIAL HIRING PROGRAM

Each employee who lost his or her job either permanently, as in the case of those employees who worked at the World Trade Center, one of the other buildings that will not reopen or any employee employed at a building which has not yet reopened, will be placed on a Preferential Hiring List in the order of industry seniority. All cleaning contractors who have agreements with the Union must report all job openings to the Program, and will hire directly from the Preferential Hiring List in the order of seniority. Employees who accept the offered positions will retain their current hourly wage rate, benefits, and industry seniority. This means that employees will maintain their full industry seniority for bumping and vacation purposes. If you were getting five weeks vacation you will still get five weeks vacation on the new job. Unfortunately, were are unable to preserve your building seniority.

Once you are offered a job, you must decide within two days whether to accept the job. Whether or not you accept the job, you will be removed from the Preferential Hiring

List, will no longer be eligible for the Extended Health Benefits and the Supplemental Unemployment Benefit which are described below and you will lost your bumping rights within your employer's system.

Employees remaining on the Preferential Hiring List who have not been offered a job as of February 4, 2002 will be offered the right to bump within their employer's system.

2. SUPPLEMENTAL UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT PROGRAM

This is a benefit being provided by the Building Service 32B–J Health Fund to all employees who meet the eligibility requirements set forth below. If you were employed as a security guard at the World Trade Center you will receive a benefit of $93.00 per week. If you had any other full time job, you will receive a benefit of $150.00 per week. If you held a part time job (less than forty hours per week), you will receive a benefit of $112.50 per week.

In order to be eligible for this benefit you must;

(a) Have been eligible for health coverage under the Building Service Health Fund as of September 11, 2001, and

(b) Be named on the Preferential Hiring List described above at any time between October 2, 2001 and April 2, 2002, and

(c) Are not receiving a pension from the Building Service 32B–J Pension Fund, and

(d) Have not held a full time job as of September 11, 2001 in addition to the one from which you were displaced on September 11, 2001.

You will continue to receive this benefit until the earliest of the following occurs:

(a) You are recalled to work by your employer.

(b) You accept a job from the Preferential Hiring List.

(c) You decline the offer of a job from the Preferential Hiring List.

(d) You fail to comply with rules established by the Health Fund to administer this benefit.

(e) You begin to receive a pension from the Building Service 32B–J Pension Fund.

(f) You become ineligible for New York State Unemployment Insurance benefits because of any other job you may have taken.

(g) April 2, 2002, or the Health Fund has paid out a total of Six Million Dollars for this benefit, whichever shall first occur.

3. EXTENSION OF HEALTH BENEFITS

Any employee who was terminated in connection with the World Trade Center disaster and who at any time between October 2, 2001 and April 2, 2002 is named on the Preferential Hiring List and his or her eligible dependents, shall continue to be covered for all benefits under the Building Service 32B–J Health Fund through April 30, 2001 or until he or she is removed from the Preferential Hiring List, whichever is sooner.

Remember, that you will be removed from the Preferential Hiring List if you decline a job offer or if you begin receiving a pension under the Building Service 32B–J Pension Fund.

Upon the termination of your extended health coverage, assuming that you have not received a job which would otherwise entitle you to benefits under the Health Fund, you will be entitled to elect COBRA continuation coverage. This means you can continue to receive health coverage for up to eighteen months provided you pay the Health Fund for the coverage. Your dependents may also be entitled to elect COBRA continuation coverage.

4. ENHANCED PENSION BENEFIT

Any employee who was terminated in connection with the World Trade Center disaster who was on the Preferential Hiring List as of October 2, 2001 and who on or before September 11, 2001, has reached his or her Fiftieth Birthday with at least five years of pension service credit, or has reached his or her Sixtieth Birthday, will be eligible to retire and receive an Enhanced Pension Benefit.

The Enhanced Pension Benefit will be equal to the pension benefit that you would be entitled to if you were five years older and had five more years of service credit. For example, if you are fifty years old and have ten years of service you would receive a pension benefit equal to the pension you would receive if you retired at fifty five with fifteen years of service, or if you were sixty years old with twenty years of service, you would receive the maximum benefit of $1150.00 per month since you would be treated as though you were sixty-five years old with twenty-five years of service.

In order to be eligible for the Enhanced Pension Benefit you must elect this benefit and retire during the window period of October 4, 2001 through November 4, 2001.

If you accept the Enhanced Pension Benefit, you will be removed from the Preferential Hiring List and will no longer be eligible for the Supplemental Unemployment Benefit or Bumping Rights within your employer's system.

Additionally, you will no longer be entitled to the extended health coverage unless you had reached your fifty-seventh birthday by September 11, 2001. If you had reached your fifty-seventh birthday on or before September 11, 2001 you will receive health coverage until you reach the age of sixty-five as currently provided in the Health Plan for those who retire at age sixty-two or later.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement is a model for what other unions and what other private sector groups can do, taking the initiative, but it is not a substitute. There is no substitute for our government assuming its responsibility and providing a safety net for the victims and for the unemployed. We must do that, we can do that.

I urge this Congress to get on with the unfinished business of providing the safety net for those who need it most.

AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, after my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) had his presentation today on his perspectives on the United States foreign policy, I thought that it would be fitting that I present a similar point of view but not exactly in agreement with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL). Although we are both people who love liberty and justice and value our freedom that we have here in the United States and in various countries throughout the world, we have a different view on exactly what policies the United States should follow to ensure that there is the maximum of peace and liberty and justice in this world.

Today I would like to talk a little bit about where we are at in the world and why we are there and some thoughts, some basic thoughts about American foreign policy.

First and foremost on this subject, we must recognize that our military forces are at this moment in action in various parts of the world, especially in Afghanistan, and they are there and they are fighting and sometimes they are taking casualties in order to avenge the slaughter of nearly 3,000 of our fellow Americans on September 11 past. This forceful and deadly response in the form of American military forces being unleashed against persons in different parts of the world is totally justified. It will and, in fact, already has deterred other terrorist attacks upon us.

It is, yes, part of an act of vengeance, and I see nothing wrong with the United States Government avenging the death of 3,000 Americans who were killed, 3,000 innocent Americans, people who were not combatants who were slaughtered by evil forces overseas. And in this vengeance we will, as I say, deter other evil forces in this world from targeting Americans and from committing other heinous acts that have caused us so much grief here with the loss of friends and family.

All Americans should be grateful for the magnificent job that has been done by our military personnel, and let us remember as we are watching this great victory that we have just had in Afghanistan that there were naysayers who were warning us not to do anything militarily in Afghanistan, that it would become a quagmire and that any time we commit military forces anywhere that it is so risky that we should just forget it.

There is a saying of a captain of a ship, if a captain of a ship believes that his number one job is preserving the ship, well, then he will never leave port.

Well, the ship of the United States has one important purpose, they have many purposes, our ship of state, but the most important purpose of our Federal Government is to protect the people of the United States and to protect our freedom. It is not simply to watch events go by. It is not simply to have a military for which we pay for our military, only to see it there and to caress it and to salute it and to say good things about it. No, our military is there and the people who are in our military understand they have a job to do. At times that means that they must leave port and they must go to foreign destinations in order to protect the national security interests of our country and in order to prevent our people from suffering the kind of attacks that we suffered on September 11.

When we do not do that and when dictators and tyrants and evil-doers around the world see the United States has no more stomach for that type of conflict in distant places, then we will indeed become the target because there are evil people around the world who