

in the short-term CR and the debt bill that he said he opposes. These are things that we believe America wants. He said he opposes them. The only way we could get around the President was to send him a bill that he could not veto.

Mr. STENHOLM. If I could reclaim my time—

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. He has chosen to shut the Government down, not us.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STENHOLM. I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I find the logic strange that somehow the President ought to be questioned about his conduct before we have ever gotten appropriation bills to him. We can all have legitimate differences about what ought to happen on Medicare, what ought to happen on education. That is normal in this country. What is not normal is when you start criticizing the President for not signing legislation that has not yet been sent to him.

When the Congress has failed to pass 10 of the 13 appropriation bills, then the issue is not whether the President has vetoed something, the issue is whether the Congress has produced something for him to sign or veto. We have not yet done that, and until we do, it seems to me that it comes with considerable ill grace for this institution to suggest that we ought to short-circuit the process when this institution has not yet performed its basic duty.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STENHOLM. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. HEFNER. I would like to ask a question. There is nothing in these two bills that the President is talking about vetoing, there is nothing in these bills that could not go the regular legislative route if you had done your work, or will do your work. They could be separated out. You have got the majority. You could bring them up, even under suspension, if you wanted to.

Am I right? Is that right?

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. If the gentleman will continue to yield, the minority well knows that in the past there have been many, many, many times when we did not pass all the appropriations bill and we ran this place with continuing resolutions, short-term CRs. When we did that, the Democrats, when they were in charge, sent to the President of the United States things that he did not want.

Mr. HEFNER. The gentleman is not answering my question.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. The fact is you are turning everything on its head. The gentleman knows that.

tleman from Iowa [Mr. LEACH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, we are today in a democratic debate about the size and role of government. It is important and involves a need for comity of purpose on all sides.

Nevertheless, despite differences on the question of whether and how fast governmental budgets should be balanced, let us not lose sight of the fact that this is a blessed country which can manage its affairs peacefully and democratically.

I stress this point because on another continent last week, the Government of Nigeria executed the playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights activists. A generation ago in her seminal work "The Origins of Totalitarianism" Hannah Arendt noted that one of the hallmarks of totalitarian regimes is the capriciousness as well as the anonymity of death.

It is therefore incumbent on democratic legislatures throughout the world to register dissent against political atrocities of this kind, and shine the spotlight of decency onto the regimes responsible.

The international community cannot allow individuals of conscience to disappear unnoted from the face of the Earth. Names must be named and deeds recorded. The courage of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee and the President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni Peoples, as well as Barinem Kiobel, Saturday Dobe, Paul Levura, Nordy Eawo, Felix Nuate, Daniel Gbokoo, John Kpuinen, and Baribor Bara must be acknowledged and remembered.

Like Socrates, forced to drink hemlock because of his alleged corrupting influence on the youth of Athens, Ken Saro-Wiwa was found guilty of crimes committed by others because his enlightened human rights advocacy was said to have created the environment that fostered societal misdeeds. As the lessons of Socrates' life and the injustice of his death 2½ millenia ago are recalled, we as public officials in a free society must today demand accountability for the execution of these 20th century Nigerian citizens of conscience.

In referencing this human rights tragedy, I do not mean to divert attention from the importance of the debate this evening, but this Congress, despite our problems, remains the principal legislative beacon of freedom in the world. We are obligated to resolve our differences. We are also obligated to put our problems in perspective. Important differences of judgment exist, but we can reach a consensus without putting a gun to anyone's head. We are, after all, Americans.

tleman from Hawaii [Mr. ABERCROMBIE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

THE LEADERSHIP'S INABILITY TO SUBMIT TO THE PRESIDENT LEGISLATION HE CAN SIGN

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I rise here to speak to the issue that we are talking about tonight, the inability of the Republican leadership, Speaker GINGRICH and the leader of the other body, to bring to us and take to the President a continuing resolution and an extension of the debt ceiling which he will sign.

I do that with a special interest tonight, because I have two constituents here with me in the gallery who are nurses in my district. They are very concerned. They are concerned that we continue the commitment that we have in this country to seniors through our Medicare Program, to others through our Medicaid Program, and to their colleagues, who work in Federal facilities, so I appreciate the gentleman giving me a moment to make sure that we remember there are real people who are being discussed in these issues. This is not just theoretical.

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Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, apropos of the remarks of the gentleman from Kentucky, reference has been made again and again this evening and in previous sessions of the House to a balanced budget, and reference has been made to the President. In fact, the President has been castigated for being unwilling, presumably, to move towards a balanced budget in a time certain, generally given to be 2002.

What is constantly left out of the equation is that there is no presentation for a balanced budget. Every time I hear that being said very frankly by Members on both sides, but most particularly as a kind of challenge from the Republic side, I would find it amusing if it was not so sad that this is based upon a palpable fraud. I will tell you exactly what it is. It is no great secret.

In previous times, Mr. Speaker, in order to mask the deficit that was accumulating, we have gone into what is called something off-budget. It is a bookkeeping trick. That is all it is, the Social Security trust fund. But before, at least we were honest about it with respect that it appeared from both the Republicans and the Democrats when we finally put budgets together that we were, in fact, utilizing the so-called surplus funds in order to achieve a budget. We were not pretending that we were trying to balance the budget at that point.

As the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STENHOLM] and others who have preceded me have indicated, that has been a goal of both Democrats and Republicans. This is not exclusive to the Republican Party. But the difference has

THE EXECUTION OF NIGERIAN CITIZENS OF CONSCIENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

GOAL OF BALANCED BUDGET NOT EXCLUSIVE TO REPUBLICAN PARTY

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