

to meet the expenses of the war. We are willing to do that. What we are not willing to do is give a \$750 billion blank check to continue on an economic game plan that has already squandered \$5 trillion of projected surpluses in one year. We do not think that is unreasonable. But we did not think our budget last year was unreasonable either. We put forth our best effort on the floor, and we lost. And when we lose, we go on to the next battle. Well, the next battle is now. The next battle is now.

Now, again, in case someone is just now joining us, on the debt limit, I used one example, and I will use another. On the debt limit, it is kind of like going into one of our best restaurants in Texas and enjoying one of our infamous Texas beef steaks, enjoying it, and then walking out and saying we are not going to pay for it. That is what the debt ceiling is all about. The other example is a businessman in trouble because of unforeseen difficulties, but has a good record. We have a lot of farmers in that condition right now out in the country that, through no fault of their own, they are finding it difficult to pay back their banker. To go back to the banker, the banker knows them, and they make adjustments. They make adjustments in their economic game plan. They make adjustments in their budgets. We cut back here; we do things a little differently. We tighten our belt. Well, that is what we are asking. We just do not believe it makes common sense to arbitrarily say to our country, we are going to borrow \$750 billion on a game plan that has squandered \$5 trillion of surpluses.

Now, I think it was very important that the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON) a moment ago acknowledged the war. I have said three times tonight, we are perfectly willing, and we are 110 percent behind our President, regarding the conduct of the war. Separate that issue from what we are talking about tonight. We will do what is necessary to make sure that our young men and women have the tools necessary, both now and in the future, to do what they are called on to do, and that is defend the freedom of this country. We will do that. That is not what we are talking about tonight. I hope that as we get closer and closer to that vote on the debt ceiling, that we will make a few changes in that economic game plan. We will be proposing how we would do it. We have already proposed how we would do it. We told our colleagues last year how we could do it, but we lost.

I want to conclude my remarks tonight by going back again to the Social Security question. I want to make it very, very clear. This is one Member on this side of the aisle that has happened to agree with the President regarding his proposal for individual accounts. I have joined with the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) on that for the last 6 years. We have introduced, re-introduced and reintroduced for the

third time our suggestion of how we can, in fact, make Social Security as sound or even sounder for our children and grandchildren. I am perfectly willing to discuss and debate that issue until the cows come home, and if we could get a majority, we win; if not, somebody will beat us with a better idea.

What I am deeply concerned about is on my side of the aisle critics talking about Social Security without offering their own plan. We will find no one anywhere in the United States tonight that says that Social Security will be there for our grandchildren without making some changes. No one. No one on it today should be concerned for one second about their Social Security check. But for my grandsons, 6½ and 4½ years old, we had better start getting concerned about their Social Security if Congress continues to not do what we need to do in coming up with a plan to reform it.

That is why even if, even if 9-11-01 had not occurred, we still would be standing here tonight saying the economic game plan that we are under, we ought to change. I repeat: even if 9-11-01 had not occurred, we would still be having the discussion that we are having tonight, based on the estimates of CBO and OMB. That is something that people need to understand.

Again, I want to make it very, very clear. The Blue Dogs have taken this hour tonight to say that we are willing to support a temporary increase to meet our expenses, but only a temporary increase. I think we need to keep this Congress's feet to the fire, and we need to make the tough decisions, hopefully starting with at least beginning a dialogue on Social Security this year, without elevating the rhetoric and attempting to win elections this November based on someone pointing a finger at the other side and suggesting that one side is going to bankrupt the system and the other side has all the answers without ever saying what their answer would be.

I will join with the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and others, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) on the other side of the aisle, for example, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD) on my side, and the gentleman from Missouri (Ms. MCCARTHY), and others who have been a part of coming up with a constructive solution; we will join. I just do not think it is too much to ask of the majority to spend a little bit of time in serious legislation on the most serious problem facing us, other than the war, and that is the future of Social Security. We are going to have a lot more to say about it in the days and weeks ahead, and I thank my colleagues for their indulgence tonight.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### TO FACILITATE POSITIVE ADJUSTMENT TO COMPETITION FROM IMPORTS OF CERTAIN STEEL PRODUCTS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRENSHAW) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

In accordance with section 203(b) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "Act"), I hereby transmit documents to the Congress that describe the safeguard action that I have proclaimed on imports of certain steel products, pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 203(a)(1) of the Act and as President of the United States, and the reasons for taking that action.

GEORGE W. BUSH.  
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 5, 2002.

#### CORRECTION TO THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2002 AT PAGE H-653, ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

#### SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 1206. An act to reauthorize the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BECERRA (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of business in the district.

Ms. LEE (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of business in the district.

Ms. SOLIS (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of business in the district.

Ms. WATERS (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of business in the district.

#### 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. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GEPHARDT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LIPINSKI, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GREEN of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CARSON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today.