

TAKING THE COWBOY HAT OFF
THE MILITIA PROBLEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise at this time to take the cowboy hat off the militia problem that the Speaker tried to put on it this weekend on national television.

For any of you who were watching the Speaker this weekend on national television, he said, "We have to understand there is in rural America, particularly in the West, a genuine fear of the Federal Government." He added that this genuine fear seemed to be driving otherwise average Westerners into the Rocky Mountains to create some kind of a Rocky Mountain guerrilla group or some such thing.

Well, I rise to say that is not true, that that is an extremist position in the West, and that we in the West are not encouraging that type of thing. I also find all of this very interesting, because I would be terribly surprised if the Speaker or any other Member of this body rose to talk about the genuine fear of the Crips and the Bloods or the genuine fear of the Members of the Aryan Nation, or the genuine fear of the Ku Klux Klan, or on and on and on. We would tell them all to grow up and get a life.

Now, what about these militias and what about the paranoid style of politics that has been practiced by some of these overgrown, overaged, GI Joes that appear to be rather on a lost patrol? Well, first of all, unfortunately, it is not a regional phenomenon. They are not all hunkered into the Rocky Mountains. The militia pup tents have raised their heads all over the country. They are in Georgia, they are in New York, they are in Michigan, they are in Montana, and, yes, unfortunately, they are in my State too. So let us not try and just put a cowboy hat on it. Let us deal with the fact that they are everywhere. Let us not romanticize this. Let us realize that this is not a genuine fear, this is ridiculous, and this is paranoid politics at its absolute worse.

The second part that comes into all of this is an attempt to try and draw some kind of an urban-rural, and therefore Western-Eastern, polarization on this. What I want to point out is the Rocky Mountain States are 71 percent urban. That may come as a surprise to people that Arizona is more urban than Ohio, and Nevada as urban as Pennsylvania. That even a hot topic of banning assault weapons that people often want to say is impossible to do in the West, when you poll, you find people in the Rocky Mountain States poll the same as any other State. So those kind of regional differences do not pan out.

Finally, the paranoid fear of government is an extremist position, and every one of us ought to say that. People who have a fear of government

should go to the ballot box and not their bullets. Ballots, not bullets, is the way to approach this government. I am very troubled when I hear people saying that we should accept this, pat people on the head, and not take it on.

I am especially surprised the Speaker has not done more to abuse the notion of this paranoia. I really hope that all of us in this body look at what we might be contributing to this kind of paranoia and ask if we are. As Pogo once said to us, we ought to look in the mirror and meet the enemy and find out if it is us.

I hope all of this regionalistic romanticism and everything else stops, and we start saying there is no reason to be paranoid about a democratic form of government.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. SCHROEDER. I yield to the gentleman from Montana.

Mr. WILLIAMS. As the gentlewoman knows, I represent Montana, all of it, the little bit of urban we have out there and the lot of rural we have. Like the gentlewoman, I, too, was watching television and heard Speaker GINGRICH make his latest in a series of wedge statements, in which he seemed to try to divide the West out as a place that was somewhat paranoid about the Federal Government. I do not know what part of the West our good Speaker was talking about, but he was not talking about Montana.

Montanans are frightened by the militia, not the Federal Government. Montanans are frightened by outlaws, not by those who would enforce the law at local, county, State and Federal levels. My Montanans, as with your constituents in Colorado and our colleagues and constituents throughout the West, recognize full well that the West, for the most part, has been a wonderful partner in having settled and developed the West. The Federal Government plumed the West. We are, after all, a hydraulic society that insists on making the deserts flourish. It is the Federal Government that set out the Interstate Highway Systems and has done so much to help the economy of the West, and we appreciate the involvement of the Federal Government. We do not fear it.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Nor do we in Colorado.

SUDDENLY A CRISIS IN MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. DEFAZIO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, suddenly the Republican leadership has discovered a crisis in the funding of Medicare, and they want to fix it. Well, they are not sure they want to fix it. They want the President to make a proposal to cut Medicare spending over the next decade. They want the Democrats in Congress to make a proposal to cut Medicare spending over the next dec-

ade. Maybe they want a bipartisan commission to make proposals to cut Medicare spending over the next decade.

The bottom line is they want someone to come out and get ahead of them and propose cuts in Medicare spending over the next decade, under the guise of saving Medicare from bankruptcy, a new crisis that no one could have anticipated a year ago during the health care debate. A year ago during the health care debate, we heard from Republican leaders on both sides of the Hill that there is no crisis in health care in America, none at all. We need no congressional action regarding health care. That was only 12 months ago.

More recently, we had the much vaunted Contract on America, which laid out the 10 most important issues confronting the United States of America, the 10 must-do pieces of legislation to bring our country into the next century. And you know what? Medicare was not on the list. I guess there was not a crisis in Medicare, or at least they did not know about it, when they were writing the contract.

Then we brought the contract to the floor again. Still, no mention of Medicare. We brought a dire emergency supplemental spending bill to the floor of the House; \$2.3 billion additional for the Pentagon, because you cannot ask the Pentagon to do anything without giving them more money. We add a few billions of dollars for the crisis in California, for the earthquakes and the floods and various and assorted sundry other things that Congress always throws in when we do a dire emergency supplemental spending bill, but not a penny for Medicare. I guess 2 months ago there was not a crisis in Medicare.

What has happened since is the Republican leadership in this House pushed through a bill cutting revenues, cutting taxes, by \$340 billion over the next 5 years. And guess what? Now they think we need to cut Medicare somewhere in the vicinity of \$300 billion. But there is no linkage. There is no linkage between the massive tax cuts which they shoved through this Chamber for the largest, most profitable corporations, for foreign and multinational corporations, for people earning \$200,000 a year, under the guise of some scant relief for middle income families and people with children. No, there was no crisis in Medicare then. But now there is.

Suddenly there is a crisis in Medicare that just happens to come close to the amount of money that is proposed in the massive tax cuts. The crisis has come now because they have sat down and tried to write their budget, and they found out you cannot hold the Pentagon harmless and in fact increase their spending, you cannot hold all of that massive part of the Federal budget harmless. You cannot deal with the existing debt and the interest payments, and you cannot cut taxes and