

pledge of no new taxes, when the fiscal hole got deep enough and the economy was in a severe downturn, the President, in a considerable act of statesmanship, worked with congressional Democrats and came up with a 5-year budget plan that set us on the path to more sensible fiscal policy.

So in those past Republican administrations, when the hole got deep enough, some leadership was exerted and they stopped digging. In this administration, it seems there is no limit to the fiscal folly.

Mr. SPRATT. The gentleman will search the budget the President sent us in vain for any such direction or inclination. There is no plan and no process for ridding ourselves of these perpetual deficits. Back out Social Security, as I think we must, and we will find, according to the Congressional Budget Office, that every year from 2003 through 2013 there is a deficit over \$400 billion a year.

When the Republicans brought their budget resolution to the House floor the night before we adjourned for the Easter break, 2 o'clock in the morning, we scrambled to go through it and understand it as much as we could.

I never will forget finally coming upon page 93, page 93. It was a table summing up in their own figures the impact of the budget they were about to ram through the House in the early hours of that morning. It showed that the gross Federal debt this year will be \$6.4 trillion. That is what it is today, because it is limited by statute at that level.

By voting for that particular budget resolution, they voted automatically to raise the debt ceiling by \$893 billion, and they voted to put in train a budget with tax cuts that will lead to a debt accumulation of \$6 trillion over the next 10 years.

The national debt, the gross national debt, subject to statutory limit, will grow from \$6.4 trillion this year to \$12.40 trillion in the year 2013. That is absolutely astounding, absolutely frightening, in my opinion, because I do not think the economy can possibly sustain that kind of increase in debt.

Not only do we see additional tax cuts proposed in the face of rising deficits, deficits, once again, as far as the eye can see. But if the White House would simply call next door to the Treasury, they would find that we are right now at this moment experiencing a tax cut, a revenue reduction. Let me give the numbers, because last year we had one of the biggest fall-offs in revenues we have seen in recent history. This year we are seeing that trend repeated.

Our budget office, the Congressional Budget Office, which is neutral and nonpartisan, projected the budget over the next year, next 10 years. They said this year in fiscal year 2003 they expected income taxes to be about \$38 billion over last year, 2002. If we look at where we are thus far since April 15, or if we look at just until March 1, excuse

me, we do not know April yet, we will find that the total tax take thus far this year is running \$54 billion below last year, which means it is \$92 billion below what CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, is projecting.

Even though we are having this follow-up of another year on the heels of last year where we have a natural reduction due to the economy and the Tax Code, a realignment of revenues, the administration is still ignoring that and pushing ahead with a mammoth tax cut which can do only one thing: it will make the budget deficits that we see here projected on paper virtually engraved in stone. They will become so difficult to unwind, resolve, work out, that they will become all but intractable. I have seen that happen.

I came here in 1983 when we were deep in deficits. The deficits were getting worse and worse and worse. But there is one factor now that is dramatically different from the 1980s. That is something called the baby boomers' retirement. Seventy-seven million baby boomers are marching to their retirement as we speak tonight. The first of them retires in 2008. By the time the peak retirement period is reached, the number of baby boomers on Social Security and Medicare will swell to 80 million, twice today's level of beneficiaries. It will change the budget demographically in ways we have only begun to imagine.

What we should be doing now is saving, not dissaving. That is what deficits are, it is dissaving, reaching into the private capital pool and spending that money that should be saved in preparation for facts, demographic facts that are going to occur when the baby boomers retire.

We have a package which we have presented since January and will present again next week which would stimulate the economy. If there is any case to be made now for cutting taxes, it would be to try to give this economy, this sluggish, slumping economy, some kind of a kick, some kind of a boost so we can put people back to work. Once they go back to work, it will make it easier for us to deal with some of these budget problems.

We have put forth a proposal which does that. But we do not need long-term, permanent tax cuts that have out-year consequences that mortgage the future. We can simply have a tax cut that is focused on 2003, the here and now, when we have the problem.

We have proposed such a tax cut: rebates to individual taxpayers, an immediate write-off of plant and equipment for businesses large and small, going after all sectors of the economy, trying to give the economy a boost. For one-seventh the cost we get, according to well-established economic models, twice the effect in resulting jobs in the first year from our economic proposal, and we do not have any out-year consequences. We simply do something on a one-time basis. We give the economy a boost, get it going

again; and we do not have any out-year consequences. As a result, we accumulate about \$1 trillion, 400 billion less in debt in the budget we propose than the Republicans propose.

What they are proposing is not necessary, by any means. It worsens our problem. That is why we are here tonight, to talk about a problem that very much needs to be understood by the American public.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, this has been an exciting discussion. We have talked about responsibility, common sense, about jobs, about health care, and about getting this budget back on balance.

FOCUSING ON THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER), for the accommodation. Perhaps after he hears the remarks, he may regret that; but as a consolation I will say to him that I share his passion for surfing and would be happy to show him a few waves in Hawaii, if that is agreeable.

We need to focus, as we have for some time, on what is clearly our number one national challenge, revitalizing our economy and balancing our Federal budget. I want to make two points and emphasize them up front.

First, I am happy that we all seem now finally to agree that it is all about the economy. There was some doubt in my mind, given the few months that I have been in Congress, but now there is no question about it.

There is also no question that the tragedy of September 11 and Operation Iraqi Freedom necessitated our full focus, our full energy on national security. But before, during, and after those events, it was and is and will be about a stagnating economy and a deteriorating budget.

Now, this is an issue not only, as we all know, of jobs, of being able to care for our children, for our parents, for our communities, and of adequate resources for our government to do what it must do for all of us. It is also, and this link is true, it is also about our basic ability to afford our national defense. Because as we focus on national security, as we ask ourselves, what do we need to assure our national security, we have to recall the painful lesson that the USSR learned, which is that defense spending resting on an insufficient economic foundation will get us every time in the end. It is all the same ball of wax.

Second, the point I want to make is it is not just the economy, it is the economy/the Federal budget. They are two halves of the same apple. To say otherwise, to pretend that somehow we can talk about the economy and about our remedies for the economy without asking ourselves, what is the impact on

our Federal budget, just as it is ridiculous to talk about the Federal budget without asking ourselves, what is the impact back on the economy, is like saying in our family budget, I can take one of the three legs to any family's budget, how much money is coming in, how much money is going out, and how much debt am I carrying, take it and toss it out the window. We cannot do it; we are talking about the same thing.

Up to this point perhaps most of us are starting to agree, but after that I do not know. I am getting conflicting reports by this administration about the state of the economy.

Sometimes my President seems to be saying, everything is fine. Don't worry, it will take care of it itself. Nothing bad has happened on my watch. If that is the case, why are we granting a massive, massive second tax cut in 2 years?

Because, frankly, if our economy is doing just fine, I think we should use those revenues for other purposes. I think we should use those revenues to retire rapidly increasing national debt. Perhaps we should use those revenues to talk about many of the aspects that many of our communities are having problems with, whether they be national security, homeland security, prescription drug benefits. We do not need a tax cut if the economy is doing just fine.

Other times, the President seems to say, yes, the economy is in trouble and we need this massive tax cut to fix a failing economy. I can accept that, because at least at that point we are focusing on the issue. Not whether our economy needs help, but how to do it.

The point here is, we all need to get on the same page so we can debate how to fix the economy. I think that is it. My page is, and I think most of our country believes that the page is, that we do have a problem.

Do not take my word for it. Just take a look at the stats: almost 3 million jobs lost in the last couple of years, and Federal revenues falling well short of projections. That is a problem. A deficit closing in on \$400 billion annually, that is a problem. Critical State and local government revenue shortfalls because of poor State and local economies, that is a problem. A single-year increase in our national debt ceiling of about \$1 billion, or \$1 trillion, excuse me. When I came up here from Hawaii, I had to add a few zeroes, and it still messes me up. One trillion dollars, that is a lot of zeroes. That is a big problem, too.

So let us stop talking about whether our economy and our Federal budget need help. We all know they do. In this building, sometimes I am not sure. But I think when we go out into our communities, we all know that is what is on people's minds. If we do not know it, the people we represent do know it.

The sooner we get to that problem, the sooner we say, it is our economy, it is our budget, and how exactly do we fix it, the better. Maybe we are closing

in on that, but I am not so sure. I can tell the Members one thing, if we are going to talk about a huge tax cut, we have to get there pretty fast.

We have to ask ourselves whether economic revitalization will result from a general, massive tax cut focused on the very upper-income levels or targeted to business. We have to ask ourselves whether that much deficit, that much debt, is good and whether it will hurt us over the long run. That is the debate. Let us get to it real fast, and let us focus like a laser beam on the issue: fixing our economy and balancing our Federal budget.

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REMOVE CUBA FROM U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURNS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) for allowing me to take this 5 minutes before the 1 hour that he has scheduled this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a disturbing development in Cuba's gross violation of human rights and recent crack down on its dissident community.

Yesterday Cuba was re-elected to its seat on the United Nations' Human Rights Commission. This comes only weeks after the Castro regime sentenced 78 independent journalists, librarians, and opposition leaders to lengthy prison terms and executed 3 alleged hijackers who tried to escape to the United States.

During this recent meeting of the Human Rights Commission, a resolution was passed that calls on Cuba to accept a visit by a human rights monitor. However, Cuba's reelection to the Commission still went uncontested. Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that it is outrageous that Cuba has been reelected as a member of the Commission only weeks after systematically trampling on the tenants the Commission was designed to uphold. I find it hard to believe that the Commission could question the human rights practices of a nation and then, in the same breath, appoint that same nation as a member of the Commission. Cuba should not be a member of the Human Rights Commission. Cuba should be investigated and condemned by the Human Rights Commission and not sit as a voting member.

Mr. Speaker, this recent crackdown is considered by many to be Cuba's worst crackdown on its dissident community in the last decade. Unfortunately, these latest developments are nothing new and are simply the next step in the systematic denial of even the most basic human rights for the citizens of Cuba. I and many of my colleagues have spoken on this floor time

and again of human rights violations in Cuba. We have called on the U.N. to condemn Cuba's continued violations of human rights standards, and their only reaction is to appoint the wolf in charge of the hen house.

On Monday before the United Nations' vote, Secretary of State Colin Powell publicly denounced Cuba's actions and criticized the Castro regime as an aberration in the Western Hemisphere. Powell also mentioned that the administration is reviewing their policies towards Cuba in light of Powell cited as the deteriorating human rights situation.

I would like to take this opportunity to applaud Secretary Powell for his strong statement on Cuba, and I urge the administration to take concrete actions against Castro's crackdown on its own people.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the Human Rights Commission cannot continue to turn a blind eye to what has become a campaign by the Castro regime to silence all voices of peaceful opposition on the island. Allowing Cuba to remain a member only weakens the Commission's mandate. The United Nations must follow the leads of the United States and other nations that have condemned Cuba's action and remove Cuba as a member of the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to identify myself with the gentleman's remarks and I am very happy I was able to yield those 5 minutes because I could not agree more with the gentleman.

Tonight I would like to discuss a matter very similar to what we were just hearing. I would like to talk about American foreign policy.

First and foremost, when we talk about America and talk about some of our basic policies, let us note that America is not like every other country. America is a unique country in the world, and I have always believed that God has a special place for the United States of America. Why is this? Because America, unlike other countries, represents every ethnic group, every religion, every race and every kind of human being that you can imagine. We represent the world here. We have people from all over the world who have come here to live in freedom and enjoy opportunity, to better the lives of their family, and they have come here from every place in the world to try to live in harmony with one another, but also to enjoy our freedom and opportunity. We have this place here between two oceans, this incredible land that was given to us that has vast natural resources.