

oversight hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee on Forests and Public Land Management of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The hearing will take place Wednesday, February 24, 1998 at 9:45 a.m. in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. The purpose of this hearing is to receive testimony on the use of specialty forest products from the national forests. Those who wish to submit written statements should write to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510. For further information, please call Judy Brown or Mark Rey at (202) 224-6170.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

MILITARY ACCIDENT IN AVIANO, ITALY

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep sympathy to the families of those killed in Italy by a low flying plane. Like all Americans, I was shocked, saddened, and angered that an American plane caused this tragedy.

We do not have all the details at this time and are having to rely on media reports, but I want to be very clear. This tragedy never should have happened. This was a disgraceful act, military training should not be done in civilian areas.

I wish that I could say that this was an isolated incident. Unfortunately, I cannot. Accidents during training missions occur with disturbing frequency.

Last September, the Secretary of Defense was forced to suspend all training flights after a rash of six crashes within one week.

Also in September, a F-117 crashed in Maryland, injuring 4 civilians and burning a portion of a home.

In 1996, a U-2 spy plane crashed in the parking lot of the Mercury-Register newspaper, killing one and injury two others.

In October, a military jet crashed in Pennsylvania. The pilot managed to eject safely, but the plane exploded near a busy interstate highway.

It may be impossible to make training missions 100% safe for the pilots, but we have an obligation to make sure they are safe for civilians.

In the tragedy in Aviano, Italy, the pilot was flying an approved flight path though not at an approved altitude. This flight path led the plane, at a very low altitude, directly over a functioning ski lift. While I have trouble believing news reports that pilots entertain themselves by flying under the ski lift cables, that plane never should have been in the proximity of the ski lift. The potential for tragedy was simply too great. Unfortunately, it took the deaths of 20 people to prove it.

Clearly, responsibility for this tragedy lies not only with the pilot, but also with the commanders who authorized these dangerous flights. There is a certain degree of risk involved in all training missions. That risk should not

fall upon innocent civilians. How many more incidents such as the one in Aviano have to occur before it becomes clear that the potential for tragedy in these missions is too great?

I would like to see the following actions taken:

1. A change in the guidelines over where planes can fly training missions.

2. An immediate report to the American people of the facts of the accident at Aviano. It has been almost a week and we still have no information from the military.

3. If the investigation shows that the pilot was at fault, the pilot should be subject to Italian law. ●

“BEWILDERING BUDGET-SPEAK” ON SOCIAL SECURITY

● Mr. KYL. Mr. President, millions of Americans, myself included, listened intently to what President Clinton had to say about Social Security in his State of the Union address. What we heard—or what we thought we heard—was a plan by the President to reserve any budget surplus that might emerge in the next few years to shore up Social Security for future generations.

It was a plan that drew widespread praise from the public. But now it turns out that what we heard is not, according to White House spokesmen, what the President really meant. The Washington Post put it this way in a February 4 report: “the ringing simplicity of Clinton’s call to ‘save Social Security first’ gave way to a fog of bewildering budget-speak from the administration’s top economic advisers.”

Here is what OMB spokesman Larry Haas had to say: “People who think it [President Clinton’s proposal] shores up Social Security were not listening closely.” Testifying before the Senate Budget Committee, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin admitted that the Clinton budget does not include any mechanism that would transfer surpluses to the Social Security trust fund.

Mr. President, why the intricate game of words? Is Social Security first or not? Let us take a look.

Next year—the year covered by President Clinton’s proposed budget—Social Security itself will run an estimated surplus of about \$93 billion. Remember, the system is currently generating surpluses that are intended to build up until about the year 2016, when we will have to begin using them to pay retirement benefits to 75 million baby boomers.

But the Clinton budget does not set aside this \$93 billion Social Security surplus. The Clinton budget spends every penny of it on general operating expenses of the federal government.

The practice of using the Social Security nest egg to mask overall government deficits dates back to President Lyndon Johnson. Colleagues from both sides of the aisle have condemned it for years. It is only because President Clinton employs this sleight of hand—counting the Social Security surplus in the unified federal budget—that he is able to show an overall surplus of \$9 billion for next year. If Social Secu-

rity’s \$93 billion surplus and the surpluses held in other federal trust funds were removed from the calculations, the Clinton budget would actually show a deficit of \$95.7 billion.

Even the relatively small surplus that is created by commingling all of the funds—that is, after mixing Social Security with the rest of the federal budget—is shrunken considerably from what it would have been if the President reserved the entire amount for Social Security, as he said he would. That is because he devotes the bulk of the resulting surplus to a host of new spending initiatives.

Here are just some of the new programs that President Clinton is proposing:

a new clean water initiative for about \$37 million;

two new farm programs for \$14 million;

\$170 million for new mandatory empowerment zones and enterprise communities;

a new program called the Community Empowerment Fund, which will cost about \$400 million;

a new \$10 million Indian land consolidation pilot program;

\$47 million on a new community adjustment program to help areas adversely affected by trade agreements;

at least eight new education programs totaling over \$1.8 billion;

a new Medicare buy-in program costing \$1.5 billion over five years;

\$4.5 billion for five new child-care related programs;

a new smoking cessation program for \$87 million; and

two new law-enforcement initiatives for \$200 million.

The cost of these new programs is estimated to be about \$120 billion to \$130 billion over the next five years, and that does not even count the myriad increases he proposes for other existing federal programs. In other words, some \$120 billion to \$130 billion of anticipated unified budget surpluses are not reserved for Social Security at all, but are used to create brand new programs.

Granted, many of these proposals are appealing, and some address real needs in our communities. Granted, some of the spending for these new programs is designed to come from the proposed tobacco settlement. But if President Clinton is sincere in his desire to reserve 100 percent of the surplus for Social Security, how is it that there is so much money for so many new programs? Why is the tobacco money not used to boost the size of the surplus that could be devoted to Social Security?

Given the programs I just mentioned a few moments ago, it is obvious that Social Security is not really first on President Clinton’s list of anticipated uses of any unified budget surplus. It is not second or even third. It does not make the top 10 list. It is number 26 on