including the Greek Cypriots and Turkey Cypriots, want to see the division of Cyprus end before its entrance into the EU, the Annan plan for a Cyprus settlement was justly voted down by the Greek Cypriots by an overwhelming 76 percent.

My colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), outlined the many reasons why this vote took place.

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But we have also heard that many of the residents are working to resolve these disputes and that there is growing strength for a unified Cyprus. A unified Cyprus would promote stability both politically and economically to the entire Mediterranean region. The people of Cyprus deserve a unified and democratic country, and I remain hopeful that a peaceful settlement will be found so that the division of Cyprus will come to an end. Some of us are calling for a special envoy to Cyprus to work towards achieving that end.

However, there have been recent developments that concern me, and I know that they may concern many of my colleagues. Earlier this month, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and I sent a letter, along with 30 other Members of this body, to Secretary of State Rice asking for clarification about U.S. policy toward Cyprus. Specifically, we are seeking answers about the policy of the United States regarding travel directly into the northern occupied parts of Cyprus by U.S. citizens.

While we have not yet heard from the Secretary, I remain hopeful that our relations with Cyprus will remain steadfast and that we will continue to adhere to international treaties and U.N. Security Council resolutions on this issue.

I also want to mention the ongoing issue in Cyprus over property in the northern part of the island. Since Turkey invaded Cyprus, American citizens have been denied access to their property even though they hold titles to that property. I urge my colleagues to support legislation offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), H.R. 857, the American-Owned Property in Occupied Cyprus Claims Act, which would enable U.S. citizens who own property in the Turkish-occupied territory of the Republic of Cyprus to seek financial remedies with either the current inhabitants of their land or the Turkish Government.

Additionally, I have introduced a resolution, H.R. 322, which expresses the sense of the House of Representatives in support of the European Court of Human Rights for its decision in the Loizidou v. Turkey and the Xenides-Arestis v. Turkey cases and for admitting similar cases before the court.

The European Court of Human Rights in 1996 ruled that Turkey must pay Titina Loizidou for denying her access to her property in the occupied part of Cyprus. Earlier this year the European Court of Human Rights decided that a similar case brought by Xenides-Arestis against Turkey was admissible and that Turkey continues to be responsible for what happens in the occupied areas of Cyprus since Turkey exercises effective and overall control through the presence of over 30,000 troops in northern Cyprus.

While I hope that Turkey respects the decisions made by the European Court of Human Rights, I believe that denying property owners access to their land in northern Cyprus is wrong and that steps should be taken immediately to address this issue. Thirty-one years is too long to have a divided country. It is too long to be kept from one's home. It is too long to be separated from one's family. We have seen many tremendous changes around the world. It is time for Cyprus to live in peace and security with full enjoyment of their human rights.

In recognition of the spirit of the people of Cyprus, I ask my colleagues to join me in commemorating the 31st anniversary of the invasion of Cyprus. Long live freedom. Long live Cyprus. Long live Greece. And long live the United States and the friendship between our countries.

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

(Mr. OTTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my time out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, my Republican colleagues have recently unveiled a new plan to carve out private accounts from the surplus of the Social Security trust fund. This is the same trust fund that President Bush said was nonexistent just a few months ago. The President traveled with great fanfare to West Virginia where he said, There is no Social Security trust fund, just a bunch of IOUs stacked in an old filing cabinet.

Let me tell the Members something. That old filing cabinet was a new filing cabinet before it got $639 billion taken out of it; and before the year is up, it will be $800 billion that was taken out of the Social Security surplus used for anything but Social Security. That is the problem.

And now it seems that the Republicans in Congress have come to a stalemate. The President wants to privatize Social Security and cut benefits for the middle class. The congressional Republican leadership would rather avoid benefit cuts, but they too want to privatize Social Security.

While the White House and congressional Republicans struggle to decide which privatization plan they want to be for, I suggest a totally different approach to Social Security: save Social Security first. The surplus should have been for Social Security. It should always be for Social Security. And my suggestion is on the $800 billion they already took out of it, before they do anything else with some grand plan to cut benefits or privatize it, pay back the $800 billion they took.

I worked in an administration where we cut taxes for the middle class, balanced the budget, and extended the life of the trust fund by 10 years. Why? Because we had an economic plan that worked. It grew the economy. It grew middle-class incomes. It helped homeownership. It reduced the poverty rate, and we added 10 years to the life of the Social Security trust fund, and we cut taxes for the middle class, and we balanced the budget, unlike the $2 trillion of additional debt we have added on to the books and on to the shoulders of our children. But it requires leadership and priorities, which is in short supply around here.

Before we create any private accounts or do anything else to fundamentally alter the character and nature of Social Security, our task here is to strengthen Social Security for the future and guarantee its future. And none of the plans, none of the various privatization plans, none of the ideas of benefit cuts or raising the age, none of that adds to the solvency. And the task here, Mr. Speaker, is to strengthen Social Security.

The American people have rejected the President's plan. They have rejected the congressional plan. They have rejected anything to do with privatization because they know it is the wrong way. I am going to tell the Members something as a person who represents a lot of employees from United Airlines: folks like the security that comes with Social Security.

They have had it up to here with risk, and all they are providing with privatization is more risk on top of more risk. They have it in their health care. They have it in their jobs. They have it in their own retirement savings. They do not need more risk, and they like the foundation of security that comes with Social Security. Ask any steel worker, any person who works for United Airlines or the airlines industry who lost their pensions or the 14,000 people at Hewlett-Packard, and they will say that privatization of Social Security is a nonstarter.

Middle-class families are struggling. They have flat wages, a 55 percent increase in energy costs, 10 percent increase in health care costs, 11 percent