

greatly decrease the size and cost of the government at all levels, so that the families of this country could keep more of their own money to spend on their children in the ways that they see fit and that they know are best for them and their children.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me talk on one last topic for a few minutes, discussing something that is of great importance to everyone. That is health care.

Today health care is the only thing all of us pay for through a third-party payer system. If we bought food through a third-party payer system, millions would be starving. If we bought cars through a third-party payer system, a Yugo probably would have cost us \$300,000.

Before the Federal Government got into medical care in a big way in the mid sixties, medical costs were low and flat for many years. A lot of young people ought to look at that, and look back and see how low and flat medical costs were for all those years that the Federal Government stayed out of it. But when the Federal Government got into it in a big way in the mid sixties, we took what was a very minor problem for a very few people and turned it into a major problem for everyone.

I remember in the late seventies when the liberals were saying Medicaid would save the medical system. Four or five years ago the Washington Post ran a series of front page stories about Medicaid. A member of the other body, Senator ROCKEFELLER, who I think was one of the people who helped found the Medicaid system, was quoted as saying about Medicaid, "It is a horrible system, a vile system, and it ought to be abolished."

A scholar from the Brookings Institution said about it, "It is a success story of the American political system. We create a system so horrible that we are forced to go to total reform."

I was told yesterday by one of the leaders of the Tennessee legislature that TennCare, our replacement or reform of Medicaid, will go up 12 percent this year, and maybe as much as 15 or 20 percent a year in future years. If it does, we would be in a catastrophic situation. Third-party payer systems are inevitably doomed to failure. They will never work. In any politicized medical system, those who are the best organized or most politically powerful get rich, but it is a disaster for everyone else.

In recent years we have seen some doctors, nursing home operators, big home health care operators, and big hospital chain owners get rich, but we have turned health care into a major problem for everyone except possibly Bill Gates and Warren Buffett.

In a private free market system, we get much more fairness and we do not have the big winners and even bigger losers that we have in a politicized big government medical system.

In fact, the main point of what I have been saying here tonight is just that.

Poor and working people can get lower prices and many more job opportunities and have much better lives in a true free market system than in any other way.

If Members do not believe that, all they have to do is look around the world. I remember in the former Soviet Union the leaders of the former Soviet Union had, before their total collapse that they are undergoing right now, they had their dachas by the sea and their limousines and their special department stores. Other people, which was the great, great majority, 99-plus percent of the people, had to line up for hours to buy, say, a pound of sausage, or something that we run into a store for and take for granted as being able to purchase.

Every place in the world where the people have let the government get too big, people have ended up starving. It really is pretty simple, Mr. Speaker. Big government means a very small elite upper class, a huge underclass, and almost no middle class. A very small government means a very small elite, a huge middle class, and very few at the bottom.

We really should pay for medical care the same way that we pay for food. Then it would be cheap. If we could get the government and the insurance companies out of medical care, medical costs probably would not even be 5 percent of what they are. However, too many doctors and nursing home owners and health care providers are getting rich off the system the way it is today to get the government and the insurance companies out.

So since we cannot realistically do that, the only real hope is to go to a medical savings account or medical voucher system to get the consumer involved once again, to give people some incentives to shop around for medical care.

Right now we are distorting the law of supply and demand, because the number of doctors is going way up but so are the costs. We need to get at least some free market incentives into the system, because we are headed for a collapse within our medical system if we do not. Then the people will start demanding, if we let it collapse, they will start demanding national government-run health care, which is the worst of all worlds, as has been shown in country after country all over this world. Then we would end up with shortages, waiting periods, rationing, the closing of many small and rural hospitals, people having to go further and further distances for health care, a rapid decline in the quality of care, and on and on.

If the government had not gotten into medical care to the extent it already has, we never would have had HMOs and people being kicked out of hospitals way too early, or denied treatment in the first place.

We need major reform in medical care, Mr. Speaker, but if we give even more government control and involve-

ment, the system will become even more expensive as it grows worse and worse. The few will get rich and the many will suffer, as with any and every big government program.

AMERICA'S BIGGEST SOCIAL PROBLEM: ILLEGAL NARCOTICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House tonight and the American public to talk about a problem which I believe is our biggest social problem as a country, our biggest social problem as a Congress. That is the problem of illegal narcotics and the damage it is doing to our population, and particularly to our young people across this land.

Some people in Congress or some people in leadership positions would have us think that the Y2K problem is the major problem, or that other dotting I and crossing T of legislation is the major problem facing Congress. But I believe that we have no more important responsibility as legislators of this Nation than to see that we do the best job possible in addressing a problem, an epidemic that is ravaging havoc, particularly among our young people.

The statistics are mind-boggling. Last year over 14,200 Americans lost their lives because of drug-related deaths. Let me cite a few other statistics that every Member of Congress and every American should be aware of, when they turn away from the question of a drug problem, when they are given some other problem, smoking or Y2K or whatever the issue of the day may be that rates in the polls. Let me talk about the hard facts of what illegal narcotics are doing to us as a Nation.

The overall number of past month heroin users increased 378 percent from 1993 to 1997 in this country. Between 1992 and 1997, drug-related emergency room episodes nationwide increased 25 percent, and they increased 7 percent between 1996 and 1997. Between 1993 and 1997, LSD emergency room incidents increased 142 percent; not declined, but inclined.

Additionally, from 1993 to 1997, our youth aged 12 to 17 using drugs has more than doubled. It has increased 120 percent. There has been a 27 percent increase between 1996 and 1997. This is a 1998 national household survey.

In 1998, more than three-quarters, actually 7 percent, of our high school teens reported that drugs are sold or kept at their schools, an increase of 6 percent over 1996.

During 1997, statistically significant increases in heroin emergency room incidents were observed in Miami, a 77 percent increase; in New Orleans, a 63 percent increase; in Phoenix, a 49 percent increase; and in Chicago, a 47 percent increase.

Let me also add this statistic. Significant increases in methamphetamine, speed, emergency room incidents were observed in Detroit, a 233 percent increase; Seattle, a 207 percent increase; Atlanta, a 151 percent increase; and St. Paul, Minneapolis, 110 percent increase.

Mr. Speaker, we have, as a result, 1.8 million Americans behind bars, and the estimates are 60 to 70 percent of those Americans behind bars are there because of a drug-related offense. What is absolutely staggering is the cost of all of this to the American taxpayers. Let me tell the Members, from the drug czar's office in a recent report, what the cost is to the American taxpayers.

□ 1845

American taxpayers footed a \$150 billion bill for drug-related criminal and medical costs in 1997 alone. That is more than what we set in our 1997 Federal budgets for our programs to fund education, transportation improvements, agriculture, energy, space and all foreign aid combined. That is the cost to this Nation.

One of the most staggering statistics, and I have quoted this before on the floor of the House of Representatives, is that our young people, our kids from age 12 to 15, in this population range, first-time heroin use, which has proven to kill, deadly heroin, surged a whopping 875 percent from 1991 to 1996.

Mr. Speaker, what concerns me as someone from a wonderful district in central Florida, my district runs from Orlando to Daytona Beach, is not just the national statistics, the national impact, the national lives that are lost, but the local devastation that this problem has imposed on my rather affluent, good economy, highly educated population. A wonderful placid area.

Mr. Speaker, every time I pick up the paper, and here is the latest newspaper, another individual, this one the latest, a death of a woman, age 38, died of a heroin overdose this weekend in central Florida. And this is in addition to another young man who died a horrible death, the sheriff told me, in a central Florida restroom of a heroin overdose.

A recent headline in my area newspapers stated that drug overdose deaths exceeded homicides, and most of these were heroin, a very deadly drug which has come across our border and into our streets in record numbers.

Now, how did we get ourselves into this situation? Let us go back to 1993 when the Clinton administration took over and they had a majority in both this House and the other body. What did they do? They changed our national drug policy.

Under the Reagan administration, and I was there, I worked as a staffer for Senator Hawkins in the 1980s, there were many initiatives adopted by Congress that tried to get a handle on the national and international drug problem that at that time was facing Florida and our country. What we did was a number of things. First, we tried to

stop drugs at their source. Then we created an Andean Strategy, eradication of crops of coca and heroin at their source.

We also tried to interdict drugs using the military, using whatever means we had available, our Coast Guard, to stop drugs before they got into our border. And then we tried tough enforcement.

What happened in that period of time, from 1992 to 1995, is that the Clinton administration made a policy decision to cut some of those programs. They cut interdiction from \$2 billion to \$1.2 billion in 1995. So, they went down 37 percent in the period from 1992 to 1995.

The international programs to stop drugs at their source, the Andean Strategy, stopping drugs by eradicating the drugs and by crop substitution programs and other programs that stop drugs as they were being produced in the fields, was cut from \$633 million to \$289 million in 1996, a 54 percent decrease.

These are the figures. Let me put these up here. Again, a 37 percent decrease in drugs interdiction budgets and the source country programs, the international programs. These are the exact figures, a 53 percent decrease.

So what happened there? We had, in fact, a flood of drugs coming into this country. For example, with those decisions came some administrative decisions and let me cite some of those again that took place in the period of 1994 and 1995.

National Guard container searches using the military to help in the war on drugs dropped from 237 in 1994 to 209 in 1995. Other National Guard workday drug interdictions fell from 597 in 1994 to 530 in 1996.

Drug interdiction budget and asset cuts in the Department of Defense in 1995. The flight hours devoted to counterdrug missions was decreased from 51,000 to 50,000 in one year, and also shipdays active in drug interdiction were cut from 2,268 in 1994 to 1,545 in 1995.

As a result, we have seen a flood of illegal narcotics coming into the United States. Additionally, there were some policies at that time that did incredible damage to us as a Nation. In addition to the source country decreases, in addition to drug interdiction cuts in the activities of the military, the administration first out cut the office of the drug czar and the drug czar's budget.

The next really offensive move by the administration was to appoint a Surgeon General who sent a message to our young people of "Just say maybe." Additionally, what hurt us tremendously in the effort to curtail cocaine production, coca production and also heroin production, was the abolition and the decision by the administration to stop a shutdown policy. We had provided information and assistance to South American countries, primarily Peru, Bolivia and Colombia, which were engaged in trying to curtail ille-

gal narcotics trafficking and we provided them some information and assistance. A liberal decision out of one of our agencies stopped that type of assistance and, in turn, there was a period in which this shutdown policy was shot down by this administration, and it took a concerted effort and over a year to get that put back in place. We have done that.

And, of course, they took the military out and cut the Coast Guard budgets, so we saw a flood of illegal narcotics coming into this country.

During the period from 1995 onward in the country of Colombia, another administrative action did a great deal of damage. It was the policy of Congress, and we passed laws, we passed appropriations, asking that assistance go to Colombia. Because of concern of human rights violations, because of other problems with the last administration in Colombia, the administration basically stopped getting helicopters to Colombia, getting resources to Colombia, getting assistance to stop the production of coca and also heroin poppies in that country.

What has happened in the meantime is an incredible flood of coca cultivation. In fact, the subcommittee which I chair recently visited Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Mexico and Panama, and I will report on that in just a minute. One of the things that we found that was most startling was that now Colombia produces more cocaine than any other country in the world. It formerly was a processing center for cocaine and now is a producer.

This policy, again from the 1993 to 1995, 1996 period of the administration, basically shut down our efforts and our assistance to Colombia to stop illegal narcotics cultivation, so we have cocaine major production there.

Additionally, we had an incredible flood of heroin coming out of Colombia. It is coming up through the Caribbean into Florida and it is also coming up through and transiting through Mexico, working with the Mexican cartels.

So these are the results of a failed policy that this administration adopted some years ago. The death in our streets, the dramatic increase in heroin on our streets. That cultivation is there for a reason. It is specifically because of a failed policy.

Now, recently I received, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, a presentation by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The 1999 proposed drug control strategy, and also the budget for this administration.

I have raised some great concerns about this budget and this strategy. This is a strategy for losing. This is not a war on drugs. This is a mild effort to eliminate some drug trafficking, some drug production. I believe that we can expedite what is proposed in this strategy. I believe there are some fundamental flaws in what has been proposed by the administration and this is

a losing strategy and a losing budget and we certainly should have learned from the past.

First of all, the most effective way to stop drugs are to eliminate drugs at their source. If one cannot grow coca, they cannot produce cocaine. There have traditionally only been two countries that have produced cocaine in large quantities: Bolivia and Peru. Both of those countries, where we visited and met with the presidents of those countries, have committed within the last 2 or 3 years, working primarily with this new majority in Congress, to eradicate drugs at their source. Very cost-effective. Very few dollars spent.

Now, we learned through the budget that was proposed from 1991 to 1995 how not to do things and it is amazing that this new budget by this administration does not address proper funding for the microherbicide program. That is a program to eliminate drugs through a chemical process, conducting the R&D to deal biologically with the production of coca and other hard drugs such as heroin and poppies.

Did we not learn that when we cut Customs and interdiction and do not properly fund them that drugs come from where they are grown to the next stage? Again, the President's budget, the President's strategy is lacking in adequate funding to provide the resources necessary to stop drugs at their next stage. And each of these stages I view as cost-effective frontiers in this effort.

Once we get to the streets, once we get to local enforcement, it is extremely expensive and costly in lost lives and enforcement to try to catch those drugs when they are in our schools and in our communities and with our young people.

This budget by this administration also fails to address one of the most fundamental needs, and that is that we have proper intelligence, adequate intelligence. If I have learned anything in this war on illegal drugs, it is that intelligence is so important, particularly in enforcement and interdiction and even eradication. If we know where the drugs are, if we know who is dealing the drugs, if we have the proper intelligence, we can save lives. Again we can cost-effectively stop traffickers in pursuit of their deadly profession purveying, again, heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines and other hard drugs.

So, not spending the adequate resources or funding for intelligence is lacking in the President's strategy and in the drugs czar's proposal to Congress.

□ 1900

Once again, we have seen the cuts for the Coast Guard that the administration made, and I cited some of those just a few minutes ago, that were mistakes and will be mistakes in this budget. So they have not adequately funded the operations of the Coast Guard.

Let me give an illustration in central Florida. Some of the heroin that we have coming into central Florida has transited through Puerto Rico. Why through Puerto Rico? This is a new pattern in the last 5, 6 years. Because back in 1995, this administration and the years before that, several years before that cut the Coast Guard operations almost 50 percent.

The Coast Guard is the line of defense around Puerto Rico and has kept that secure, again, through the 1980s and early 1990s from drugs transiting through there. That Guard was let down. Here again, an incredible error on the part of the administration and the drug czar's office.

The President's strategy, if you call it a strategy, is to let down the funding for the Coast Guard for operation and maintenance, one of the most important ingredients for success.

Finally, properly funding U.S.-Mexico border security. Now if we know that 60 to 70 percent of the hard drugs coming into the United States are coming in through Mexico, transiting through Mexico, then we know where we have a major drug transiting problem. It does not take rocket science to figure this out. So, again, we have another perimeter of defense that is not being secured by the proposal of this administration.

What is of major concern to me is that some of the money in this budget in big chunks is being spent to correct mistakes and errors. One of the biggest mistakes and errors that we found in visiting some of the producing and transiting countries that our subcommittee visited was in Panama.

In Panama, the United States of America is getting its clock cleaned. There is no other way to put it. We have been out-negotiated. We have lost basically our interest in the Panama Canal.

We will be turning over, we will be giving the keys to the Panama Canal. I wanted to pull out my keys here as an illustration. These are the keys to the Panama Canal. We will be giving them to Panamanian officials by December of this year.

What is scary is all of our forward drug reconnaissance efforts are located in Panama right now as we speak. The administration is scrambling at this hour because they lost the treaty agreements. They could not negotiate them. They got to the end. The whole thing collapsed.

We are turning over \$10 billion in assets, 5,000 buildings. We basically in May have to stop all of our overflights. So they are scrambling now to find another location, which we asked questions about, for our forward reconnaissance in the war on drugs.

They will probably be relocated in Ecuador and also in Aruba and that area as they, again, are working at this point to patch together some forward reconnaissance operation. Not to mention that we will have to relocate such assets as AWACS and other reconnais-

sance equipment and airplanes from that area.

So the situation in Panama is pure chaos. The situation regarding even the operation of the ports, we were told that corruption has dictated how the awards for control of those ports will be determined, and that the Red Chinese, in fact, will control one of those port activities and gain that through corrupt activities.

A very scary scene, when it comes to dealing with the Panama Canal, with the billions of United States dollars invested in that area all lost. Also, from my perspective, the war on drugs, where we are being booted out, and at great cost in this budget, as I started to say, one of the biggest items is moving that operation, which will cost the taxpayers \$73.5 million. I think that is just the tip of the iceberg. So those are how some of the dollars are being spent in a strategy that does not make sense.

If you think that the administration would want to spend more than we spent last year and would come out and say we need to spend more resources, I am not a big spender, I am one of the lowest spenders in Congress, but of all of the things we should be spending more money on, it is this effort, whether it is education and prevention and treatment and interdiction, law enforcement, but actually from a total spending of \$17.9 billion in last year's full appropriations for this effort to stem illegal narcotics, the administration drops down to \$17.8 million, 109 net million dollars less in spending.

In addition, if we add in the mistakes to correct in Panama, we are probably looking at \$250 million in funds less than we spent the year before. Additionally, what concerns me is that the administration talks a good line about helping our communities' education and prevention.

I might say that a Republican Congress added \$195 million for the ads that are now being aired on television for the information program that is being conducted by the Office of National Drug Control Policy and matched by the private sector.

But, additionally, the administration played games with their proposal and their budget and their strategy by not funding some of the programs that we passed. For example, the Drug-Free Communities Act, they came in \$8 million below our authorization and request.

So if we want to do something about drugs in our communities, we have got to interdict. We have got to educate. We have got to enforce. But we have to have an honest proposal on the table from the administration. I do not believe that is the case.

I would like to turn now, to the latest chapter in the war on drugs, and I will be addressing the Congress and the Nation on a repeated basis. People may get tired of hearing about it. But, again, since it has such a big impact on our communities, I will be here talking about it.

Since the Speaker of the House has given me that responsibility as chair of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, I will, again, be bringing this consistently to the attention of the public and the Congress.

The latest chapter is another sad chapter and mistake. Again, I said earlier, if we knew where 60 to 70 percent of the drugs were coming from, we would do something about it. We would target that. Now, we know where 60 to 70 percent of the drugs are. These are not my figures. These are the administration's figures, the Office of Drug Control Policy, the Office of the Chief DEA Administrator of the land. These are, again, their figures.

We know where hard drugs, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine are coming from. They are coming from Mexico. Again, the latest chapter is that, yesterday, the President of the United States, and last week he said he was going to do it, but he did it on the deadline, yesterday, March 1, he certified Mexico as fully cooperating with the United States on the war on drugs.

Let me say something about the certification process since I helped draft that with Senator Hawkins back in the mid 1980s, that law. The law is a simple law. The law says that the State Department shall review the progress of every country that is involved in narcotics production and trafficking and determine whether they are fully cooperating with, eliminating, or helping to reduce drug production and drug trafficking.

That is what certification is. They must certify honestly, and the President must present honestly whether a country is cooperating, fully cooperating, those are the terms of the law, in eliminating drug production and drug trafficking.

Why are they certifying? They are certifying to make that country eligible for foreign aid, foreign assistance, foreign trade benefits, and foreign financial assistance of the United States. These are benefits of the United States, again, in trade and finance and foreign aid. So if they are fully cooperating, they are eligible for foreign aid and foreign assistance.

It is a simple law. The law has been convoluted. The law has not been properly interpreted by this administration. It certainly has not been applied appropriately by this President.

The President ironically went to Mexico and met with President Zedillo several weeks ago. He said Mexico should not be penalized for having the courage to confront its problems. Now, that is a new Clinton-speak.

What are the facts about cooperation, full cooperation? What is the pattern of conduct of officials there in trying to stop production and stop trafficking.

Let me quote, if I may, the DEA Administrator Tom Constantine who has great courage, an official of this administration, in charge of our Federal

Drug Enforcement Agency. He testified in a recent Congressional hearing on the other side of the Congress, and let me quote, "In my lifetime, I have never witnessed any group of criminals that has had such a terrible impact on so many individuals and communities in our nation," Mr. Constantine said. "They have infiltrated cities and towns around the United States, visiting upon these places addiction, misery, increased criminal activities and increased homicides."

"There is no doubt that those individuals running these organized criminal drug-trafficking syndicates today are responsible for degrading the quality of life not only in towns along the Southwest border of the United States, but increasingly, cities in middle America."

This is what the chief law enforcement officer of our Nation said regarding Mexico's participation. This article further went on to state, and let me quote this, that "No major traffickers were indicted in Mexico last year; drug seizures dropped significantly; fewer drug laboratories were seized; total arrests declined; the number of drug cases dropped; and seizures of drug-carrying automobiles, boats, and trucks also declined."

Is this a pattern of cooperation? Is this a pattern that deserves certification so that Mexico is eligible for benefits and foreign assistance of the United States?

Let me cite from another article and some other statistics about Mexico's performance. Again, 60 to 70 percent of the cocaine and heroin that come into the United States come in through Mexico. It is estimated that 85 percent of the methamphetamine, the foreign methamphetamine comes in from Mexico. It is produced in Mexico.

Another recent article said that Mexico has increased heroin production by sixfold in the last 2 years.

□ 1915

Not only are they transiting hard drugs, they are now becoming a significant producer of heroin from that country. Chemical precursor laws are not being enforced in Mexico. Mexican heroin seized in the United States between 1995 and 1996 quadrupled.

Now, another significant thing, and every American should listen to this, and every young person who is listening should listen to this, the purity of the heroin coming into the United States from Mexico and from these other countries in the last 2 years has jumped from a purity level of 7 to 20 percent to 50 to 76 percent. That is why we are seeing so many deaths. That is why we are seeing the destruction of so many lives, because this is deadly heroin. These are deadly drugs with high purity and high potency coming into the United States. And any time a young person or anyone else abuses these drugs and mixes it with anything else, they risk death and they risk destroying their lives.

Last year, 15 metric tons of heroin came into the United States through Mexico. We had a 27 percent increase in heroin use in the United States between 1996 and 1997. So more heroin is coming in, more heroin is being used, and most of the heroin that we see, again, is coming through Mexico or now being produced in Mexico.

Now, we are neighbors, we are partners, we are friends. There are millions of Mexican-Americans in the United States who are good citizens. We have a long relationship of friendly trade, of finance, communication, and cultural exchanges between our two countries. I think the United States, and the Congress in particular, and this administration, have gone even overboard to extend benefits to Mexico as a partner, as a friend, as an ally and a neighbor. We have given probably some of the best trade benefits to Mexico as to any country in the world.

When Mexico's pesos were faltering and the economy was heading down the tubes a few years ago, we, as friends and neighbors, went in and helped bail them out. In return, we heard the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. JIMMY DUNCAN), talk about jobs that are lost in the United States and lowered opportunity. And what has happened is we have actually given up much of our trade, much of our manufacturing to Mexico.

We just got the recent figures for 1998, and our trade deficit was \$15.7 billion. That means more goods being sold by Mexico in the United States, contributing to our whopping trade deficit. So here we are good friends, we are good allies, and we ask for cooperation, and what do we get? We get an unbelievable quantity and quality of hard, deadly drugs coming into our country from Mexico.

Let me again cite the statistics of the cost of drug abuse in this country. Last year, we had 14,218 Americans, and this is actually last year. They have the wrong date up here. They were killed last year at a cost of \$67 billion. This is the cost in lives and Americans who will no longer see the light of day. And if we calculate 60 to 70 percent of the hard narcotics coming into the United States, we can figure that we have 8,000 or 9,000 Americans dying from drugs that came in through Mexico.

I am not the only one that questions the certification of Mexico, and this should not be a partisan question. Let me, if I may, read a quote from the minority leader of the House of Representatives. "After reviewing the past year's record, I am compelled to disagree with the President's decision to certify Mexico as fully cooperating with our government in the fight against drugs." And that is the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), who said that in a quote last Saturday in the Dallas Morning News. So, again, there is bipartisan concern about what is happening with Mexico.

Why that concern? The statistics, again, speak for themselves.

Mexican drug seizures for opium from 1997 to 1998, a 56 percent reduction in drug seizures. Is this fully cooperating to stop drugs at their source or as they transit through that country?

Cocaine, a 35 percent reduction in seizures in the period from 1997 to 1998.

And if we want to look at methamphetamine, how it is affecting some of the heartland of America, about 85 percent of the methamphetamines in Minnesota is smuggled from Mexico. And this is the source, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Sunday September 27th of last year. Again, hard drugs coming in through Mexico; Mexico certified by this administration.

Finally, the DEA administrator, Tom Constantine, again questioned what this administration is doing and talked about Mexico. He said, "The truly significant principals have not been arrested and appear to be immune from any law enforcement effort." So this administration has certified a country as fully cooperating that, again, is dealing in death and destruction at every level of our effort to eradicate illegal narcotics from coming into this country.

Now, what is my role? Again, I chair the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources of the Committee on Government Reform. Today I join my colleague, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), who introduced a resolution to decertify Mexico. I did not sign on that resolution, although I now support that resolution because of the evidence I have found.

However, the Speaker has asked me and other chair members of the majority to conduct a thorough review of the drug policy of the Congress, the drug policy of the Nation and also of the certification and decertification of Mexico and other countries that are dealing in illegal narcotics. I, as chairman, intend to conduct that review to see if drug decertification is the answer, to see what other mechanisms we can enact to hold Mexico's feet to the fire and other nations who deal in illegal narcotics and do not make an effort to fully cooperate and yet receive benefits from the United States Government. So that will be my task and my responsibility to work with others.

We launch that investigation, that review and that oversight process tomorrow. One of the subcommittees of the Committee on International Relations will begin tomorrow looking at the drug policy issue in Latin America. We know, again, that almost all of the heroin coming into the United States, the huge quantities of heroin, comes from Colombia and is also produced in Mexico and transits to the United States. We know that cocaine is produced in Peru and coca in Bolivia, and now a majority of cocaine in Colombia, and that also is transited through Mexico.

So we know where the problem is. What we do not know are the solutions on how to get a handle on it. We do

know that we must restore a few dollars into the programs that are most effective, the most cost effective. Stopping drugs at their source, where they are grown, the crop eradication programs, we have now seen are so effective. And substitution programs in Bolivia and Peru we know are stopping production, they are stopping cultivation and providing alternative development for people in those regions so they do not go back to producing the basis for hard drugs.

We know we have to work with President Pastrana, the new president in Colombia. We must get him the resources to eradicate the hectares of poppy that have grown while the administration stopped equipment and resources from reaching that region. We know we must do that.

We must get a handle on the situation in Mexico. Mexico is losing control of its Nation. The Baja peninsula is now controlled by drug lords. Ironically, where the President met, in Merida, the Yucatan peninsula is now controlled by the drug lords; and other areas, regions and states of Mexico are totally controlled by narco-terrorists who are raining destruction, who have gone from corruption to terrorist intimidation of people in that country.

I will say that there are people at the top, President Zedillo, a brave attorney general who we met with, that are trying their best, but I am concerned that they are about to lose control of their nation to narco-terrorists. So we must find a solution. We must find some way to hold their feet to the fire, to aid them, as good neighbors.

We must reach across the aisle when the minority leader of the House says that what the President has done is not correct relating to Mexico, and we must find a solution that is correct. We cannot afford to let this go on. We cannot fill our jails with any more Americans. We cannot subsidize the quarter of a trillion dollar loss to our economy, not to mention the destroyed lives of our young people and other Americans who could have been so productive.

So that is our task. It is an important task. It is, again, I believe the biggest social problem facing this Nation.

Stop and think if we could eliminate 60 percent of the crime. Stop and think if we could eliminate 60 to 70 percent of those deaths. Stop and think if we could have more productive citizens rather than people strung out on drugs, ruining again their lives and their loved ones' lives, of what we could do in this Nation.

So I believe it is an important task. I do not plan to let up for a minute. I do not have the answers at this point, but we will review every possible solution. We extend our hand of cooperation across the aisle to our colleagues and to anyone who is interested, who wants to come forward and help us with a problem that we must address, that we must resolve in the best interest of the Congress, in the best interest of our Nation, and in the best interest

of those who hope to have any future in this country, our young people.

INTRODUCING H.R. 948, THE DEBT DOWNPAYMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BILBRAY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues in Congress a letter I received today. It is a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Alan Paul of Ellsworth, Kansas. The Pauls write to suggest that Congress use its good sense and to do what is best for the country.

Mr. Paul specifically writes, "Comes now a budget surplus. You know and I know that the 'surplus' can be what we want it to be depending on how we cook the books. Fact is, without Social Security, there is no surplus. Suddenly, Democrats see new programs we cannot get along without, Republicans get those tax cut dollar signs in their eyes, and our collective brains get all mushy. I have a revolutionary idea," Mr. Paul writes. "Let's do nothing. No new programs, no tax cuts, nothing. Let the surplus reduce the debt, thereby reducing the annual interest payments out of the budget and thereby bolstering Social Security."

Mr. Paul is right. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Debt Downpayment Act, legislation that will establish a plan for paying down our national debt. While many in Washington celebrate the idea that we have balanced the books, Americans, and especially Kansans, have not forgotten that our national debt stands at \$5.6 trillion. That is over \$20,000 for every American. Twenty thousand dollars per person is not balanced, and using the Social Security Trust Fund to mask the true extent of the debt is not balanced either.

Debt is certainly not a glamorous issue in Washington. It is much more exciting to talk about new programs that our surpluses could fund. In each of our districts there are great needs. In Kansas, all of our major industries face record low prices. Wheat, oil, hogs and cattle prices are wiping out family farmers, ranchers and small oil producers.

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Our hospitals are struggling to meet the needs of an aging and rural population. I rise this evening not to suggest that we should ignore the pressing needs of the American people but to remind Members of Congress that as we meet these needs we must continue to make the difficult choices that can help us reduce our national debt.

Mr. Speaker, despite the claims, we do not have surpluses as far as the eye can see. In fact, we have a very short window of time where demographics and a strong national economy will allow us to pay down a portion of our national debt.