

are rated number one amongst younger listeners. Next week, we will launch a new Middle East television network called, Alhurra—Arabia for “the free one.” The network will broadcast news and movies and sports and entertainment and educational programming to millions of people across the region. Through all these efforts, we are telling the people in the Middle East the truth about the values and the policies of the United States, and the truth always serves the cause of freedom. (Applause.)

America is also taking the side of reformers who have begun to change the Middle East. We’re providing loans and business advice to encourage a culture of entrepreneurship in the Middle East. We’ve established business internships for women, to teach them the skills of enterprise, and to help them achieve social and economic equality. We’re supporting the work of judicial reformers who demand independent courts and the rule of law. At the request of countries in the region, we’re providing Arabic language textbooks to boys and girls. We’re helping education reformers improve their school systems.

The message to those who long for liberty and those who work for reform is that they can be certain they have a strong ally, a constant ally in the United States of America. (Applause.)

Our strategy and our resolve are being tested in two countries, in particular, the nation of Afghanistan was once the primary training ground for al Qaeda, the home of a barbaric regime called the Taliban. It now has a new constitution that guarantees free election and full participation by women. (Applause.)

The nation of Iraq was for decades an ally of terror ruled by the cruelty and caprice of one man. Today, the people of Iraq are moving toward self-government. Our coalition is working with the Iraqi Governing Council to draft a basic law with a bill of rights. Because our coalition acted, terrorists lost a source of reward money for suicide bombings. Because we acted, nations of the Middle East no longer need to fear reckless aggression from a ruthless dictator who had the intent and capability to inflict great harm on his people and people around the world. Saddam Hussein now sits in a prison cell, and Iraqi men and women are no longer carried to torture chambers and rape rooms, and dumped in mass graves. Because the Baathist regime is history, Iraq is no longer a grave and gathering threat to free nations. Iraq is a free nation. (Applause.)

Freedom still has enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq. All the Baathists and Taliban and terrorists know that if democracy were to be, it would undermine violence—their hope for violence and innocent death. They understand that if democracy were to be undermined, then the hopes for change throughout the Middle East would be set back. That’s what they know. That’s what they think. We know that the success of freedom in these nations would be a landmark event in the history of the Middle East, and the history of the world. Across the region, people would see that freedom is the path to progress and national dignity. A thousand lies would stand refuted, falsehoods about the incompatibility of democratic values in Middle Eastern cultures. And all would see, in Afghanistan and Iraq, the success of free institutions at the heart of the greater Middle East.

Achieving this vision will the work of many nations over time, requiring the same strength of will and confidence of purpose that propelled freedom to victory in the defining struggles of the last century. Today, we’re at a point of testing, when people and nations show what they’re made out of.

America will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins. We will do what it takes. We will not leave until the job is done. (Applause.)

We will succeed because when given a choice, people everywhere, from all walks of life, from all religions, prefer freedom to violence and terror. We will succeed because human beings are not made by the Almighty God to live in tyranny. We will succeed because of who we are—because even when it is hard, Americans always do what is right.

And we know the work that has fallen to this generation. When great striving is required of us, we will always have an example in the man we honor today. Winston Churchill was a man of extraordinary personal gifts, yet his greatest strength was his unshakable confidence in the power and appeal of freedom. It was the great fortune of mankind that he was there in an hour of peril. And it remains the great duty of mankind to advance the cause of freedom in our time.

May God bless the memory of Winston Churchill. May God continue to bless the United States of America. (Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

THE PRESIDENT’S BUDGET

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I have had a chance now to look over the President’s budget. What with being out of our offices and stuck over in the Capitol and not being able to see some of the people we were supposed to see and conduct business as usual, I have had the chance to look at the budget. Of course, I had heard it was kind of bad. I read some of the preliminary reports, but it was not until I really started digging into it and looking at some of the fine print and getting out a calculator and adding it all up that I realized how stupefyingly bad this budget is. It almost defies logic.

After going through it, I can sum up his election year budget in four words: More of the same. More tax cuts for the wealthy, more massive spending increases on things such as Star Wars and, of course, that nice trip to Mars we are going to take, more giveaways to special interests, and more massive budget deficits.

This is Mr. Bush’s fourth budget submission, so now I think we can take stock. We can size up the full 4-year fiscal record of this administration. Quite frankly, the irresponsible actions of this administration over 4 years boggles the mind.

In just 4 years, Mr. Bush has put in place trillions of dollars in tax cuts, overwhelmingly for the very wealthy. In spite of the huge deficits, the President now is demanding that those tax cuts be made permanent. At the same time, he is proposing tens of billions of dollars on new spending programs, and this includes untold billions for trips to the Moon and Mars. There is billions more for Star Wars, which Mr. Bush intends to build now and test later.

President Bush has taken the projected 10-year surplus of some \$5 trillion that he inherited from President Clinton and turned that into a projected 10-year deficit of nearly \$5 tril-

lion. Think about that. In 4 short years, this President and this administration have taken a \$5 trillion surplus and turned it into a \$5 trillion deficit, a \$10 trillion swing. As I said, it just boggles the mind.

By any measure, this is an astonishing record of economic mismanagement and economic malpractice. In fact, I challenge my colleagues to cite any President in the 215-year history of our Republic who has compiled such a record of sheer recklessness.

The White House now says the deficit in the current fiscal year will be \$521 billion. That is bad enough, but that is not the worst of it. Far more dangerous are the long-term, permanent, structural deficits that will result. Mr. Bush dares to claim he has charted a course to cut the deficit in half in 5 years. This has about as much credibility as his claim that Iraq possessed massive stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. The fact is that, after 4 years, Mr. Bush has zero credibility on the budget.

Let’s look at his past projections and promises. In 2001, Mr. Bush promised: “We can proceed with tax relief without fear of budget deficits.” That turned out to be untrue.

In 2002, Mr. Bush reassured us: “Our budget will run a deficit that will be small and short term.” That turned out, also, to be untrue.

In 2003, Mr. Bush again assured us: “Our current deficit is not large by historical standards and is manageable.” That also is turning out to be untrue.

This year, President Bush claims that the massive deficits he has created will be magically cut in half in 5 years’ time. Is there any Senator in either party who believes that promise? I don’t think so. Mr. Bush has not just created a structural budget deficit, he has created a structural credibility deficit. Few credible economists believe him anymore.

The Washington Post sized up this budget in an editorial yesterday morning. The editorial was titled “Bogus Budgeting.” The editorial stated that:

The Bush administration 2005 budget is a masterpiece of disingenuous blame-shifting, dishonest budgeting and irresponsible governing.

The reality is that the deficits will persist at high levels even if the economy stays healthy. Year after year they will stay at high levels, until the baby boomers start to retire, and then the deficits will explode.

If we look at the operating budget—that is not counting the surplus that comes from the Social Security taxes—the picture becomes crystal clear. Under the operating budget—again, excluding Social Security surpluses—Bush has a huge \$675 billion deficit for this year. That is equal to 5.9 percent of our GDP, our gross domestic product, the second highest operating deficit since 1946.

But President Bush claims this operating deficit will drop to \$470 billion in just 2 years. Then, according to his own

budget documents, the operating deficit begins to rise, reaching \$500 billion in 2009—deficits as far as the eye can see.

There are three huge problems here. No. 1, we are continuing to add debt at a very rapid rate. No. 2, the glidepath is not downward to lower deficits but upwards to bigger deficits, and it rises more rapidly as we begin paying Social Security benefits to the baby boomers and, as the Social Security surplus shrinks, the true direction of the budget disaster under Bush's plan becomes clear. No. 3, the Bush budget does not include costs that we all know we are going to have.

For example, get this. The Bush budget does not include any additional funds for Iraq after September 30 of this year. In other words, for 2005, beginning October 1 of this year, fiscal year 2005, there are zero dollars for Iraq. We will have no troops there? We will have no support going to Iraq? After September 30 it is just going to all end? Does anyone believe that? Yet this budget has zero dollars in it for Iraq after September 30 of this year. That alone ought to tell you this budget is bogus.

The 2001 tax bill left a timebomb called the AMT, the alternative minimum tax. In 2001, fewer than 2 million, mostly wealthy, taxpayers paid it. By 2010, if it is not changed, over 30 million taxpayers will be paying it, mostly middle-class families. Nobody around here believes that is going to be allowed to happen. Everyone understands it will be fixed, probably at a cost of over \$400 billion. So, what does the Bush budget do? It just fixes it for 1 year. Again, bogus.

What do these huge deficits mean, coming ahead? They mean we are increasingly dependent on the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and other foreign governments and investors who buy our Treasury bonds.

I said to someone the other day, after looking over this budget and looking over who is loaning us money to buy our bonds, we are actually borrowing money from the South Koreans to finance our deficit.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. HARKIN. I am pleased to yield.

Mr. REID. I was struck by the statement made by the Senator from Iowa, that this budget includes not a penny for our troops and the other programs we have going on in Iraq. The question I ask the Senator is, Does this kind of remind you of what took place last year? Does the Senator remember that the President came and asked for a supplemental of \$69 billion early in the year, and then later came and asked for \$87 billion, in 1 year?

Mr. HARKIN. That is right.

Mr. REID. Does the Senator from Iowa think for 1 minute we are going to spend no money in Iraq, after last year having had two supplementals in the amount of more than \$150 billion?

Mr. HARKIN. I tell you, the Senator from Nevada has put his finger on it.

Look, everyone knows, we had the \$69 billion last year. We knew it wasn't enough, so he had to come back and ask for \$87 billion. He got that. We also know that is not enough. Yet the President has the audacity, as the Senator has pointed out, to have a budget that on September 30 of this year has no money for Iraq.

I say to my friend, no one believes that. Yet the President puts it in his budget as though it is factual.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield for another question?

Mr. HARKIN. Yes, I am delighted to yield.

Mr. REID. Does the Senator believe that in the Pentagon and in the bowels of the White House they have already prepared the documents for a supplemental appropriations bill to take care of the funding in Iraq and poor little Afghanistan, about which we seem to have just forgotten?

Mr. HARKIN. The Senator from Nevada is very perceptive. He has been here a long time. My good friend from Nevada knows how these things work, and he is absolutely right. The Senator is right. We all know that. The Pentagon already has figures put together. In the bowels of the White House they have figures put together. They already know it is going to cost money for next year.

Again, I guess I respond to my friend by asking him, why wouldn't they be honest with us? Why wouldn't they be honest and put this in the budget? Because everyone knows the facts—that it is going to cost some money after September 30.

I ask my friend what possible reason would they have for saying it costs nothing and they are zeroing it out?

Mr. REID. Because they believe, in my opinion, we will do whatever is necessary to fund the key things that are important. I am sure down there they have taken into consideration the programs they say they are going to cut. I believe this is just a prelude to having these people accomplish indirectly what they can't do directly; that is, decimate and in effect void the Social Security laws that have been in effect for this country for more than 70 years. Those people do not believe in Social Security. They don't believe in Social Security.

I carry this with me, because I want people to know I don't make this up. It is my wallet. It is kind of worn. I am not going to read all of it. But let me just read a couple of statements from Senator Robert Dole, our friend, who is a nice man and does a good job now on television being a commentator. This is a direct quote. He said:

I was there fighting the fight, one of 12 voting against Medicare because we knew it wouldn't work in 1965.

He is one of the patriarchs of the Republican Party who gives advice and counsel to the President of the United States today. He doesn't like Medicare, and most other people at the White House do not like Medicare.

Listen to this one:

Medicare has no place in a free world.

I am not making this up.

Mr. HARKIN. Who said that?

Mr. REID. The recently departed majority leader of the House of Representatives, Dick Armey.

That is only part of what he said.

Medicare has no place in a free world.

I am not making this up. That is what he said.

Social Security is a rotten trick. I think we are going to have to bite the bullet on Social Security and phase it out over time.

These people are doing indirectly what they cannot do directly. They are going to rob this Government of all the moneys they have until they have no choice but to say what we have to do is basically do away with the Social Security program; do away with Medicare. Let the private sector take care of it. If you want some retirement benefits, get it at your job; and if the job doesn't, save it.

Social Security is a rotten trick. That is what they think. But my mother and father who drew Social Security—actually, my dad didn't. He died too early. But my mother did. I don't think it was a rotten trick. I can remember my grandmother. I was a little boy. Every month she got what we called and she called her "old age pension." That was Social Security. That was what gave my grandmother independence from her eight children. She got her check. She didn't have to depend on her children. She was a widow. She got her Social Security check.

I thank my friend very much for talking about this budget, which is as phony as a six-dollar bill.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, will the Senator from Iowa yield for a question?

Mr. HARKIN. Yes.

I thank the Senator from Nevada for his questions and for answering one of my questions, too. The Senator is right. There is a part in this budget where essentially the administration points out that with the huge deficits, the Social Security system will be unsustainable in its present form. Talk about code words. There is a code word for privatization. Charge Social Security, turn it over to the private marketplace, and let people take a chance on whatever. I think the Senator from Nevada is absolutely right. I will not say every Republican, because I can't cast the net that far. But I would say there are forces in the Republican Party—the Senator mentioned Senator DOLE and Dick Armey. Newt Gingrich said he wanted Medicare to wither on the vine and also led the charge to try to privatize Social Security.

There are forces at work and they are in control of the Republican Party now that do not like Medicare. They do not like Social Security, and they will do whatever they can to get rid of it. I believe this budget is a step in that direction.

I yield to my friend from Illinois for a question.

Mr. DURBIN. I want to ask the Senator a question through the Chair. I thank the Senator from Nevada for his comments.

But I have before me the budget. It is now in four different books. I have the lead book. By the time you get to page 14 of the President's budget, right in the front end of it, in the introduction, "Winning the War On Terror," is a long section on removing the threat of Saddam Hussein. It talks about Operation Iraqi Freedom, the removal of Saddam Hussein, and the responsibility of the United States in Iraq.

If I understand the Senator from Iowa correctly, despite the fact this is in the opening introduction of the budget, you can pour through this entire budget and not find a single penny—not one cent—that is going to be spent by the United States of America in waging the war in Iraq after September 30 of this year.

Is that my understanding of what the Senator from Iowa said?

Mr. HARKIN. The Senator from Illinois is absolutely right. I didn't believe it myself when I was first told of this. I started digging in the budget along with my staff. I said surely someplace in this budget they must have some money in there to fund our operation in Iraq.

You will look until your dying day and you will not find one penny in that budget for our operations in Iraq after September 30, you will just find a note about possible funding.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask the Senator from Iowa through the Chair this question: Has he heard any member of this administration suggest we will be withdrawing all of our troops from Iraq before September 30 of this year?

Mr. HARKIN. I think the Senator asked a very good question. I don't know. I have not heard them say that. But that is what the budget implies.

Mr. DURBIN. I am sure the Senator has visited with his National Guard in Iowa as I have visited them in Illinois. They have been told just the opposite. The Guard and Reserve have been activated and told they will be gone for a year or 18 months in service to our country. It is clear that once there we are going to support them. We will give them what they need to come home safely with their mission accomplished. But we can't do it for nothing.

My question to the Senator from Iowa is, Why would the President of the United States refuse to include in his budget one penny to wage this war in Iraq and this war in Afghanistan? What is the purpose behind short-changing this budget and making it look cheaper than it actually is? I ask the Senator from Iowa if he has any opinion.

Mr. HARKIN. I will just say to my friend all you have to do is go back and look at 2002, 2003, and 2004. Look at the last 3 years of the Bush budget and you can see what happened. They have dug themselves and our country into a huge fiscal hole. Now what they want

to do, rather than trying to get out of it, is going to dig us even further into that hole and try to make it look not so bad. They are trying to cut here and cut there, and doctor things up a little bit so it doesn't look quite so bad. They put zero money in there for Iraq.

Mr. DURBIN. If I might ask another question—

Mr. HARKIN. It is a shell game. That is all it is.

Mr. DURBIN. The Senator realizes that only 4 years ago we had a \$236 billion surplus that we were strengthening Social Security with, paying down America's debt, and reducing the mortgage our children will have to carry. And now, if I am not mistaken, we are going to be faced with this budget which is the largest deficit in the history of the United States of America.

My question to the Senator from Iowa is this: In basic terms for those following this discussion, how do we pay for the debt? I am told every minute the Bush administration spends \$991,000 more than we take in in taxes. This results in a \$520 billion deficit this year. I ask the Senator from Iowa, How do we balance the books? Where do we turn with a deficit like this to help balance the books?

Mr. HARKIN. We are not going to balance it. But I tell you what they are doing. Effectively, they are going hat in hand to the Chinese, and they are saying, Please loan us some money. The Chinese will buy our bonds. Japan is buying our bonds. I think Japan now is the single largest owner of bonds. I think China is No. 2, if I am not mistaken.

Mr. DURBIN. Japan is \$526 billion, and China—I can give you the exact number. I think the figure is \$144 billion.

Mr. HARKIN. From China?

Mr. DURBIN. China.

Mr. HARKIN. And they will keep buying more and more and as the huge deficits pile up America's debt. This is going hat in hand to China and Japan and South Korea and many other countries. To do what? To finance huge tax breaks for the wealthy.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask the Senator from Iowa to complete the thought; the obvious question which I ask which we ought to consider, where does China get the dollars to buy the debt of the United States? Where does China have a surplus of dollars coming in? What is it about China that they end up with all of these dollars?

Mr. HARKIN. I ask my friend from Illinois, what is the trade deficit we have with China?

Mr. DURBIN. That is exactly the answer. It is a trade deficit.

Mr. HARKIN. So we have a huge trade deficit with China. We are buying everything from China. They get the dollars, and we go hat in hand, a debtor nation, and effectively say, please, buy our bonds.

Mr. DURBIN. And I ask the Senator from Iowa, in your home State of Iowa

and my State of Illinois, we have lost 20 percent of our manufacturing jobs in the last few years; America has lost 3 million jobs under this President, more than any President since the Great Depression. So as we have lost these jobs and lost these businesses, and our economy is sinking—a jobless recovery is no recovery where I live—we see other countries who now take over our manufacturing jobs, like China, and because they are selling more to the United States, they have dollars and turn around and own our debt.

So our workers do not have the jobs, their children have the debt, and China is holding the mortgage. Is that the fact?

Mr. HARKIN. The Senator is on to something. First of all, they are getting our dollars for the products they make and send to this country with cheap labor, with no Social Security protections for the workers. They get all those dollars. They then buy our debt, they buy our bonds. The Senator is right. They buy the bonds and then there is interest on the bonds, a lot of interest. So who gets the interest payments? The Chinese get the interest payments.

So our workers lose their jobs, the jobs go to China, we buy their goods, they get the dollars, they buy our bonds, and the Senator is absolutely right. It is the workers' families, the kids who now have to pony up to pay the interest charges.

Now, I ask the Senator, looking ahead, if, in fact, we have these huge budget deficits which are going to roll on year after year, that means someone has to finance this debt. So we will still be going back to the Chinese and the Japanese, the Europeans and others, to buy our debt.

I ask the Senator, if you are in the position of having a lot of money and you are buying debt, do you want high interest rates or low interest rates?

Mr. DURBIN. I say to the Senator from Iowa, clearly what we have here is a scarce commodity—dollars. And the people who can come up with the dollars want to get paid more for coming up with them in terms of interest. As the interest goes up that is being paid for those holding our debt overseas, it runs up the interest rates in America in terms of how we can expand our businesses.

So we have lost the jobs. We have lost the manufacturing. And with interest rate pressure going up from all of the debt, we are making it more difficult for businesses to rebound, build in America, and create American jobs.

Is the Senator from Iowa aware of the figures given by Senator KENT CONRAD on the Budget Committee that by 2009, every American will have as their personal share of our American mortgage, our American debt, \$35,283, so that the debt tax from the Bush administration on every individual American will be over \$35,000.

I ask my friend from Iowa if he believes the people in his State, let alone

any other State, have a notion that President Bush's failed economic policy is building up the mortgage on every single American and American family for years to come.

Mr. HARKIN. The Senator is right. I ask the Senator to repeat this figure.

Mr. DURBIN. By 2009, each American's share of the debt will total \$35,283.

Mr. HARKIN. That is bad enough in itself. I say to the Senator, also by 2009, the interest payments on this debt that we are piling up under this budget that we have will lead to \$980 for the credit card of every man, woman, and child in America. In other words, a family of four will pay nearly \$4,000 just in interest on the debt in just that year. They are not buying it down but just paying the interest charges. And, with the policies of this administration, they will just grow and grow. We know what happens to families as they have a growing difficulty just paying the interest on their credit cards.

Where is a big chunk of that interest rate payment going?

Mr. DURBIN. Certainly it goes overseas.

And I ask the Senator from Iowa, the President said in the State of the Union, the key to the future of the American economy is to make the tax cuts for the wealthiest people in America, permanent law.

I ask the Senator from Iowa, as he has traveled his State and I have traveled mine, as well, has the Senator found with the working families, a hue and cry, demands to keep President Bush's tax cuts in place, tax cuts that have basically given us the biggest deficit in the history of the United States and have failed to create jobs? Has the Senator heard this in the State of Iowa?

Mr. HARKIN. Not only have I not heard from the people in the State of Iowa, even friends of mine who have a lot of money, who make a lot of money, have basically told me: You guys are crazy what you are doing back there. You have to get this economy straight.

Even the people who made out under this tax break, if they are honest—and many are—are saying: Wait a minute, this is not right for America, not right for our economy.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask through the Chair, I know the Senator from Iowa has had a leadership position when it comes to education and health issues in his appropriations subcommittee. I ask the Senator from Iowa, is the Senator hearing the same thing I am hearing as you visit school districts in Iowa and sit down with school board members and principals and teachers, regarding No Child Left Behind, which is imposing a requirement for testing kids to find out the progress they are making—and there is nothing wrong with that—but then when they find the kids are falling behind, does the Senator hear in Iowa the same as I do in Illinois, hear that these educators are

asking, Why did the Federal Government fail to fund this mandate? Why are you sending us the No Child Left Behind mandate and failing to send the money to help educate the children?

Again, we find this President's budget is not funding his education program. It is underfunding his mandate. Does the Senator find the same thing as he travels through Iowa?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-EXANDER). The Senator from New Hampshire.

The time of the Senator is expired.

Mr. HARKIN. How much time was I allowed?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is a 30-minute time limit.

Mr. HARKIN. Under what rule was I allowed 30 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We had an order for a 30-minute time limit for morning business.

Mr. SUNUNU. It is my understanding the Senate is in a period of morning business with a time limit not to exceed 30 minutes. I will not take that much time. I wish to speak very briefly and ask a rhetorical question, since I am not allowed to ask a question of a Senator who does not have the floor. But then I would be pleased, if permissible under the rules, to yield the remainder of my time to the Senator from Iowa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SPENDING

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, I happened to come to the floor to hear my colleagues from Illinois and Iowa talking about their concern for the deficit and for spending priorities, and I share their concern.

However, it is worth noting that at this time the pending business of the Senate is a transportation bill that is, by any standards, enormous. It represents an increase of over 40 percent over the previous 6-year bill. It represents a dramatic expansion in the size and scope of Federal Government. It totals over \$300 billion. Unfortunately, it seeks to obtain funds by diverting general revenue tax receipts into the highway trust fund, something that has never been done before.

To the best of my knowledge, both of my colleagues who spoke earlier are more than willing to vote for this enormous spending measure.

I just do not think it is credible to take the floor and raise concerns about deficits and spending priorities and, at the same time, be willing to support such a massive increase in infrastructure spending, when we know full well that States are very capable of making sound decisions for this kind of construction and investment. We know full well that it is wrong to divert money from the general revenue fund in order to support an expansion of this funding. And we know full well this bill is significantly in excess of what has been proposed by the President.

While I do not agree with all the priorities in the President's budget, I think it is fair to say that we would have \$20 or \$30 or \$40 or \$50 billion more for the priorities my colleagues spoke about if they would join with me in raising concerns about this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

THE BUDGET AND THE DEFICIT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to engage my colleague from Iowa in a dialog on this issue relative to the budget and the deficit.

The question I asked earlier related to the experience of the Senator from Iowa when he traveled his State and the response of the people of Iowa when it came to the suggestion of President Bush that his tax cut program—primarily for the wealthiest people in the country—be made permanent law. And I asked the Senator: I know that everyone likes a tax cut, but what are you finding?

If I might have the permission of the Chair to ask this question of the Senator from Iowa, without yielding the floor—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. What are you finding to be the response, as you travel throughout your State, in terms of the President's tax cut policy?

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I reply to my friend from Illinois, as I traveled around my State since we adjourned back in December, I have not heard anything about making this tax cut permanent. I cannot think of one person who came up to me saying that. But I will tell you what I did hear a lot about.

As the Senator pointed out, I heard from my schools on No Child Left Behind, that they are being underfunded. Special education is taking its toll on property taxpayers all over our State, and they are demanding the Federal Government live up to its promise on special education. I am hearing about the loss of manufacturing jobs in our State. And there are no jobs to be had. I am hearing about the need for better health care for people who do not have health insurance in our State.

I am hearing about the high cost of education. So many middle-class families now, and low-income families, are simply being priced out of higher education. It is taking more and more money to get into college. Right now, a Pell grant provides for about—under this budget—30 percent, give or take 1 percent—maybe 31 percent—of the cost of college. Just 4 years ago, it was 40 percent. So we have lost 25 percent of the purchasing power just of a Pell grant. And these are for poor kids to go to college. Twenty-five percent, just in