

Republicans last year, gone are the \$88 billion cuts they wanted to do to Medicaid, no more talk about doing away with the Department of Education, the Department of Commerce, no more suggestion that the Environmental Protection Agency should be stripped of its power and its funds.

Now, I believe this radical revolution is over with this budget deal. Could this budget deal be better? Yes, of course, it could. One way, Mr. President, it could be better is if we kept our tax cuts moderate and targeted them to the middle-class. We could reach balance sooner. We would still have resources left to do more for our children and our communities.

What Senator DURBIN and I—and it is cosponsored by Senators DASCHLE, HARKIN, and BUMPERS—what we say in our amendment, and I am very pleased it will be accepted, is that a substantial majority of the tax cut benefits provided in the reconciliation bill will go to middle-class working families earning less than approximately \$100,000 per year and that the tax cuts in the reconciliation bill will not cause revenue losses to increase significantly in the years after 2007.

In other words, we have two points to our amendment. One is tax cut benefits go to the middle-class; and two, we do not want to see an explosion of deficits in the outyears.

Mr. President, I am pleased that the chairman is accepting this. I am pleased we are walking down this path together. I really will watch this because we have no assurance that this amendment will be kept in the conference, but we will keep our eye on it because I suspect if we insisted on a vote we would get a near unanimous vote.

I am hopeful we can keep this language in the bill itself. If it is stripped out, Mr. President, I will be back once we get to the reconciliation bill, to make sure that tax cuts are not going to the people who are earning \$1 million but are, in fact, going to our hard-working families who earn approximately \$100,000 a year.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. Again, my thanks to the Members of the Budget Committee. This has been a long time in coming. It is not the perfect budget but I think it puts an end to the radical revolution that was threatened a couple years ago and it will bring us to balance. It is good for our children, and overall I am pleased with it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Alaska.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. I ask unanimous consent there now be a period for the transaction of morning business.

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

U.S. FOREIGN OIL CONSUMPTION FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 16

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the American Petroleum Institute reports that for the week ending May 16, the U.S. imported 7,834,000 barrels of oil each day, 52,000 barrels more than the 7,782,000 imported each day during the same week a year ago.

Americans relied on foreign oil for 54.8 percent of their needs last week, and there are no signs that the upward spiral will abate. Before the Persian Gulf War, the United States obtained approximately 45 percent of its oil supply from foreign countries. During the Arab oil embargo in the 1970s, foreign oil accounted for only 35 percent of America's oil supply.

Anybody else interested in restoring domestic production of oil—by U.S. producers using American workers? Politicians had better ponder the economic calamity sure to occur in America if and when foreign producers shut off our supply—or double the already enormous cost of imported oil flowing into the United States—now 7,834,000 barrels a day.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, May 20, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,346,367,814,885.12. (Five trillion, three hundred forty-six billion, three hundred sixty-seven million, eight hundred fourteen thousand, eight hundred eighty-five dollars and twelve cents)

One year ago, May 20, 1996, the federal debt stood at \$5,114,233,000,000. (Five trillion, one hundred fourteen billion, two hundred thirty-three million)

Five years ago, May 20, 1992, the federal debt stood at \$3,921,030,000,000. (Three trillion, nine hundred twenty-one billion, thirty million)

Ten years ago, May 20, 1987, the federal debt stood at \$2,291,944,000,000. (Two trillion, two hundred ninety-one billion, nine hundred forty-four million)

Fifteen years ago, May 20, 1982, the federal debt stood at \$1,068,510,000,000 (One trillion, sixty-eight billion, five hundred ten million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,277,857,814,885.12 (Four trillion, two hundred seventy-seven billion, eight hundred fifty-seven million, eight hundred fourteen thousand, eight hundred eighty-five dollars and twelve cents) during the past 15 years.

INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF ASYLUM ERODING

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, every year the respected U.S. Committee for Refugees issues a review of the state of the world's refugees. This yearly review has earned worldwide respect as the most authoritative compilation of analyses, data, and thought-provoking information on refugees. The 1997

World Refugee Survey, released yesterday is especially troubling. The Committee finds that many countries which were once considered safe havens for refugees and asylum seekers are beginning to turn their backs on persons fleeing persecution.

The report estimates that the number of refugees and asylum-seekers decreased last year to about 14.5 million worldwide. But this apparent decrease is misleading. The Committee attributes it in part to the higher barriers to asylum erected in many countries last year, including the United States. In addition, some countries have begun to forcibly repatriate refugees back to their home countries, even if conditions in those countries have not improved. For example, Thailand has recently begun to forcibly return Burmese refugees to their persecutors in Burma.

There is some good news. Several countries, including Guatemala, Haiti, Mozambique, and Cambodia, have improved their human rights situations, so that some refugees have been able to return to their homes.

Sadly, the overall message of the report is that basic long-standing international principles of asylum and refugee protection are in trouble. As this report points out, the United States bears a share of responsibility for this problem. The summary exclusion provisions of last year's immigration law, and the continued detention of asylum-seekers sets a poor example for other countries which look to the United States for guidance on asylum and refugee protection.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a U.S. Committee for Refugees press release be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ASYLUM ERODING IN MORE COUNTRIES, REPORT FINDS; REFUGEES' LIVES, PROTECTION PRINCIPLES ENDANGERED

WASHINGTON, DC.—Asylum for refugees around the world is eroding in more countries than ever before, as governments, including those traditionally friendly to refugees, either close their borders completely or offer "pseudo-asylum" that lacks adequate protection, the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) said today.

"We are seeing a continuing deterioration in the quality of protection and assistance countries are willing to offer to those fleeing persecution and violence," said USCR Director Roger Winter in releasing USCR's 1997 World Refugee Survey. "This pseudo-asylum not only endangers the lives and well-being of refugees, but threatens to kill the principle of asylum itself," Winter said.

USCR's World Refugee Survey is considered the preeminent source for information on the worldwide refugee situation, and this year's Survey includes 120 detailed country reports, 12 statistical tables, and essays on deteriorating asylum standards.

The 1997 World Refugee Survey provides examples of countries either shutting their doors to asylum seekers or offering pseudo-asylum in the past year:

The international community deprived Rwandan refugees of true asylum by ignoring serious protection problems in refugee

camps in Zaire. The lack of proper asylum for legitimate Rwandan refugees became one trigger for the current civil war in Zaire, which in turn triggered attacks on Zaire's refugee camps. Significant numbers of Rwandan refugees continue to die in central Zaire.

The *Bulk Challenge*—a freighter packed with Liberian refugees fleeing violence and chaos in their country—was turned away from one West African port after another last May.

Burmese refugees in Thailand suffered cross-border attacks on their camps in 1996, while Thai authorities offered little security. In recent months, there have been instances of Thai authorities preventing New Burmese asylum seekers from entering Thailand and forcibly returning those who have managed to cross the border.

Iraqi Kurds who fled to Iran last September returned to Iraq by the end of the year because the quality of asylum offered by Iranian authorities was so poor. The close proximity of the camps to the border allowed them to be shelled from Iraq, while basic services were lacking. When the Iraqis began returning to their country under questionable circumstances, UNHCR was not permitted access to the camps.

"The deterioration of asylum is not only an African phenomenon," said Winter. "The problem can be found in every corner of the world and even in our own backyards as the recent changes in U.S. asylum law shows," he said. The new U.S. asylum law, which went into effect in April, makes it harder for asylum seekers to apply for asylum, in part through a summary removal procedure for persons arriving with false documents, the only way many asylum seekers can flee repressive governments.

Other Western governments are also taking a more restrictive approach. In Germany, authorities are seeking to withdraw asylum for Bosnians prematurely. Authorities there recently ended temporary protected status for Bosnians and are beginning to send them back to an unstable situation in Bosnia, which is short on housing, landmine sweeping, jobs, freedom of movement, and tolerance.

The 1997 World Refugee Survey reports that although the total number of refugees, internally displaced people, and asylum seekers is at a seven-year low of roughly 34 million people, the reasons are complex. While human rights conditions have sufficiently improved for refugees to repatriate to Guatemala, Haiti, Mozambique, and Cambodia, refugees elsewhere have been forcibly repatriated to unsafe conditions. At least 18 countries, including the United States, forcibly expelled refugees or insufficiently screened asylum seekers in 1996.

Founded in 1958, the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) is a private humanitarian agency which defends the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced persons worldwide.

COUNTRIES THAT DAMAGED ASYLUM PRINCIPLES IN 1996

(This is a selected list and should not be viewed as comprehensive)

- The Bahamas (denied asylum to Cubans)
- Bangladesh (denied asylum to and forcibly repatriated Burmese)
- Cote d'Ivoire (denied asylum to Liberians)
- Germany (announced intention to forcibly repatriate Bosnians)
- Ghana (denied asylum to Liberians)
- Hong Kong (forcibly repatriated Vietnamese)
- Iran (provided inadequate asylum for Iraqi Kurds and expelled Afghans)
- Lebanon (provided inadequate asylum to Palestinians)
- Tanzania (forcibly repatriated Burundians and some Rwandans and denied asylum to Burundians)

Togo (denied asylum to Liberians)

Turkey (denied asylum to Iraqi Kurds, expelled Iraqi and Iranians)

United States (provided inadequate asylum procedures for Cubans)

TRIBUTE TO MAJ. (P). RANDY O'BOYLE

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, when people think of special operations forces, the image that immediately comes to mind is that of the Army's Green Berets and Rangers, or the Navy's SEAL's. Few realize that the Air Force has a special operations element which is robust and impressive. Air Commandos, Combat Controllers, and ParaRescue personnel have all made important contributions to military operations and National Security over the past five decades, and today, I rise to pay tribute to one member of that community, Major Randy O'Boyle, who is about to assume command of the 551st Flight Training Squadron.

For the past several years, Major O'Boyle has been a tireless and diligent advocate as the Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs for the United States Special Operations Command. In that capacity, he has worked closely with Senators, Representatives, and their staffers in order to explain the missions and needs of this unique, joint-service Command. In the process he has helped to give Members of Congress a better understanding of the capabilities of our Nation's special operators and has provided us with the information necessary for us to help shape policy and the future of our special warfare elements.

Major O'Boyle was particularly effective in his job as he brought with him to Washington both extensive experience as an Air Force Officer and as a special operator. An accomplished pilot, Randy O'Boyle has literally thousands of hours behind the stick of the Air Force's Pave Low helicopter, an aircraft specifically modified to support special operations. During Operation Just Cause, Randy demonstrated his abilities as a pilot and his coolness under pressure as he flew combat operations in support of Army, Navy, and Air Force special forces personnel as they fought to liberate Panama from the grasp of the dictator Manuel Noriega. Major O'Boyle's experience and expertise was put to good use a little more than a year later during the Gulf War, where he played an instrumental role in helping to plan the coalition forces' first strike into Iraq, kicking off Operation Desert Storm. His intimate knowledge of what is required of both a successful tactical and planning officer provided Major O'Boyle with an unusual insight to how the Special Operations Command functions. His understanding of what the needs of Special Operations personnel are, from the newest member on a Special Forces or SEAL Team to the Commander of one of the SOCOM Theater

Commands, assured that he was able to speak knowledgeably and eloquently on literally every aspect of special operations. In addition, his easy-going Midwestern demeanor, engaging personality, and quick-witted sense of humor all assured that he established a bond with those he worked with both in the Department of Defense and in the halls of Congress.

As Major O'Boyle leaves Washington and heads west to the famed painted landscapes of New Mexico, he leaves many friends who have enjoyed working with him during his assignments here. Though the ranks of the Special Operations Command are filled with nothing but capable individuals, I am certain that SOCOM Legislative Affairs will miss Major O'Boyle's positive and determined attitude and his effective representation of the Command. Without a doubt though, the young Air Commandos who will come under his command at the 551st Training Squadron will benefit greatly from his tutelage. I am especially pleased to note that Randy will pin on the silver oak leaf of a Lieutenant Colonel on June 1, I hope that he continues to enjoy great success in the years to come.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:42 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 84. Concurrent resolution establishing the congressional budget for the U.S. Government for fiscal year 1998 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002.

At 1 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 26. Concurrent resolution to permit the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a congressional ceremony honoring Mother Teresa.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1306. An act to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to clarify the applicability of host State laws to any branch in such State of an out-of-State bank.

H.R. 1650. An act to authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to Mother Teresa of Calcutta in recognition of her outstanding and enduring contributions through humanitarian and charitable activities, and for other purposes.

At 4:09 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate: