

much in taxes in order to support us in our retirement years when they cannot live as good and as full of a life as we have had.

I congratulate the President on his budget, and I look forward to working with this Congress in passing such a budget and moving toward fiscal responsibility in this country.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLEN). The majority leader.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended 10 minutes to each side.

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

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I am pleased to hear our Budget chairman stand up and talk about real fiscal responsibility. I am also very pleased to see that we have a President who continues to provide the kind of strong leadership Americans demand.

In 1994, when I was elected to the House of Representatives, I campaigned long and hard on the fact that we needed to move the Federal Government back to the same type of fiscal responsibility we ask every single American to make every month when they sit around their kitchen table; that is, not spend more money than we take in. Thank goodness, due to the economy thriving and surging ahead and due to fiscal responsibility on the part of Republicans and Democrats in the 1990s, we were able to not only balance the budget but achieve surpluses. Then along comes September 11, 2001. Since that point in time, we have operated in a deficit situation for a number of reasons.

First, revenues have been declining from the projected increases we thought we would have. But most significantly, we have seen an increase in Federal spending both in defense and nondefense areas, but also in homeland security-related areas irrespective of whether it is defense or nondefense. Therefore, we have seen ourselves projected back into a deficit-spending situation.

But we have a President who has made a commitment to the American people. He made it during the course of the campaign, and he is living up to what he talked about during the campaign; that is, we need to return to more of a balanced budget scenario so our children and grandchildren can see us operating in the black in the future, and we can tell them that we were fiscally responsible and that we will turn this country over to them with a new, sound fiscal condition.

Unless we have somebody who is as bold as this President is with this

budget which he has come forward with, that is never going to happen. I am very pleased to see the President is leading us in the right way from a fiscally responsible standpoint.

That having been said, there are a number of programs in the President's budget that he has proposed eliminating. I think there are some 150 programs. In last year's budget that came from the White House, we saw a proposal to eliminate some 61 or 71 Federal programs that were not performing up to the standards at which they should be performing. Therefore, the President was proposing to eliminate those, very much like what he has done this time.

The problem is when those proposals reach Capitol Hill, we tend to look at those programs and then somebody has some parochial interest in those programs and they never get eliminated. I don't know what the programs are this time. I have not looked at the budget in that kind of detail. But I do hope—and I know under the leadership of Senator GREGG as well as Senator CONRAD, who is very fiscally minded always—that we look at these programs which the President is suggesting, that we look at eliminating them, and that we give them serious consideration relative to their efficiency, to whether they are performing at the standard we have always anticipated they perform at, and if they are not performing, then we ought to consider eliminating them.

There are two areas of the budget I do have some concerns about. First of all, we are seeing an increase of about 5 percent in defense spending. I know the President is like me. He is very strong minded when it comes to defense issues. We have a very difficult situation, a very complex situation on our hands right now, relative to Iraq. We are still in the midst of a war. It is imperative that we continue to spend the money necessary to make sure America's military forces are the best trained, the best equipped fighting forces in the world. We need to make sure they have in their possession the latest, most technologically advanced weapons systems that are made anywhere in the world so they can protect freedom and democracy around the world; that they can accomplish what is being accomplished in Iraq today; that is, the liberation of the Iraqi people; that we are giving hope and opportunity to the people of Iraq in making sure they live in a free, open, and democratic society, in a country where freedom does reign; where they have an opportunity to provide a better quality of life for themselves and their children, unlike the society in which they have lived for the past 30 years under Saddam Hussein.

In order to do that, it is imperative we look at the weapon systems we are going to be purchasing over the next decade, over the next two decades, and into the future, because we not only have this conflict to consider, but we must also keep in mind there will be

future conflicts out there. We need to make sure our men and women will continue to have the best weapon systems available to them to continue the fight for freedom around the world when freedom calls us.

In that regard, there are two particular weapon systems that are proposed to be eliminated in this budget that I have serious questions about: the FA-22—not that we are eliminating it, but the number we are going to buy—and also the C-130, which is a great weapon system, a weapon system that has been in our inventory for at least four decades, and we are into the fifth decade. Any time you turn on the TV, whether you see the Baghdad International Airport or whether you see the tsunami relief effort, you see C-130s flying the flag of America as well as other countries participating in national security issues.

It is critically important that we review the proposals relative to these two weapon systems. The C-130 is proposed to be eliminated, and the FA-22, we are thinking in terms of not buying as many as we originally thought we would buy.

I was in a meeting this morning at the Pentagon that the President happened to be in, and we had a very good discussion, a frank discussion with the Secretary of Defense and his colleagues relative not just to this issue but to the overall issues relative to Iraq, as well as the budget. I was pleased to hear they are going to continue to look at these two weapon systems, and hopefully we will make some changes from the budget that are more realistic, more reasonable, and decisions that are a lot more correct than the decisions contained within the budget.

The second area I will talk about that concerns me relative to this budget is the proposal to reduce the budget of the Department of Agriculture by some \$5.7 billion over 10 years. In 2002, we wrote the latest farm bill. That farm bill was a controversial farm bill. It has been criticized by conservatives. It has been criticized by liberals. It has been applauded by both sides as well. I happen to think it is the right kind of farm bill that allows our consumers in America to go to the grocery store and be able to continue to buy the most reasonable food products of any industrialized country in the world. We spend less money per dollar on food products in this country than any other industrialized country in the world. We have a guarantee that those products are safe and secure, and at the same time we provide the research that allows our farmers to produce the highest quality and the largest yields of agriculture products of anyone in the world.

All of that happens for one simple reason; that is, the action this body, as well as the House of Representatives, takes when we write a farm bill. That is exactly the result that happened from the 2002 farm bill.

This budget seeks to rewrite that farm bill and to reduce the amount of