

there is reason to be hopeful. I have done a fair amount of traveling throughout Wisconsin over the last year, speaking to all kinds of people—Republicans, Democrats, union members, tea party folks. I talked about America, about how incredibly precious and exceptional it is, and how I fear we may be losing it.

What I will never forget is how many people came up to me after my speeches with tears in their eyes or tears running down their cheeks—not because I am a great public speaker but because people love this country. Their political affiliation makes absolutely no difference. Americans want this Nation preserved, and they are counting on us to do just that.

The good news is they will support us if we make the hard choices together. So together let's roll up our sleeves and do what needs to be done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I congratulate our new Senator from Wisconsin, a very important addition to our caucus and to the Senate—a man who has actually run a business, actually employed people and created wealth in his State and our country. Having someone in the Senate who knows how to do that at this critical moment is absolutely essential, and I congratulate the new junior Senator from Wisconsin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate the other accountant in the Senate. It is nice to have additional help with numbers. It will make a tremendous difference.

He has had both the business experience and the accounting experience, and he understands a lot of things that to us in the Senate are pretty simple but to the person working on the ground it is very difficult. He is good at expressing himself and, as I said, particularly good with numbers. So I congratulate him on his maiden speech.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant editor of the Daily Digest proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, we are at an extraordinary crossroads in American history, both from a moral perspective as well as an economic perspective.

The reality today, as I think most Americans understand, is that the middle class of our country is collapsing. Over the last 10 years, median family income has gone down by \$2,500. Millions of Americans who have lost their jobs secured new jobs at substantially lower pay. Younger workers are finding it very hard to get a job at a livable wage.

Furthermore, what we don't talk about terribly often here on the floor of the Senate or certainly in the corporate media is the rather unfortunate reality that in the United States, we have the most unequal distribution of income and of wealth of any major country on Earth. Today, the top 1 percent of earners make 23 percent of all income. The top 1 percent earn 23 percent of every dollar, and that is more than the bottom 50 percent. The top 1 percent make more money than the bottom 50 percent. The percentage of income going to the top 1 percent has nearly tripled—nearly tripled—since the 1970s. Between 1980 and 2005, 80 percent—80 percent—of all new income in America went to the top 1 percent.

Today, when we talk about distribution of wealth—not income—the numbers are, frankly, beyond belief. Today in America, if my colleagues can believe it, the wealthiest 400 Americans—400 Americans, a very small number out of a nation of over 300 million people—own more wealth than the bottom 150 million Americans. So 400 on one side, 150 million on the other, and that gap between the very, very rich and everybody else is growing wider.

I don't have to describe economically what is going on in this country because almost everybody understands it. Real unemployment today is not 8.9 percent; it is closer to 16 percent. Today in America, 50 million people have no health insurance. Today in America, seniors and disabled vets understand they have not received a Social Security COLA in 3 years.

So what we start with when we look at America today is a middle class which is disappearing, poverty which is increasing, and the people on top doing phenomenally well. Given that reality, one might think the Congress would be actively involved in trying to protect the middle class and working families and lower income people, but if one believed that, one would be sorely mistaken.

Just last December, 4 months ago, Congress passed legislation to provide huge tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires by extending the Bush tax cuts to the top 2 percent and by even more by lowering the estate tax for the top three-tenths of 1 percent. So at a time when the people on top are already doing phenomenally well, what Congress did against my vote in December was make the wealthiest people even wealthier.

Four months ago, after giving huge tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires and growing the deficit, our Republican friends and some Democrats

come back and they say: Well, now we have a real deficit problem. We made the problem worse in December, so now we really have to deal with the deficit, and we are going to do it by making devastating cuts to programs that low- and moderate-income Americans desperately depend upon.

What we are looking at is the Robin Hood principle in reverse: We are taking from working families who are struggling to survive—taking hundreds of billions of dollars and giving it to millionaires and billionaires. In my view, this is grossly immoral, and it is also very bad economics.

Let me touch on some of the cuts that are coming down the pike in this, the 2011 budget. At a time of soaring fuel prices—in the State of Vermont and I am sure in Minnesota, a lot of people heat with oil—the cost is going up. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, would be cut by \$390 million. In Vermont, many of the people who use the LIHEAP program are low-income senior citizens. So we give tax breaks to billionaires, and we go after low-income senior citizens and say: Sorry, you may have to go cold.

At a time when the cost of college education is getting unaffordable for many low- and moderate-income families in this country—hundreds of thousands of young people have given up their college dream because of the high cost of college—Pell grants would be reduced by an estimated \$35 billion over 10 years, including a nearly \$500 million cut this year, and Pell grants are the major source of Federal funding to help low- and moderate-income college students go to school.

At a time when 50 million Americans have no health insurance, community health centers would be cut by \$600 million. This is an issue on which I have worked very, very hard. Community health centers provide access to primary health care, dental care, low-cost prescription drugs, and mental health counseling for some 20 million Americans right now. Our hope was to expand that to 40 million Americans. When we do that, we save money because people do not end up in the emergency room; they do not end up in the hospital sicker than they should have been. So \$600 million for community health centers was cut. The Children's Health Insurance Program was cut by \$3.5 billion.

At a time when poverty is increasing, the WIC Program—women, infants, and children—a nutrition program for pregnant women and children, will be cut by \$500 million.

At a time when we have such high unemployment rates and we want to put Americans to work rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, including our rail system, which is now far behind Europe, Japan, and even China, Federal funding for high-speed rail will be eliminated in the budget we are going to be voting on very soon, representing a cut of \$2.9 billion. Public

transportation would be cut by nearly \$1 billion—a 20-percent reduction.

I know in Vermont, and I expect all over this country, local communities are struggling with their budgets. Police departments are not getting the budgets and the manpower they need. Yet, in this budget we will be voting on, local law enforcement funding would be cut by \$296 million.

At a time when homelessness is increasing, when we need more low-income housing, public housing would be cut by \$605 million.

That is the 2011 budget agreement that was just reached a few days ago. What is absolutely incredible about that budget is that deficit reduction falls totally on the backs of low- and moderate-income families, on people who will not be able to get health care at community health centers, young people who will not be able to go to college, and senior citizens who will not be able to heat their homes in the wintertime. That is where this budget is balanced—on the backs of the weak, the vulnerable, the children, the elderly, and the poor. Yet, at the same time as the wealthiest people are becoming wealthier, this budget does not ask for one penny—not one penny—from millionaires and billionaires.

At a time when major corporation after major corporation enjoys huge tax loopholes—so not only do they avoid paying any Federal income taxes, but in many cases, such as General Electric, they actually get a rebate from the IRS—this budget does not ask corporate America to pay one penny more in corporate income taxes.

That is where we are with the 2011 budget, and now we are looking in a short period of time at the 2012 budget. If my colleagues think this 2011 budget is a moral and economic disgrace, wait until we hear what this 2012 budget, the so-called Paul Ryan tea party budget, which, as I understand it, will be voted upon in the House, likely passing later this week—that budget will slash trillions of dollars from Medicare, converting Medicare into a voucher program, meaning that seniors will have to pay substantially more for their health care than they currently do. The interesting question that has not yet been answered about this is, if you will be—when this Ryan budget would go into effect—a senior citizen living on \$14,000 or \$15,000 a year, which millions of seniors currently live on, how are you going to be able to come up with thousands and thousands of dollars to pay for your cancer treatment or the other problems senior citizens have? There is no money available for you to do it.

What Ryan's budget does is demand that low-income seniors pay with money they don't have. I am not sure I have heard the answer to the question: If you are a low-income citizen and you are asked to come up with thousands of dollars, and you don't have that money, what do you do? The Ryan budget would savage Medicaid, edu-

cation, the environment, infrastructure, and other programs that tens of millions of Americans depend upon.

Here is the kicker. We savage Medicare, Medicaid, education, and many other programs that moderate and middle-class families depend upon in order to give even more tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country and the largest corporations. After savaging health care in America for middle and low-income families, the Ryan budget would reduce the tax rates for the wealthiest people in this country from 35 to 25 percent, and it would cut corporate income taxes to the same level, from 35 to 25 percent.

I suspect there are people listening to me who don't believe that: Come on, you are not serious; at a time when the middle class is collapsing and the rich are getting richer, you are not telling me that the House is about to vote on a budget that will give huge tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires and throw millions more off of health care—you are not serious. Check it out. I am serious. This is what the Ryan tea party budget, which will likely pass the House, will do.

As I began saying, we are at a pivotal moment in the modern history of this country. That question is whether we move, in a sense, into an oligarchic form of society, where a few people on top have incredible amounts of wealth and incredible amounts of political power, while the middle class disappears and poverty increases. That is where we are right now.

I hope very much the American people engage in this debate and tell Members of the Senate and the House that it is morally wrong and very poor economics to cut back on programs that are desperately needed by working families, while giving huge tax breaks to people who absolutely don't need them.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the issue of our budget. Later this week, the House will vote on its fiscal year 2012 budget resolution. Congressman PAUL RYAN, the author of that blueprint, calls it a path to prosperity.

Mr. INHOFE. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. SCHUMER. I will be glad to yield to the Senator.

Mr. INHOFE. I was scheduled to be speak at 4 o'clock. At the conclusion of the Senator's remarks, would the Senator request that I be recognized as in morning business for up to 30 minutes?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move that immediately after I finish

speaking, the Senator—well, we had a Member who was going to go speak after you did. Could the Senator limit his speech to 15 minutes or—

Mr. INHOFE. No, sir, I could not. I have to have 30 minutes. The floor has been pretty empty today.

Mr. SCHUMER. OK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that immediately after I finish, Senator INHOFE be recognized for up to 30 minutes, and then Senator FRANKEN be recognized immediately after Senator INHOFE.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. So Mr. President, resuming my remarks, PAUL RYAN, the author of that blueprint, called it the path to prosperity. It may be a path to austerity, but it is hardly a path to prosperity.

Nonetheless, with the negotiations finished just days ago on last year's budget, Congressman RYAN has succeeded in jump-starting the debate about next year's. The President himself will join this conversation about how to do long-term deficit reduction in a major address tomorrow at GWU—George Washington University. This is a debate we must have, and the President's entrance into it comes not a moment too soon. It will make for a powerful contrast with the Republicans' plan.

The contrast we will hear from our President tomorrow will likely not be in the commitment to deficit reduction. PAUL RYAN's goal in his budget is to trim the deficit by \$1.6 trillion over the next 10 years. He does not succeed in meeting this target, according to CBO. In fact, budget experts say his proposal only achieves \$155 billion in net deficit reduction. But the number itself is not the issue. Without a doubt, we must be ambitious in setting a target for deficit reduction. We cannot be gun-shy about achieving fiscal discipline. So, no, the contrast will not be in how much we seek to reduce the deficit, it will be in how we go about doing so.

The Republicans would like the looming debate to be one about numbers, but, instead, it will be about priorities. The Ryan budget has all the wrong priorities.

The House Republican budget puts the entire burden of reducing the deficit on senior citizens, students, and middle-class families. At the same time, it protects corporate subsidies for oil companies, let's waste at the Pentagon go untouched, and would give even more tax breaks to the millionaires amongst us. In short, the Ryan budget puts the middle class last instead of first. As a result, it will never pass the Senate.

In the days since he first rolled out his budget proposal, Congressman RYAN has been hailed for taking on the tough challenges, and we certainly salute him for putting out a plan. But a closer look at his proposal shows that

it is not bold at all. In leaving Pentagon spending and revenues completely untouched, Ryan's budget hews exactly to his party's orthodoxy.

Some of the columns I read say it takes courage. Well, maybe it takes courage for someone who has a different political philosophy to say what he said but not for a conservative Republican to say what he said. It does not gore a single Republican ox. It is a rigid ideological document.

Consider what Congressman RYAN wants to do on Medicare. In the name of ideology, PAUL RYAN's budget proposes getting rid of Medicare as it exists today and replacing it with a private system that would cut benefits. We have seen this movie before. Five years ago, President Bush tried to sell the country on a plan to privatize Social Security. The public rejected it. If they didn't like what President Bush tried to do to Social Security, just wait until they see what PAUL RYAN and the House Republicans want to do to Medicare. Their budget plan proposes putting the Medicare system into the hands of private insurance companies. That is a recipe for disaster. It would mean an end to Medicare as we know it.

Beginning in 2022, Americans turning 65 would no longer be enrolled in Medicare but, instead, would receive a voucher to go shopping for their own health insurance on the open market. Insurance companies, however, would not be required to honor that voucher, which would average about \$8,000. Many private insurance plans for seniors far exceed that price already today. Under the Ryan plan, seniors who cannot find an affordable plan at the value of their voucher will simply have to make up the difference themselves out of their own pockets.

This problem would only worsen over time as health care costs rise. Ryan caps Medicare spending at the level of inflation, even though health care costs rise higher than that historically. As Ryan's voucher covers a smaller and smaller fraction of actual health care costs, seniors would have to cover the gap out of pocket.

That is why Alice Rivlin, a Democrat and President Clinton's former OMB Director who worked with Congressman RYAN on his approach for a time, has distanced herself from this final product. She told the Washington Post she opposes the Ryan plan:

In the Ryan version he has lowered the rate of growth and I don't think that's defensible. It pushed too much of the costs onto the beneficiaries.

Let me repeat that last part of the statement of Alice Rivlin, Congressman RYAN's partner for a time in this proposal. She writes:

It pushed too much of the cost onto the beneficiaries.

Other Medicare experts agree with Rivlin. Stephen Zuckerman, a health care economist at the nonpartisan Urban Institute, said:

The most serious flaw is that the focus of that approach is on limiting Federal spend-

ing on Medicare without concern about the potential of this change to shift costs to Medicare beneficiaries.

A better way to rein in Medicare spending would be to trim the waste and inefficiency out of the delivery system. Anyone who has gone through the health care system knows all the waste and inefficiencies—the legendary stories of a doctor waving as you go into the emergency room and you never see him again, and then there is a \$4,000 charge, these kinds of things. But it turns out that RYAN's plan does nothing to reduce overall health care costs. It increases them. We have to preserve the benefits to people but make the cost of delivering them less expensive. That is what every other country in the world does. That is what we have to do.

The Ryan plan does not do that. The Ryan plan not only does not try to eliminate the waste and inefficiency out of the delivery system, it does nothing to reduce overall health care costs. It actually increases them.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, in 2030 traditional Medicare insurance would cost just 60 percent of a private policy purchased with RYAN's voucher. In other words, the Ryan health care plan would cost two-thirds more than traditional Medicare. Not only would the Ryan plan increase insurance costs, it would force seniors to shoulder a higher share of these costs.

CBO said—this is CBO not CHUCK SCHUMER, the nonpartisan CBO:

Under the proposal, most elderly people who would be entitled to premium support payments would pay more for their health care than they would pay under the current Medicare system.

How much more? It is staggering when you look at the numbers. Here they are, the seniors' share of health care costs. We know even with Medicare seniors have to pay some of it themselves, but now they pay 25 percent; under the Ryan budget, 68 percent. So there is this voucher, and it goes to the insurance companies, health care costs more, and seniors pay more. Why the heck would we do that?

This is a crippling burden that would drive the average Medicare recipient into poverty. It is not only too much to ask for our seniors, it destroys the foundation of our health care system.

Madam President, just to check on the time, I believe I said after I finished I asked unanimous consent that Senator INHOFE would follow me.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has used 10 minutes. Did the Senator wish for more than 10 minutes?

Mr. SCHUMER. I did, and that was the intention of my unanimous consent request.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. The bottom line is the House Republican budget would cause the cost of health insurance to

rise and then would make seniors pay a greater share of that higher cost. It is a cut in benefits plans, plain and simple. If we are serious about reining in Medicare spending, there is a far better starting place than the Ryan budget. It is the health care law passed by Congress last year. Republicans are patting themselves on the back lately for leading on entitlement reform. When it comes to reining in the runaway costs of Medicare, the truth is the President did it first, and he did it better.

In the health care law, we certainly did not complete the job, but we made a good start on reducing waste and inefficiency and duplication in the system. We started down the path of making delivery system reforms. We set up a system for studying the effectiveness of different methods and treatments so that care could be delivered more efficiently. We made a downpayment on shifting the larger health care system away from a fee-for-service model toward a system that pays providers for episodes of care.

The Ryan proposal adopts none of these cost-saving approaches. In fact, his budget calls for the repeal of the health care law altogether. Left unsaid is that this would have the side effect of reopening the doughnut hole, another hit to Medicare beneficiaries.

If the Ryan budget's only goal was to end Medicare, that would be ample cause to work tooth and nail to defeat it, but the Ryan budget doesn't even put most of its savings from ending Medicare toward deficit reduction. Amazingly, it cuts Medicare, ends Medicare as we know it, and takes whatever savings it produces and gives more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. That is right. RYAN's budget not only seeks to permanently extend President Bush's tax cuts for millionaires, he wants to cut their taxes even lower than the Bush levels.

In fact, under the Ryan proposal millionaires would pay a rate so low that it was last seen in the days of Herbert Hoover. What about shared sacrifice? As unbelievable as it sounds, Congressman RYAN wants to give millionaires and billionaires an extra tax break. Ryan's budget proposal would bring down the top rate from 35 percent to 25 percent for those who are very wealthy. This would make for the lowest level of taxing the wealthiest among us since 1931 when the Great Depression was raging and Herbert Hoover was President. This is the trade Congressman RYAN proposes we make: Cut Medicare benefits for seniors so we can afford to give millionaires an extra tax break.

This is exactly the opposite of what the public wants. They don't think the millionaires and billionaires should even be getting George Bush's tax cut, let alone an extra one on top of that. I have nothing against millionaires and billionaires, God bless them. Many of them made their money the good old-fashioned way, but they don't need a tax break when we are cutting health

care and everything else. Most Americans agree with me.

In last month's NBC Wall Street Journal poll that asked Americans what proposals they most support to reduce the deficit, 81 percent of Americans, including a majority of Republicans, as I recall, said they would support a tax on millionaires, the highest polling answer. One of the lowest polling answers was—you guessed it—cutting Medicare benefits. So the Ryan budget has its priorities completely upside-down.

You may ask, if Congressman RYAN puts all his savings from Medicare into millionaire tax breaks, how does he propose to achieve any deficit reduction? The answer is, by targeting the programs most important to the middle class.

It turns out that the Republican plan to end Medicare is also a plan to end other important programs. For example, the Republican plan to end Medicare is, additionally, also a plan to cut tens of thousands of teachers. The Republican plan to end Medicare is, additionally, also a plan to cut Head Start for kids. The Republican plan to end Medicare is, additionally, also a plan to cut medical research on diseases such as cancer. The Republican plan to end Medicare is, additionally, also a plan to cut clean energy projects that create jobs and help us become energy independent.

In all, the Ryan plan assumes a steady squeezing of government until, by 2050, the total cost of everything, save for Social Security and health care, is shrunk from 12 percent of the GDP to just 3 percent. But he doesn't spell out a single detail of how to achieve those cuts. He has a number but no specifics. That is the definition of a meat ax approach as opposed to an approach that uses a smart, sharp scalpel.

Even though the Ryan plan doesn't spell out where the cuts would come from to meet his goal, it isn't a total mystery. We can fill in the blanks. The just completed debate on the 2011 fiscal budget offers plenty of hints on the Republican approach to cutting spending. In the debate we just had, Republicans wanted to cut the very programs that create good-paying jobs and help the middle class. They targeted everything from cancer research to financial aid to college. We fended off many of their worst cuts by successfully pushing Republicans to include \$17 billion in cuts from the mandatory side. We also got them to agree to reduce Pentagon spending by nearly \$3 billion compared to their original budget. This was not the Republican's preferred way to reduce the deficit. Because of ideology, they disproportionately targeted the domestic discretionary part of the budget for cutting.

But our deficit problems weren't caused by Head Start and cancer research, and we won't fix them by going after Head Start and cancer research. In the budget debates to come, we need

to broaden the playing field beyond domestic discretionary spending. We should include, for instance, waste in the Defense Department. The Pentagon makes up half of the discretionary side of the budget, but Republicans continue to treat it as off limits. RYAN himself leaves it virtually untouched save for a symbolic trim. To say there isn't waste at the Pentagon like there is waste everywhere else in the budget is absurd.

The bottom line is, any budget that leaves defense and revenues off the table is ultimately not serious. We need an all-of-the-above approach that puts all parts of the budget on the table. A dollar cut from mandatory spending or the Pentagon is just as good as a dollar cut from nondefense discretionary spending.

Deficit reduction is an important goal, but the sacrifice must be shared. The Ryan budget fails that test. The Democratic Senate will not stand for any proposals that seek to balance the budget on the backs of the middle class and seniors. I look forward to hearing the President's remarks tomorrow. As for Congressman RYAN, I encourage him to go back to the drawing board and come up with a fairer, more balanced plan.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, let me thank my good friend from New York for allowing me to have this time. I do appreciate his generosity. I have to say, I don't agree with what he said, but that comes as no surprise to my friend from New York. I will only make one comment. One statement I heard him say toward the end of his remarks was that every other country in the world would do it this way. That is the whole crux of it right there. I often wonder if you look at the other countries, they are all trying to get to our system. They all envy America for its system of freedom, of health delivery. We wonder sometimes if government-run health care is bad—and that is what this is; that is what the Obama administration is trying to do—if it is better, then why doesn't it work anywhere? I have often looked at this. It doesn't work in Canada, Denmark, the UK. It doesn't work in any of the other places. Yet they always say: It will work here. A lot of my liberal friends say: If I were running it, it would work. We have a great system.

I guess a little class warfare is healthy now and then, and we had a little bit of that in the last few minutes.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I am going to be very offensive right now to a lot of people, certainly to the Ouattara group, the rebels taking over in Cote d'Ivoire. I am going to be offensive to the United Nations. I am going to be offensive to the French and to our own State Department.

This little girl is named Zegita Marie Rapert. Zegita is an Ethiopian name. It means God's grace. This little girl we found. She is only 2 days old. I happened to be in Ethiopia. She was an orphan. And my daughter Molly—in fact, I should hold this up. These are my 20 kids and grandkids. My daughter Molly had nothing but boys. So she adopted Zegita Marie. She came up to me the other day, that little girl—she was 2 days old when we first saw her. She is now 10 years old. She reads at a college level. She is a brilliant little girl. She came up to me the other day and Pappi—let me explain that. I is for Inhofe. That is me. So it is Momma and Pappi. She said: Pappi, why do you things nobody else would do. I said: That is why I do it.

Zegita Marie got her answer, and that is the reason I am talking today. I happen to be familiar with Africa. I have been for quite some time. I am on the Senate Armed Services Committee. I think they consider me the point man for Africa. We started working with Africa back at 9/11. At 9/11 we made a decision that while the squeeze in terrorism in the Middle East is going down through Djibouti and the Horn of Africa, we need to help the Africans build African brigades, supply them, help send their officers to the United States to train. It was a good program. I sometimes kind of joked around by saying, since I was the only member of the Senate Armed Services Committee who knew where Africa was, I took it on.

Anyway, I do have a background in Africa. For that reason, I am going to speak for the fifth time on the crisis. Cote d'Ivoire is a West African country. We have been reading about it. It is sub-Saharan Africa. Nobody cares about sub-Saharan Africa. They do care about Libya but not sub-Saharan Africa. Anyway, the news is reporting that President Gbagbo and his wife Simone were captured yesterday by the French military forces acting with the rebel forces of Alassane Ouattara. There is a videotape of both the President and First Lady in custody. According to the BBC and Reuters, after the U.N. and the French helicopters repeatedly attacked the Presidential palace, French special forces stormed the building with up to 20 French tanks and armored vehicles. They took them both from the Presidential palace to the Golf Hotel, killing untold hundreds or thousands of people.

This right here is a picture that was taken. This is a helicopter, a United Nations helicopter. It was encouraged to be used by the French. The French said: We authorize you. We are going to send our troops in there with you. We are going to do whatever they are doing. This is the capital of Cote d'Ivoire, where they are hitting targets. That is an area where they have a lot of their ordinance. I have been there. I have seen it. They are all scattered. You have little huts with galvanized steel roofs over them with countless, hundreds and hundreds of people.