

government? Could we tell a friend about it? Is it fair for the government to take over one-third of our hard-earned income each year?

I do not think it is fair, Mr. Speaker. I think it is time right now to get spending under control and try to bring sanity back to Washington.

There are a lot of other topics that I want to talk about, Mr. Speaker, but I think what I may do is just end tonight on the budget, because I want to focus just on the importance of it.

There is a budget right now, introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. MARK NEUMANN, and it takes Social Security out of the formula. Two important things I would say the Neumann budget does. Number one, it takes Social Security out of it.

People do not realize this right now, but Social Security has a \$65 billion surplus. That money is thrown into the pot with the rest of the general spending, the rest of the budget, and it makes the deficit look smaller than it is. The Neumann budget says, no, sir, that \$65 billion is stand-alone, it goes only in the Social Security trust fund, it goes only for Social Security purposes, and it should not be used for deficit reduction and general spending.

That is one thing the Neumann budget does and I think that is very important for our grandparents and other folks on Social Security.

The second thing it does, which is equally important for those of us fathers, is it pays off the national debt by the year 2023. So a child born today, at 25, 26 years old, they will live in America without a national debt. If we can do that, the jobs that will be created are incredible.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I had a list of some of these benefits that I may submit for the RECORD, Mr. Speaker. But I believe that we can achieve a balanced budget. I believe that we can pay down the national debt. I believe, again, it is a moral imperative. It is not a matter of common sense only but a matter of survival and doing what is right for our children.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues and friends here in Washington to vote for a balanced budget, work for the balanced budget amendment, make some tough decisions in terms of government spending reductions, and let us walk out of here with our heads held high, not worrying about the next election but only concerned about the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the article to which I earlier referred.

FLORIDA COUPLE TO PLEAD GUILTY TO TAPING
GOP LEADERS' CELL PHONE CALL

(By Michael J. Sniffen)

WASHINGTON.—A Florida couple agreed Wednesday to plead guilty to federal criminal charges of intercepting a cellular telephone call between House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other Republican leaders last December.

Identical one-count criminal information were filed in U.S. District Court in Jacksonville, Fla., against John and Alice Martin of Fort White, Fla.

The Martins signed agreements with prosecutors to plead guilty and those were filed in court along with the charges. The Martins admitted in the agreements that they intentionally intercepted the telephone conversation and agreed to cooperate with the Justice Department's continuing investigation of the case.

Justice officials, who requested anonymity, said the investigation is continuing here into how a transcript of the conversation ended up in *The New York Times*, and later in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and *Roll Call*, a Capitol Hill newspaper.

The call—between Gingrich, House Majority Leader Dick Armey of Texas, Rep. John Boehner of Ohio, Rep. Bill Paxon of New York and others—took place last Dec. 21 as the House ethics committee was about to announce a settlement of its investigation of complaints against Gingrich. The publication of the text set off an uproar on Capitol Hill.

Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington, the ranking Democrat on the ethics committee, said the call breached Gingrich's agreement with the committee that the Speaker would not orchestrate a response to his ethical wrongdoing.

Republicans said the transcript, to the contrary, showed that Gingrich was following the agreement and they demanded an investigation of the call's interception.

The Martins each face a maximum penalty of a \$5,000 fine with no prison term. The government made no promises on what sentence it might recommend.

Alice Martin, reached at her home in Fort White, Fla., refused to comment Wednesday evening and referred questions to the couple's attorney. "I can't say anything about that," she said.

Boehner said the Martins "should not be patsies in this, set up to take the fall for more politically influential people."

Anyone "who knowingly accepted the tape and passed it along to the press is also guilty," said Boehner, who when the call was intercepted was in Florida taking part in the conversation on a cellular telephone.

The Martins said they gave the tape to McDermott. In the ensuing furor over the tape's contents and its disclosure, which also could be a crime, McDermott removed himself from the ethics panel's investigation of Gingrich. A Republican also stepped aside to keep the panel at an even party balance.

"The Martins were charged with the most serious violation possible based on the applicable federal law and the circumstances surrounding the interception of the telephone call," said Charles R. Wilson, U.S. attorney for the middle district of Florida. "If the Martins are ever convicted of an illegal interception again, they would face a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine or both."

Because it was a first offense and because the interception was of the radio portion of a cellular call; and because there was no evidence that it was done for commercial or private financial gain or for an illegal purpose such as aiding in blackmail, the offense is classified as an infraction, the Justice Department said.

John and Alice Martin heard the conversation on the Radio Shack scanner in their car while on a Christmas shopping trip. Once they realized the conversation they were picking up was of Gingrich discussing the Republican response to his admitted ethics violations, they recorded it on a hand-held machine. They said it struck them as historic.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GREEN (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today, on account of personal business.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today through May 1, on account of official business.

Mr. YATES (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today, on account of back pain.

Mr. HOEKSTRA (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today, on account of a death in the family.

Mr. HERGER (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today and the balance of the week, on account of family matters.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POMEROY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POMEROY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. DELAURO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. CLAYTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ROEMER, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. DUNCAN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GOSS, for 5 minutes each day, today and on April 30 and May 1.

Mr. NORWOOD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. METCALF, for 5 minutes each day, today and on April 30.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, on April 30.

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POMEROY) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.

Mr. BERRY.

Mr. TORRES.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.

Mr. LEVIN.

Mr. LAFALCE.

Mr. ORTIZ.

Mr. BONIOR.

Mr. SCHUMER.

Mr. KANJORSKI.

Mr. PASCRELL.

Mr. LIPINSKI.

Mr. DOYLE.

Mr. HINCHEY.

Mr. YATES.

Mr. FROST.

Mr. HOYER.

Mr. BROWN of California.

Mr. MENENDEZ.