

all the rights and attributes that belonged to independent nations and a declaration that they “fiercely and confidently” committed their decision to “the Supreme Arbiter of the destiny of nations.”

Over the next 2 weeks, a constitution was drafted and an interim government was formed, despite daily reports from the front detailing the collapse of the Alamo and the subsequent advance of the Mexican army through Texas.

On March 17, 1836, the government was forced to flee Washington-on-the-Brazos on the news of the approach of Santa Anna. Just over a month later, independence was secured in the form of a victory over that same army by General Sam Houston, a delegate at that very convention, and his courageous fighters at the battle of San Jacinto.

Mr. Speaker, let me remind folks from my neighboring State of Tennessee that Sam Houston, along with another Texas hero, Davy Crockett, served in this Congress representing the State of Tennessee. In fact, I have told my colleagues from Tennessee that sometimes the best of Tennessee immigrated to Texas in the 1830s.

From that point on, Texas was firmly established in the community of nations, and for 10 years she stood as an independent nation, until President James K. Polk signed the treaty admitting Texas to the United States in 1845.

Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, March 2nd, was celebrated throughout Texas. But, again, as we are a Nation at war now, I hope that this Congress and the whole country realize that we did not start this country just yesterday. We have a tradition in our Nation of freedom, and that freedom not only started with our own independence in the 1700s but it started with the Texas independence in 1836, and that is why we celebrate Texas Independence Day.

WORKING TOGETHER TO FIX SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some comments on Social Security, a very important program.

A couple speakers ago, the minority leader suggested that the President and Republicans come up with their Social Security proposal, I suspect so that it could be criticized.

I would hope that the minority leader and the Democrats would come up with their solution for Social Security. To pretend that there is no problem and nothing needs to be changed is not facing up to the fact that the Social Security system is going to run out of money.

Social Security started in 1934. It was predicated on the fact that there would be an increasing number of workers paying their taxes into Social Security

that is used to pay benefits for existing retirees. I think that point needs to be stressed, that it is now and always has been a system where existing workers pay their taxes and that tax money goes out to existing retirees.

Back in 1940, there were 38 workers paying in their Social Security tax for every one retiree. Today, there are three workers paying in their Social Security tax for every retiree. The suggestion by the actuaries is that by 2025 there will only be two workers paying in their Social Security tax for every retiree. It will be very expensive for those workers.

So what Congress and the President have done in the past, every time that we are short of money we have increased the taxes on workers and reduced benefits. Let us not put ourselves in that predicament again.

One way to do it is not to suggest that this is just up to the President of the United States. This is the Congress. This is the House of Representatives. We should be working together on both sides of the aisle to look at the problem with a program that has been so successful and so important since it was instigated in 1934.

The way we accomplish something to solve this problem is facing up to the fact that it is insolvent; the fact that there is an unfunded liability, according to the actuaries, of \$9 trillion right now; that the money in the trust fund right now, money that the government has borrowed from the surplus coming in from Social Security and spent on other programs or other responsibilities of the General fund, is now \$1.2 trillion, again compared to the \$9 trillion unfunded liability. We would have to come up with \$9 trillion today and invest it to accommodate what we are going to be short over the next 75 years in terms of meeting current-day promises on Social Security payments.

The average retiree today is receiving a return of 1.7 percent interest on the money they and their employer put into Social Security. We can do better than that.

Nobody is talking about privatizing Social Security. None of the proposals suggest that government is not going to be ultimately responsible for paying those Social Security benefits. But the way to accomplish this, the way to move ahead, is not by demagoguery. I know it is tempting in an election year to try to put down and scold and scare seniors that one party is better than the other.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, let me say that I would hope both the Democrats, the minority leader and the majority party in this House and the same with the Senate work together to come up with proposals to solve the problem, rather than demagoguing it.

PAKISTAN'S INTER-SERVICES INTELLIGENCE—ISI

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

tleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor this evening to express my serious concerns regarding Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, or ISI. It is important to highlight the history, work and intentions of the ISI in light of the unfortunate murder of Daniel Pearl and in light of the current fight against global terrorism.

The ISI not only has ties to Omar Sheik, the prime suspect in the murder of Daniel Pearl, but the ISI has also fostered deep connections with Islamic militant groups, particularly Jaish-e-Muhammad, operating throughout Kashmir.

In the 1980s, Pakistan assisted Afghanistan in fighting off Soviet invasion. During these years, the ISI grew into the role of Pakistan's strongest political agency on foreign policy. It was also during this time that the ISI developed and nurtured strong relationships with Islamic militants in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

Ties between the ISI and Afghan militants grew stronger, and this gave rise to the Taliban. The ties between the Taliban and the ISI remained strong for years, and to this day there are deep connections between the Pakistani ISI and what is left of the Taliban.

Ties between the ISI and Islamic militants in Kashmir grew stronger as well, and, in fact, the ISI, until very recently, had a Kashmir desk, headed by Brigadier Abdullah, which was responsible for militant insurgency into India's state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to expand on the deep, nefarious connections between the ISI in light of Daniel Pearl's murder and recent terrorist events throughout the world. There have been reports that Brigadier Abdullah, formerly of the ISI, has aided Omar Sheik in his travels between Afghanistan and Pakistan and has perhaps provided further support to both Omar Sheik and another individual, Maulana Azhar.

Omar Sheik and Maulana Azhar worked to form Jaish-e-Muhammad, an Islamic militant group that continues to operate throughout Kashmir and is the primary group blamed for the October attack on the Jammu and Kashmir State assembly. Jaish has received support from the ISI and particularly Brigadier Abdullah.

Both Sheikh and Azhar served in prison together in India in 1999, when they were freed after the hijacking of an Indian Airlines flight that landed in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that this flight was hijacked by the method of knives and box cutters and that weapons were not available to the hijackers until the plane landed in Kandahar. Furthermore, it was after their release that both Sheikh and Azhar formed Jaish and operated terrorist activities in Kashmir while in Pakistan and Afghanistan and with the help of the Pakistani ISI.