Bentsen
Berman
Bevill
Bishop
Bonior
Borski
Boucher
Brewster
Browder
Brown (CA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Bryant (TX)
Cardin
Chapman
Clay
Clayton
Clement
Clyburn
Coleman
Collins (IL)
Collins (MI)
Condit
Conyers
Costello
Cramer
Cummings
Danner
DeFazio
DeLauro
Dellums
Deutsch
Dicks
Dingell
Dixon
Doggett
Dooley
Doyle
Durbin
Edwards
Engel
Eshoo
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Fazio
Fields (LA)
Filner
Flake
Foglietta
Frank (MA)
Frost
Furse
Gejdenson
Gephardt
Geren
Gibbons
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green (TX)
Gutierrez
Hall (OH)
Hamilton
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hefner
Hilliard
Hinchey
Holden
Hoyer
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jacobs
Jefferson
Johnson (SD)
Johnson, E. B.
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (MA)
Kennedy (RI)
Kennelly
Kildee
Kleczka
Klink
LaFalce
Lantos
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lincoln
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowey
Luther
Maloney
Manton
Markey
Mascara
Matsui
McCarthy
McDermott
McHale
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek
Menendez
Millender-McDonald
Miller (CA)
Minge
Mink
Moakley
Mollohan
Moran
Murtha
Nadler
Neal
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Orton
Pallone
Pastor
Payne (NJ)
Payne (VA)
Pelosi
Peterson (FL)
Peterson (MN)
Pickett
Pomeroy
Poshard
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Richardson
Rivers
Roemer
Rose
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sabo
Sanders
Sawyer
Schroeder
Schumer
Scott
Serrano
Sisisky
Skaggs
Skelton
Slaughter
Spratt
Stark
Stenholm
Stokes
Studds
Stupak
Tanner
Tejeda
Thompson
Thornton
Thurman
Torres
Torricelli
Towns
Traficant
Velazquez
Vento
Volkmer
Ward
Waters
Watt (NC)
Waxman
Williams
Wise
Woolsey
Wynn
Yates

NOT VOTING—22

Cox
Coyne
de la Garza
Dickey
Ford
Greene (UT)
Hayes
Hostettler
Johnston
Leach
Molinari
Montgomery
Owens
Pryce
Quinn
Riggs
Roth
Talent
Tauzin
Visclosky
Whitfield
Wilson

□ 1305

Mr. NEUMANN changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 150, the previous question on House Resolution 416, and 151, adoption of House Resolution 416, I was unavoidably absent from the Capitol on personal family matters—a conference at my son's school. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes'' on both issues.

PROVIDING FOR EXPENSES OF SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON UNITED STATES ROLE IN IRANIAN ARMS TRANSFERS TO CROATIA AND BOSNIA

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on House Oversight, I call up a privileged resolution (H. Res. 417) providing amounts for the expenses of the Select Subcommittee on the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia of the Committee on International Relations in the second session of the One Hundred Fourth Congress, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 417

Resolved, That (a) there shall be paid out of the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives not more than $1,200,000 for the expenses of the Select Subcommittee on the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia (hereinafter in this resolution referred to as the ''select subcommittee'') of the Committee on International Relations, any part of which sum may be used for procurement of consultant services under section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946.

(b) Payments under this resolution shall be made on vouchers authorized by the select subcommittee, signed by the chairman of the Committee on International Relations, and approved in the manner directed by the Committee on House Oversight.

(c) Amounts shall be available under this resolution for expenses incurred during the period beginning on the date on which this resolution is agreed to and ending on the date on which the select subcommittee ceases to exist or ending immediately before noon on January 3, 1997, whichever first occurs.

(d) Amounts made available under this resolution shall be expended in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Committee on House Oversight.

(e) The Committee on House Oversight shall have authority to make adjustments in the amount under subsection (a), if necessary to comply with an order of the President issued under section 254 of the Balanced budget and emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 or to conform to any reduction in appropriations for the purposes of such subsection.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The Clerk read as follows:

Committee amendment in the nature of a substitute:

Strike out all after the resolving clause and insert:

Resolved, That (a) there shall be paid out of the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives not more than $995,000 for the expenses of the Select Subcommittee on the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia (hereinafter in this resolution referred to as the ''select subcommittee'') of the Committee on International Relations, any part of which sum may be used for procurement of consultant services under section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946.

(b) Payments under this resolution shall be made on vouchers authorized by the select subcommittee, signed by the chairman of the Committee on International Relations, and approved in the manner directed by the Committee on House Oversight.

(c) Amounts shall be available under this resolution for expenses incurred during the period beginning on the date on which this resolution is agreed to and ending on the date on which the select subcommittee ceases to exist or ending immediately before noon on January 3, 1997, whichever first occurs.

(d) Amounts made available under this resolution shall be expended in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Committee on House Oversight.

(e) The Committee on House Oversight shall have authority to make adjustments in the amount under subsection (a), if necessary to comply with an order of the President issued under section 254 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 or to conform to any reduction in appropriations for the purposes of such subsection.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. FAZIO] for purposes of debate only, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume, with the understanding that any additional time which I may yield will be subject to the specific limitation for purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, did the White House permit a mortal enemy of the United States to establish a military presence in Europe, or did the White House inspire a mortal enemy of the United States to establish a military presence in Europe? That is the essence of the question that this Congress will be investigating in the next months and that we at this time are authorizing funding for, the select subcommittee of the Committee on International Relations.

The House has just approved House Resolution 416 authorizing the creation of a select subcommittee. We will now be considering the resolution to provide $995,000 for the expenses of the select subcommittee.

There is ample justification for the creation and the funding of the select subcommittee. The chairman of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], articulated these reasons

when he appeared before the Committee on House Oversight last week to explain the funding request. As presented to the committee, the select subcommittee is needed to investigate questions that have arisen, very serious questions, following the revelation that the Clinton administration gave a green light over 2 years ago for the creation of an Iranian arms pipeline to Bosnia and Croatia.

The administration's policy, No. 1, directly contradicts the stated position of the Government of the United States. This Congress repeatedly tried to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia, and the administration opposed us, and the President vetoed our attempts to do so. The policy was also not revealed to the Congress, nor to the American people, and it has allowed the terrorist government of Iran to gain a strategic presence in Europe.

It also, Mr. Speaker, affects the United States exit strategy from Bosnia.

Discussion at the committee meeting raised several unanswered questions:

How was this policy developed?

What was the United States role in implementing it?

What will be its consequences?

Was Congress deceived or misled?

Has any United States law been violated?

The serious nature of these issues warrants further investigation by the select subcommittee established specifically for this purpose and deserves to be funded at the appropriate level. The $995,000 funding level approved by the Committee on House Oversight, which is a $205,000 reduction from the original request, is, Mr. Speaker, a responsible and prudent figure.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the resolution before the House funds this very needed select subcommittee investigation in a very prudent and fiscally responsible manner. I would hope that the House, in a bipartisan fashion, would adopt the resolution, and I look forward to the debate on this extremely critical matter.

The reality of the matter is that the administration now admits that despite the fact that it opposed our attempts to openly permit the arming of the Bosnian people by the United States directly or through our allies or responsible Muslim governments, instead of doing that the administration opposed congressional efforts and engaged in this tactic of secretly giving a green light to the arming of the Bosnians by one of the most horrendous enemies of the American people.

This is a very serious subject, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing about the establishment of this select subcommittee—be it process, procedure or substance—that is not profoundly flawed. Indeed, there are so many objectionable aspects to this funding request that it is difficult to know where to begin.

Some of these many problems might have been avoided had the Republican majority not chosen to act with such unnecessary haste. Why all the rush? There has been no showing of such extraordinary circumstances that require the Republican majority to ram this legislation through the House with so little thought, discussion, preparation or analysis. This is certainly no way to do the people's business—a criticism that has become increasingly common in this Congress.

Having told the minority virtually nothing about the need and purpose of this subcommittee, and having rushed this process to a ludicrous degree, the majority suddenly presented the Committee on House Oversight, and now presents before this House, with a subcommittee budget for 6 months at nearly one million dollars in taxpayer money. Annualized, this amounts to a budget of almost $2 million, making it the most expensive subcommittee established by the Republican majority this Congress. That is nearly three times the average amount for each of the House International Relations Committee's other standing subcommittees. By any measure, this is a substantial sum of the public's money, and we should not authorize its use without an equally substantial and compelling justification for doing so.

What, then, is the majority's justification? It is now obvious that the majority is asking for additional taxpayer money to do nothing more than review an aspect of the President's—and this country's—foreign policy. A particular policy, which, I might add, has proven highly successful to date. The American people should know that this million dollar request for their money is not being sought by the Republican majority for use in the investigation of any crimes—for no such allegations have been made—or to resolve any legal or factual disputes. No, the controversy at issue, to the extent that one exists at all, is one that relates to policy, and, as such, is an inappropriate subject for the creation of an expensive new subcommittee.

This is not to say that the Congress should play no role in the conduct of this country's foreign affairs. On the contrary, we have a responsibility to contribute to the formulation, funding, implementation, and oversight of U.S. foreign policy. But we believe that this role should first be exercised through our time-tested committee system. The Republican majority chooses to ignore the fact that the American taxpayer has already fully funded a standing House committee to do this very job—namely, the Committee on International Relations—and that committee has already been funded in the 104th Congress in the precise amount of $10,056,875.

Everything the Republican majority proposes for this select subcommittee—however unnecessary or unwise the undertaking itself—can be achieved by the existing Committee on International Relations and done so within its existing budget. We have seen nothing that is unique or extraordinary to justify the creation of yet another new House entity, with its own separate funding, staffing, and mandate. We already have an excellent House standing committee in the foreign policy arena, and if the Republican majority really cares to pursue this particular matter, it should use the standing committee and existing resources which the House created and authorized for that purpose. Under these circumstances, to allocate an additional $1 million in taxpayer funds is a waste and an embarrassment. Surely Republicans have more respect for tax dollars than is suggested by this resolution.

Moreover, the creation of this subcommittee is at odds with many of the reforms we have imposed on the House. Speaker GINGRICH imposed a strict staffing freeze, and the House funding resolution specified funding limits, on all House committees. At the time, the Republican majority represented that it was serious about reducing the size and cost of government, and touted the staffing freeze and reduced funding levels as indicative of its commitment. It even claimed credit for reducing the number of subcommittees, and in an ironic twist, the very subcommittee which would ordinarily oversee this matter was eliminated at the beginning of this Congress, its jurisdiction being taken over by the full Committee on International Relations. The creation, however, of this special select subcommittee allows the majority to circumvent the staffing limits and cost reductions—another example of the majority saying one thing and doing another.

It is clear, then, that the establishment and funding of this select subcommittee is neither necessary, appropriate, frugal, or wise. One need not venture very far, however, to determine what is really at stake here. Indeed, the majority's true purpose in this exercise is as transparent as an election date in November is certain. For in the Republican majority's actions there is the unmistakable whiff of election year politics in the air. From Speaker GINGRICH's press release, issued during the week preceding the introduction of House Resolution 417, it is quite clear that the objective of this proposed subcommittee is to gin up criticism of the President's foreign policy. That is why the American taxpayers are being asked to foot a $1 million, 6-month investigation—and everyone knows it.

This proposal to create yet another new panel can best be understood in the context of the majority leadership's recent memorandum to its committee chairs directing them to dig up information with which to attack the Clinton administration. Apparently,

the creation of this particular subcommittee is page one of the Republican campaign playbook. And as their candidate for the White House continues to do poorly in his campaign, we can only assume that we will see more of the same.

But for the Republican majority to so brazenly manipulate the machinery of government in this manner is to violate the public trust and squander hard-earned tax dollars. Far too much of our time and the resources of this Congress are being spent by the majority in pursuit of political gain in its efforts to tarnish unfairly an increasingly successful and popular President.

The most obvious of these is the so-called Whitewater investigation, which has now cost the taxpayer a mind-boggling $30 million. The costs of numerous other Republican investigations of this administration, such as the inquisition into the White House Travel Office, add up to hundreds of more pointless hours, and hundreds of thousands of additional public dollars. It is a staggering amount of time and money, all of which has been enormously wasted in a partisan effort to discredit the President and obtain political advantage.

The real tragedy in all this is that the time and resources expended by the majority in these efforts could have been put to far better use in furtherance of a substantive legislative agenda, one that speaks to the needs of America's working families. This resolution, however, represents politics at its worst, and the majority gravely underestimates the patience of the American public in pursuing this course. The minority has done what it can to point out the needlessness of this undertaking. Absent a more compelling basis than has been presented thus far, the House should reject the present effort to convert appropriated funds to undertake yet another baseless attempt to attack this administration. I emphatically urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on House Resolution 417.

□ 1315

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, just a few facts on the funding. No supplemental appropriations or reprogramming of existing appropriations are required to support the funding amount for this select subcommittee. There are sufficient funds in fiscal 1996 available within the appropriate House account to fund the expenses of the select subcommittee without jeopardizing other committee's funding needs.

Second, this funding level continues to honor the Contract With America's commitment to reduce committee staffing by one-third. On the first day of Republican control of the House, committee staffs were cut by 621 positions, a 33 percent reduction from the previous Congress. As of March 31, by not filling the total authorized positions, committees have contributed an additional 105 positions to this reduction, an actual cut of 40 percent. This resolution, as amended, does not violate the commitment to reduce committee funds by 30 percent in the 104th Congress, and the amount is also well below previous similar investigations.

Mr. Speaker, the famous October Surprise investigation cost taxpayers over $4.5 million. Now our friends on the other side of the aisle apparently have found fiscal conservatism.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], the distinguished chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON].

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I wish my colleagues' frugality had been apparent when we were talking about the Iran-Contra investigation, which ended up with nobody really being convicted. Everybody was dismissed, and we spent $48 million; $48 million on Iran-Contra and $2 million on the select committee. On the October Surprise they spent $1.35 million.

They cannot have it both ways. If something is done that is questionable and needs to be investigated and we need the resources to do it, they should be appropriated, just like you did, only you spent a heck of a lot more money than we are talking about.

Mr. GILMAN. I thank the gentleman, Mr. Speaker. Incidentally, the gentleman's figures on the October Surprise should be revised to show there was a total expenditure of $4.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, this request for $995,000 to fund the Select Subcommittee on Bosnia is a reasonable, prudent allocation of House resources for a particularly important task.

Some of our colleagues have asked why our full committee cannot investigate the Clinton administration's role in secretly permitting the Iranians to provide arms to the Bosnian Muslims in 1994.

It is an appropriate question, and there is a good response.

First of all, our full committee continues to have a full and demanding agenda.

Among the major issues our committee is extensively engaged in are international terrorism, narcotics and organized crime, NATO expansion, trade, China-MFN, the Middle East Peace Process, Haiti, North Korea, Russia, and oversight of other aspects of United States policy towards Bosnia, to name just a few.

My colleagues will recall that, in keeping with our promises after the 1994 elections, Republicans reduced the size of our committee staffs by one-third.

All of our professional staff are fully engaged in their regular duties.

We do not have the staff to undertake the focused and comprehensive investigation that the administration's handling of this arms pipeline issue has demonstrated is needed.

Nor do we have in our regular allocation the funds that are needed to properly conduct such an investigation.

If our committee still had a subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, that would be an obvious focal point for this investigation.

However, when the cap of five subcommittees was mandated, the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee was eliminated.

The most efficient and effective way to conduct a thorough, yet speedy investigation of a major policy change that has placed American troops in danger in a volatile part of the world is through a select subcommittee with adequate resources and a defined mandate.

This resolution, and its companion, House Resolution 416, meet that test. Accordingly, I urge the support of our colleagues.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. GEJDENSON], who serves on both the Committee on House Oversight and the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose this funding. What is clear here, Mr. Speaker, is that the only thing select about this committee is the selective memory it takes to bring us to this point.

In Iran-Contra, Mr. Speaker, we were talking about criminality. In the 4 years prior to President Clinton's presidency we had mass executions of policy that did nothing to stop murder in Yugoslavia, and yes, while Iranians were shipping weapons to the Muslims in Yugoslavia. We are going to spend $1 million, but if some of our colleagues on the other side had spent $1 for the Christian Science Monitor, or a quarter for the Washington Post or the Washington Times, they would have known about this a long time ago.

October 28, 1992, President Bush is the President of the United States. Iran in particular has positioned itself at the forefront of this fight to defend Yugoslavia's Islamic minority. Arms shipments from Iran in 1992. What changed? A lot of things have changed. President Bush has gone, President Clinton has come in, and he has succeeded to stop the fighting, to stop the killing, to stop the liquidations of villages.

What did he do to achieve this? No, he did not violate unilaterally the U.N. embargo that existed. He did not report to the Congress that he did not take an action. That action would have been to

stop, somehow, the Iranians from shipping arms there. However, President Bush had vetoed the legislation which would have mandated a President to inform the Congress of an action that they even requested, let alone one that they took no action on. So in the intelligence bill vetoed by President Bush, the President had no obligation to report what other countries were doing.

Should we know these things? Yes, as a Member of Congress, I think we should know these things. But let us take a look at the hard facts. The gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE] and the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] voted for a bill that included a prohibition prohibiting the President of the United States from interfering with arms shipments from other countries.

What do we hear about today? We are going to have a select committee led by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE] to find out why the President did several months before we mandated him to do it, the very same thing he did. If this confuses people, let us go from the beginning.

In 1992, we already have the Bush administration knowledgeable of Iranian arms into Yugoslavia, if they read the Christian Science Monitor. What happens? In 1992 the Iranians are shipping arms into Yugoslavia. There are ups and downs in those shipments. In 1994, yes, the administration learns that the Iranians are going to ship more arms. We do not ship the arms. We do not violate a Federal law. The President does not violate the U.N. embargo. That is in April.

In May, just in case you missed the 1992 Christian Science Monitor story, in May the Washington Post publishes reports of Iranian arms shipments. Now to June. In June, the Congress passes an amendment calling for a unilateral embargo. The President says the unilateral embargo means we will have to put American troops on the ground while there is fighting. There is debate over that. That was his policy. It did lead to peace, so it apparently worked.

But also in June Senator MCCAIN, on the floor of the Senate, June 24, the Washington Times story, one more 25-cent expenditure, says, ''Iranian Weapons Sent,'' and what happens? It says it is done with a wink and a nod. That is recorded in the Senate.

Now, in August, in August of the very same year, this Congress votes to prohibit the President of the United States from interfering with arms shipments from third countries. It does not exclude Iran. It simply says the President cannot interfere with those shipments.

□ 1330

Let us compare where we were. In 1992, the Bush administration, for 4 years, watches genocide and mass village exterminations. President Clinton initiates a policy that may have some debate, but at the end of the day they are in Canton, OH, and we have a peace process where the murdering and killing has stopped.

Let us go spend $1 million. Why? My colleague from California said it: Instructions from the Republican leadership.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE].

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

The gentleman is quite right, we all voted to lift the embargo, but we did not specify what countries should not put arms in there. That would have required us to list six pariah states. We kind of thought the President knew that Iran and Libya and Syria and these countries were pariah states. We took that into consideration without having to spell that out.

The fact is, that is the last country we would want to have get a foothold in that volatile part of the world. That is our complaint.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting how our friends on the other side of the aisle now say during Iran-Contra they were investigating bad things, but now we are not investigating anything. It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that President Clinton allowed the shipments, contradicting his own public statements in support of an arms embargo and possibly violating law.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], the distinguished majority leader.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take a moment to reflect, to reflect on the duty and the responsibility that each of us has to the citizens who elected us to this office. The responsibility of popularly elected representatives to oversee and to check the executive branch is perhaps the most essential working element of a truly free political system, as essential as voting, because oversight of the executive branch is ultimately about the public's right to know.

No matter what the issue, no matter how unpleasant the issue might be, the public has, as the press reminds us, a right to know. The issue before us today is not one of partisan politics or election year grandstanding. At issue today is the legitimate suspicion of serious wrongdoing on the part of the administration, wrongdoing that could threaten the lives of our young men and women serving overseas, wrongdoing that could result in the ominous spread of terrorist doctrines to yet another corner of the world and put our troops at increased risk.

It is our constitutional duty to investigate those suspicions and to get the facts out. The duty is not optional. It is what we were elected to do. I urge my colleagues again on both sides of the aisle to welcome this opportunity to discover the truth. The citizens of the United States do have a right to know what their Government is doing. It is our duty to find out and to tell them. All Members, Democrat and Republican, should join in getting to the bottom of this matter.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Georgia [Ms. MCKINNEY].

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, here we go again with promises made, promises broken.

I rise today in opposition to another million-dollar ripoff of the American taxpayer. This bill would have us spend $1 million to fund a select subcommittee to look into an issue that the International Relations Committee has already dealt with.

Why is it necessary to create a whole new subcommittee with a dozen new staffers, when we already have a subcommittee to handle issues related to Bosnia? Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership is well aware that this is an election year and that Senator DOLE needs all the help he can get.

It must be quite disheartening for the Republican leadership to see their nominee for President so far behind President Clinton in the polls. Apparently, the 50-plus hearings they have held on Whitewater have not done enough to hurt the President's ratings. So now they are trying a new approach—Iranian arms transfers to Bosnia. Somehow, Mr. Speaker, GOP leaders will try to blame President Clinton for Iran's transfer of weapons to Bosnia.

Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to arms transfers of all kinds. In fact, I have introduced legislation that would require greater congressional oversight of weapons transfers from the United States to dictators, human rights abusers, and military aggressors. But I fail to see why we have to spend $1 million of taxpayers' money—especially in these austere times—when we already have an International Relations Committee.

Clearly, Republican leaders are trying to create a $1 million political entity designed to help candidate DOLE, who has hit the limit on his campaign spending. Let us face it, this is the mother of all independent expenditures.

I will say it again, Mr. Speaker, we already have a standing International Relations Committee charged with looking into matters related to Bosnia. And if not to help candidate DOLE, why else would we be setting up yet another International Relations subcommittee?

Why, Mr. Speaker, we are telling the American public that we must cut education funding, but somehow we have $1 million to blow on among other things, new RCA color TV's and bottled water for this new and redundant subcommittee?

Mr. Speaker, this Congress should be focusing on raising the minimum wage, improving education, and reducing corporate welfare. We do not need to hire

a dozen new staffers and create the most expensive subcommittee in the House of Representatives. Moreover, let us not forget the memo Republican leaders sent around to Republican committee chairmen asking them to use their committees to find dirt on President Clinton.

Mr. Speaker, let us create this subcommittee. All I ask is that we call it what it really is: the select House subcommittee to sling mud on Democrats and elect BOB DOLE for President.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SMITH], my friend and the chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, there is only one way to describe the Clinton administration's policy on arms embargo against Bosnia: breathtakingly duplicitous. Duplicitous first in that the White House repeatedly and strenuously rebuffed congressional efforts to lift the illegal and immoral arms embargo in violation of Bosina's legitimate right to self defense. Duplicitous in that the President authorized a policy which effectively sanctioned arms shipments from Iran, of all places, Iran, a terrorist state, to Bosnia via Croatia.

This latest fiasco underscores the crisis of leadership we have seen time and time again over the last 3 years. I commend both Chairman GILMAN and Chairman THOMAS for their leadership in pursuing this matter.

The House Committee on International Relations recently held a hearing on United States policy towards Bosnia which delved into charges that the Clinton administration approved or allowed Iran to ship arms to Bosnia. Frankly, that hearing raised more questions than it answered.

Mr. Speaker, as a House sponsor of the bipartisan effort to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia, I am extremely concerned about the implications and consequences of such a policy should these allegations be substantiated. It is ironic that President Clinton apparently was willing to turn a blind eye toward Iran while blocking a majority of Congress, a bipartisan majority, that called for the United States, not Iran, to take the lead in upholding Bosnia's legitimate and fundamental right to defend itself.

In a recent interview, former Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, the architect of the Dayton agreement, indicated that the situation on the ground in Bosnia had reached such a crisis that the Bosnian Government would not have survived without outside arms shipments. In attempting to justify the Clinton policy on Iranian shipments. Mr. Holbrooke concluded, and I quote, ''We knew that the Iranians would try to use the aid to buy political interest. It was a calculated policy based on the feeling that you had to choose between a lot of bad choices,'' close quote.

Bad choices, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, but there had to be a better choice than the one that was embraced by President Clinton. Should the Bosnians been given the means to defend themselves in the face of aggression and genocide? Absolutely. Should those arms have come from Iran? Absolutely not.

In the past 2 years, Mr. Speaker, Members from both sides of the aisle have put aside their differences to respond to this senseless slaughter of innocent civilians by well-armed Serb militants in Bosnia. Repeatedly we have raised our voices, calling upon the President to display a determined U.S. leadership in the face of this naked aggression. These calls were repeatedly rebuffed.

When we voted in an overwhelming manner in support of lifting the arms embargo on June 8, 1995 and again on August 1, we were told by the White House that such an action was not in the interest of the United States as it would lead to an Americanization of the conflict. It would result in the deployment of thousands of U.S. troops, and undermine the U.N. Security Council.

Mr. Speaker, when all is said and done, the fundamental issue at stake here, as in so many other instances, is one of leadership and in this case flawed leadership. For nearly 3 years, Mr. Speaker, the Clinton administration, like the one before it—and I was equally critical of the previous administration, as my colleagues know on the other side—passed the buck on Bosnia.

But the President and then candidate Clinton said that he knew better, and he argued that during the campaign years and during his first few months in office. They said the Europeans should handle this. Now they turn a blind eye to who would provide the arms and allow the Iranians to do it. It is shameful, and unfortunately it has led to the situation that we are in today.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for support of this resolution. It is a good one.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, could I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 13½ minutes, and the gentleman from Florida has 15½ minutes.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN].

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I was not here when we had the Iran-Contra investigation of clearly illegal activities, but I was here when the new Republican majority took over the Congress with promises to slash congressional spending, to cut committees, to reduce staff, to eliminate duplication, to reform the legislative process. Now we have a proposal that does just the opposite of all those promises.

In that process of eliminating committees and slashing congressional expenses, the majority eliminated the two subcommittees that would have had jurisdiction over this matter, the Europe and Asia Subcommittees of the International Relations Committee. The purpose of that was to save half a million dollars over the entire year. The average subcommittee spends $189,000 over a 6-month period.

This subcommittee will spend $1 million over a 6-month period. It will be the most expensive subcommittee in the entire Congress, more expensive than the health, Social Security, crime, and military readiness subcommittees. Any of those other subcommittees pale by comparison to what we are going to spend here.

In fact, this spending is understated. I grant you there is a line for new RCA color TV's and other things like that, bottled water, but there is not an inclusion for money for the travel for the witnesses. That is a major expense. I think this amount of $1 million is understated.

But we already spend $3.2 million and we employ 132 staff people to review U.S. foreign policy. We have three committees that are looking into the Bosnia issue. Talk about creating more duplication. Do we really need a fourth committee that is going to be more expensive than any of the other subcommittees in the entire Congress? I cannot imagine why.

The other reason why this proposal does not make sense, is that in the very same year that this activity took place, which no one has even alleged is illegal, but in that very same year we passed a law that says ''no funds appropriated by any provision of law may be used for the purpose of participation in, support for or assistance to the enforcement of the Bosnia arms embargo by any department, agency, or other entity of the United States.''

□ 1345

That was congressional will. We passed that in the very year that these alleged decisions took place.

I do not even understand the allegation, to be honest with you. There is clearly no illegal activity involved. The President did not do anything. We did not violate any arms embargo. We did not send any arms. The reality is the administration did exactly what the Congress wanted them to do. Do not waste another $1 million of the taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the administration did not do what we wanted them to do. We wanted them to lift the embargo and let the Bosnians defend themselves. We passed that twice, and the President vetoed that. That was the will of the Congress and the will of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER], the chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

(Mr. BEREUTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member rises in strong support for House Resolution 416.

This Member would say to his colleagues that there are serious issues involved here. The administration, and some on the other side of the aisle, would have you believe that this a political exercise—payback for the October Surprise investigation.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The October Surprise fiasco was a conspiracy theorist's fantasy, concocted whole-cloth by a seedy mixture of arms merchants, convicted felons, and washed-up academics. Convicted scam artists were claiming that a decade earlier they had a direct role in deceiving the American public. Mr. Speaker, it was pure bunk. Eventually a strong consensus developed that the October Surprise charges leveled about President George Bush were wholly without merit.

Mr. Speaker, I believe some people in the White House and top advisers to the President's foreign policy need to remember this is not a dictatorship. This is not a banana republic. In order for foreign policy to be sustainable over the long run, it must be supported by the American people and by the Congress of the United States.

Now, clearly, despite what one reads in the papers, the Congress of the United States and the American people would not have found it acceptable to have arms coming in from either Iraq or Iran. The administration understood that. But, nevertheless, they proceeded with a wink and a nod to the knowledge of Iranian arms and fighters coming through Croatia to Bosnia.

As a former member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I can tell you that about two-thirds of what you read in the paper is inaccurate. That fact it has been read in the paper that perhaps arms were coming from Iran is no confirmation and no real warning to Members of Congress that in fact the administration would do something so out of touch with what the American people would want. It was inconceivable for Members here to really believe that the administration would permit perhaps as many as 2,000 Iranians and weapons from Iran to come into Bosnia. Ridiculous. Out of the question. Unthinkable.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a conscious policy to deceive Congress is not a partisan issue. It goes to the heart of our constitutional system of government. Willful deception of the Congress and the American people is a corrupting influence that can, and, if left exposed, will, unchecked, undermine our system of government.

No one, regardless of political affiliation—not our Democratic colleagues—should be willing to tolerate such contempt for Congress in a constitutional system of government.

This Member would be perfectly willing to exonerate the administration if the facts do not support those allegations. However, the Congress has a right and a duty to learn the facts regarding the administration's knowledge of and role in Iranian arms being sent to Bosnia through Croatia. Thus far, Mr. Speaker, the administration's response has been clumsy and a patronizing effort to stonewall us.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be no question that President Clinton and his top national security advisers did indeed knowingly tolerate and perhaps encourage the shipment of Iranian arms and Iranian fighters to assist the Bosnian Muslims. There also seems to be little doubt that the administration was implementing this policy at the very time that it was telling Congress that it was fully supporting the arms embargo. The issue is quite simple—key policymakers in the Clinton administration deceived the American people and the Congress in order to implement a clearly intolerable policy, a policy that apparently resulted in the deployment of hundreds of Iranian fighters in Bosnia perhaps as many as 2,000 Iranians.

Mr. Speaker, a conscious policy to deceive the Congress is not a partisan issue. It goes to the heart of our constitutional system of government. Willful deception of Congress and the American people is a corrupting influence that can, if left unexposed and unchecked, thoroughly undermine our system of government. No one, regardless of political affiliation, no not our Democrat colleagues, should be willing to tolerate such contempt for Congress in our constitutional system of government.

This Member would be perfectly willing to exonerate this administration if the facts do not support such allegations. However, the Congress has a right to learn the facts regarding the administration's knowledge of and role in Iranian arms being sent to Bosnia through Croatia. Thus far, Mr. Speaker, the administration's response has been a clumsy and patronizing effort to stonewall.

Resonses under oath to the initial inquiries made at the International Relations Committee hearing by this Member, together with the distinguished gentleman from Illinois, Mr. HYDE, the distinguished chairman from New York, Mr. GILMAN, and other demonstrated a remarkable case of selective amnesia by the administration on virtually every key point regarding the administration's complicity with the Iranian arms shipments.

During repeated questioning, senior administration officials voiced no recollection of events that clearly transpired. Peter Tarnoff, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and hence the chief political liaison from the State Department to the White House, repeatedly insisted he was not privy to White House decisions on the Iranian arms and fighters that apparently were made. Regrettably, the Clinton administration's own actions make the creation of a select subcommittee inevitable and necessary.

In fact, the representatives of the administration, on a wide variety of issues, seem to frequently ignore the requirement to tell the truth under oath by feigning an inability to recall details they surely do recall. The witnesses appearing before the committee may indeed not have thorough knowledge about the details we requested, but someone does have knowledge and the Congress, and the American people are entitled to the truth from those who are involved or otherwise knowledgeable. That is the objective of the select subcommittee proposal in House Resolution 416.

Mr. Speaker, this Member does not relish the task that lies ahead for the select subcommittee. The integrity of this institution, the integrity of the American system of representational government, the integrity of the executive branch, and the integrity of the executive branch's relation with Congress demand that we fully investigate the Iran-Bosnia arms transfer fiasco.

The Member urges adoption of House Resolution 416 and House Resolution 417.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER], a true champion of the Bosnian people, particularly on this matter, and a member of the House Committee on Oversight.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Maryland.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 6½ minutes.

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, human beings have a tendency to, unfortunately, respond to previous wrongs against them or slights that they have seen, real or imagined. October Surprise has been mentioned by the chairman of this proposed subcommittee every time I have heard him speak on this issue. I have spoken to him personally. He feels very deeply that October Surprise hearings were a mistake. He may have been right.

I stand before you disavowing the issue of money. I do not think that is what this is about. If in fact there was a legitimate purpose for this investigatory committee, an unusual creation within the committee itself, then the $990,000-some odd dedicated to that objective would be justified.

The fact of the matter is, however, as the gentleman from Connecticut has so ably pointed out, everybody knew what was happening. The outrage that I hear articulated is not justified by some surprise.

During the Bush administration, everybody knew, everybody knew, that the Iranians were trying to make hay out of what was happening in Bosnia. Everybody knew that the Iranians had sent people to Bosnia. It was in the newspapers, much less an intelligence report.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I will yield to the gentleman from Nebraska, unlike most of the gentleman's colleagues, when I ask them to yield.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his courtesy in yielding. I would say to the gentleman that I disagree with him. The fact that it is in the paper is no confirmation it existed. As I suggested to the gentleman, about two-thirds what I read in the paper was in fact not borne out in what the facts were before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. I just wanted to give my alternative view on that.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I respect the gentleman's alternative view, but I will tell him in discussions I had with Bosnian officials, there was no secret about this. As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I knew it. I do not know where the Committee on Foreign Affairs was on this or the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence was on it, but I can tell you that Bosnian officials, President Izetbegovic, did not make it a secret, I would tell my friend. The fact of the matter is that we all knew. The newspapers said it, and, I agree, you cannot take everything you read in the newspaper, so you try to confirm it.

But the central fact of the history is not so much that we knew that Iran or somebody else might give arms. It was that all of us wanted the Bosnians to get arms. That is the central fact here.

The central fact further is we all know, the papers reported, that the President did not preclude that knowledge. But what nobody has mentioned is we did not have U.S. troops on the ground. The English did, the French did, the Danes did, and a number of other countries had troops on the ground.

The fact of the matter is that they did not interpose an objection either. Why? Because they were conflicted about this policy. They knew that under the United Nations charter, an independent, sovereign nation had the legal right to defend itself.

But under the Bush administration and our Western allies, we took a stance in the United Nations that no, we will have an arms embargo. The French and English in particular felt very strongly about it, because they had troops on the ground and they were concerned about the escalation. But they were on the ground, and they could have stopped this in its tracks. Perhaps they had a wink and a nod, because on a public negotiated level, they could not reach a multilateral lifting of the arms embargo. But they did not want the Bosnian Government to fall, and, therefore, of necessity they needed arms.

Let me give you an analogous situation. Saddam Hussein remains in Iraq right now. The 500,000 troops we sent, billions of dollars we spent, and Saddam Hussein sits in Baghdad today. Why? Why? Because the Bush administration made a judgment, that we all went along with, the Congress did not stop it, that maybe we ought to leave Saddam Hussein as a balance against the Iranians, because if we remove him and make Iraq very weak, Iran remains. A practical, pragmatic decision, perhaps not the moral judgment of eliminating someone we believe is a butcher and a war criminal himself.

Bill Clinton, the President of the United States, had this judgment to make: Do I allow them to go through and be able to defend their lives, their homes, and their very nation, or do I say no, die.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Indiana.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, let me just say, did the gentleman know that as of January of this year that they were still sending weapons in from Iran, after our troops were there, after we had 20,000 American troops on the ground?

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, the answer is I do not have specific knowledge of that.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. We have it here.

Mr. HOYER. Let me respond. The fact of the matter is, we are conflicted as well on the policy of making sure the Bosnians have arms. We have had significant discussions about U.S. involvement in doing that, U.S. trainers doing that. We have a conflict on the floor on that. If you are a Bosnian leader dedicated to the protection of your country, you seek aid where you can get it. None of us on this floor is an apologist for Iran. We do want Bosnia to survive.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON].

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, let me just say we had 20,000 American troops on the ground. We remember what happened in Beirut, Lebanon when 235 marines were blown to hell because of a terrorist driving through a barricade. After we had 20,000 Americans on the ground, Iran, who was behind what happened in Beirut, still was funneling supplies in. Not only that, there was also a terrorist training camp found by the NATO forces over there. So for the gentleman to say that this is not a big deal, it is a big deal.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Are you not pleased it has not happened here?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Kansas [Mrs. MEYERS].

(Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. The administration's ill-advised actions regarding Iranian arms transfers to Bosnia raise many questions to which Congress and the American people have a right to know the answers.

In 1994–95, the President's public policy was to support the arms embargo against Bosnia—because to lift it would put at risk the forces of our NATO Allies who were in Bosnia—and to pursue the international isolation of Iran because of that rogue country's promotion of anti-American terrorism. In fact, Assistant Secretary of State Strobe Talbott testified that lifting the arms embargo was inadvisable because it would allow Iran access into Europe.

Little did we know that the President's secret policy was to support Iranian arms smuggling into Bosnia through Croatia, allowing Iran to establish itself as one of the Bosnian Government's most significant patrons. And that it was quite possibly Mr. Talbott himself who advised the President to adopt that secret policy.

We need to know how this secret strategy was arrived at. How much consideration was given to the possible consequences of such a radical shift in American policy?

For more than 2 years, the Clinton administration has been deceiving Congress about its policy in Bosnia. Not merely concealing convert activity, but deceiving the American people about its objectives and goals. Its distortions were so complete that the Central Intelligence Agency was unaware of the switch in tactics and thought the State Department was running a rogue covert operation. This must be investigated by Congress so that we and the American people can know how our foreign policy has been managed. These actions may or may not have been actually illegal, but they are definitely irresponsible, shortsighted, and foolhardy. And the administration must be accountable for them.

□ 1400

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. MENENDEZ].

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I know it is an election year and this type of partisan ploy is expected, but still I find it incredibly difficult to understand how my balanced budget minded, fiscally conservative Republican colleagues, who shut down the Federal Government to save the future of our children, can come before this House and stretch out their hands for $1 million to fund a special committee for 6 months when its oversight work could easily be done by the House Committee on International Relations, of which I am a member.

It is the right committee on substance, on policy and process as it relates to this issue. The most expensive subcommittee of the House Committee on International Relations does not spend in 1 year what the Republicans are proposing to spend on this committee for 6 months.

Mr. Speaker, we can get to the truth that the majority leader spoke of without more government and more tax dollars. In truth, the genesis of the Bosnian crisis and the arms issue goes back to the Bush administration, and if we are going to have this committee, I hope we bring out members of that former administration to discuss what they did and did not know and what they did and did not do.

Mr. Speaker, these are the same Members who stood before the House

arguing that children in my district did not need school lunches, that the cost of safe drinking water and clean air were too high, that energy assistance for seniors and financial aid for college students had to be forfeited in time of fiscal constraints.

Mr. Speaker, this is nothing more than a baldface use of taxpayers' dollars to fund a Republican campaign gimmick, one that was expressed in a memo from the Republican leadership to cause political harm to the President. What a waste of taxpayers' money.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON].

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say we have a letter from the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS], chairman of the Committee on House Oversight. He said that these funds are coming out of the standing committee special and select account. The money is there. There is no problem with it. In addition, there are no new funds required because it is coming from the $6 million that was saved by cutbacks in the cost of running the House and the committees of the House.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues and maybe to the American people who may be paying attention, while President Clinton was saying to the American people and to the Congress he did not want to lift the embargo against Bosnia, behind the scenes covertly he was talking to the Croatian Government saying that is OK, let Iran, another country whom we are embargoing, send these weapons underground in an underground pipeline into Bosnia. Mr. Speaker, he was telling the American people, he was telling the representatives of the American people, something else, lying to us, and yet dealing with the Croatians in a way that would allow the Iranians to send these weapons in.

A cache of weapons was found by NATO forces in a safehouse there where Iranian terrorists were, and these are some of the weapons that were found: mortars; toys that children might pick up that would blow up in their hands; all kinds of weapons of destruction by the same people who were behind the bombing of our barracks in Beirut that killed 235 of our men.

Mr. Speaker, the President misled the Congress of the United States of America. Now, my colleagues have said on a number of occasions today we are going to spend $1 million on a witch hunt and this is nothing we should be doing, we should not be spending this money. I want to remind them on Iran-Contra, that resulted in no one going to jail, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle spent $48 million, and a lot of people thought it was a witch hunt. Admiral Poindexter's career was tainted and it almost ruined him.

My Democrat colleagues spent $2 million on the select committees in this House, $1.35 million on October Surprise, and it ended up costing a total of almost $5 million. Yet we are talking about less than $1 million to get to the bottom of this issue of whether or not the President of the United States may have violated the law, No. 1; or, No. 2, deliberately misled the Congress of the United States by sending incorrect messages up here through his Secretary of State.

Mr. Speaker, let me end by saying that Secretary of State Christopher said to us on a number of occasions, ''We do not want to lift that embargo,'' and yet under the table they were working with the Iranian terrorists to fund that. I think it is wrong. We need to investigate.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SKAGGS].

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, this is a serious matter. It deserves sober debate.

The uncontroverted facts underlying all of this are as follows: They involve no U.S. covert action, nor any ''action'' for that matter. The President of the United States sent to our Ambassador in Croatia instructions to take no position about country C's, Croatia's, request for our views about country A's, Iran's, shipment of arms to country B, Bosnia. That is what happened. No instructions.

''Acquiescence'' somehow gets transformed into ''complicity'' which somehow gets transformed into ''duplicity,'' which in the continued rhetorical inflation on the other side gets transformed into ''contempt of Congress.'' That, in turn, gets bootstrapped into the notion that this is ''serious Presidential wrongdoing.''

Give me a break.

Republican former Senator Warren Rudman, who looked at details of this as explained by the Intelligence Oversight Board's own investigation, found no illegality or wrongdoing. He said, in effect, this is a question of ''politics;'' namely, the wisdom of the policy.

We can look at the question. We should look at it. The majority has every right in the world to hold the administration accountable for that. But let us be a little bit more accurate in the characterization, which has now taken on almost a caricature quality.

Let us stipulate that there is a problem that needs looking into. Do we need one committee to do it? Perhaps the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Two? The Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. Three? The Committee on National Security. Now let us have four, and create a Select Subcommittee of International Relations to boot!

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan [Mr. EHLERS].

(Mr. EHLERS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, listening to the debate for the past hour, I am struck by one aspect of the comments I hear from the other side of the aisle: ''Methinks thou dost protest too much.'' I am beginning to wonder whether there is more here than even I had thought.

As a scientist, I like to deal with the facts and I am interested in finding out the facts. I do not put more credence in allegations unless we can investigate them. On that basis, I believe it is important to proceed with this investigation and try to determine what the facts are.

It appears that the President did allow the Iranians to get arms into Bosnia, and I believe it is important to determine whether, if fact, that happened.

There has been a great deal of discussion here about the cost of the inquiry. I would point out first of all this cost is being handled within the committee budget of the House of Representatives; that that is still 30 percent less than the committee budget under the previous Congress, and certainly appears to be a reasonable expenditure in terms of determining the truth of the situation.

The real issues are whether the President did in some fashion deceive the public and the Congress by publicly stating his opposition to arms going into Bosnia and at the same time allowing arms to go into Bosnia.

Mr. Speaker, I think perhaps a more serious allegation, and one that certainly has to be investigated, is whether the President knowingly allowed the Iranians to be the source of those arms, to provide the pipeline for those arms to get into Bosnia.

I recall when I heard the first news reports of our troops coming in, the international troops, IFOR, and discovering various caches of weapons from the Iranians and finding a number of Iranians there. I was dismayed as a citizen and as a Member of Congress to find that Iranian influence had extended there.

Mr. Speaker, you can imagine my dismay when I found out that the President had some complicity in this. As I said, I believe it is extremely important for us to investigate this, to determine as best as possible what the facts are in the situation, and make our conclusions.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. BALLENGER].

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution to investigate the United States role in the Iranian arms transfer to Croatia and Bosnia.

The Bosnian arms embargo was established in 1991 by the United Nations in an effort to prevent the Bosnian conflict from erupting into widespread civil war. By placing an embargo on the region, it was thought that none of the warring factions could gain a decisive advantage over the others. However, the embargo had little effect. The

already well-armed Serbians were able to easily roll over the militarily weaker Bosnians, claiming much territory and causing horrific casualties. While still opposed to direct United States intervention, the Republican-led Congress called for a lifting of the embargo so that the Bosnians could, at least, acquire the arms they needed to defend themselves. On eight separate occasions, the President rejected congressional attempts to lift this embargo.

While publicly supporting the arms embargo, President Clinton had secretly approved a shipment of Iranian arms to Bosnia in 1994. This is a classic Clinton flip-flop. Last year, he blocked our efforts to lift the arms embargo, and he has allowed Iran—a known sponsor of terrorism—to ship arms directly to Bosnia. There are 20,000 Americans risking their lives in Bosnia because President Clinton sent them there. By allowing Iran to establish a foothold in the region, the President has significantly increased that risk.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York [Mr. ENGEL].

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, our Republican colleagues never cease to amaze me. They yelled for years about lifting the arms embargo, as did I. We all knew that the arms embargo could not be lifted because Britain and France objected. But we all knew this was going on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they want to waive the House rules to form this committee. They touted the new House rules for saving money and now they want to waive it like they have waived all the other House rules.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans want to blow a million bucks on this unneeded committee when all they needed to do was plunk down a quarter for the June 4, 1994 Washington Times. We knew it was happening then. These arms shipments were widely reported in 1994. Because the Republicans did not pay attention then, the American taxpayer will pay a million bucks now.

The Republicans should hit the library and read the old newspaper clips of this story instead of hitting the American taxpayer in the wallet. The Committee on International Relations can handle it on its own. If they had not abolished the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee, that subcommittee would be in effect now, doing these kinds of things.

Mr. Speaker, they talk about Iran. Where were they during the Iran-Contra scandal? This is a political ploy. It is election year politics at its worst and it should be defeated.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield 15 seconds to the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER].

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the point once more. There is a big difference between complicity in permitting Iranian arms to come in to Bosnia or permitting it to happen on one hand, and accepting newspaper reports which indicate that arms are coming in from the Arab world or even specifically from Iran.

This Congress was not informed and certainly had no expectations that anybody would be dumb enough in the White House to permit Iranian arms and troops to come into Bosnia.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, let me just simply conclude by saying I think we have explored all aspects of this over the last several hours. There is no question that we are in the middle of a political campaign, and I think the gentlewoman from Georgia who called it ''an independent expenditure'' was probably close to being accurate.

But there is no question we also hear something else here which is regrettable. It is a ''get back,'' a position taken by many on the other side that this is a response to prior investigations. Well, regardless of whether they turned up any indictable offense, every prior investigation was warranted by the facts, by allegations of illegality. this one is not, and does not deserve this expenditure and this emphasis of time.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, a previous distinguished speaker from the other side of the aisle said that the facts are uncontroverted with regard to what the President did. If that is the case, then why does the minority oppose the investigation of the facts?

The distinguished gentleman from New York [Mr. ENGEL] a few minutes ago said the arms embargo could not be lifted because the British and the French objected. The British and the French and the Germans objected to the decision of the Clinton administration to appoint a Secretary General of NATO who is a socialist, and yet he was appointed.

The United States is the only remaining superpower in the world, and if the United States would have exerted leadership as the Congress demanded of the President with regard to Bosnia, the multilateral embargo would have been lifted. We said, ''Mr. President, if you cannot, even with exerting leadership as the only superpower in the world, lift the multilateral embargo, the lift it unilaterally because the people of Bosnia have a right to defend themselves.'' But no, he vetoed that.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time the administration was vetoing the will of the Congress with regard to letting the Bosnian people defend themselves, the administration through Mr. Tarnoff was admitting publicly, quote, ''Iran engages in terrorism by assassinating its opponents. It provides material and political support to Palestinian rejections trying to undermine the Middle East peace process through violence. It seeks to subvert secular regimes in the Muslim world.''

Mr. Speaker, that is the administration talking about Iran at the same time that it is giving a green light to Iran to enter Bosnia.

This is a very serious issue, Mr. Speaker. This is not political. I reject that allegation. What would the other side require to realize that the national interest of the United States is legitimately involved in this issue, Mr. Speaker?

□ 1415

So we will be investigating this. We have done this. I commend the gentleman from California, Chairman BILL THOMAS, for his leadership in bringing forth this select subcommittee under cost, under the actual request that was made because he was able to do it as efficiently as possible.

I would like to submit for the RECORD a memorandum from the Office of Finance to Chairman THOMAS that states that the $995,000 of the cost of the subcommittee can be absorbed within the fiscal year 1996 funds.

I would urge all of my colleagues to take seriously the national security interests of the United States. This is a very serious issue. It deserves to be legitimately and thoroughly studied.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the memorandum to which I referred:

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 1, 1996.

[Memorandum]

To: Chairman Bill Thomas, Committee on House Oversight.

From: Tom Anfinson, Associate Administration, Office of Finance.

Subject: Funding for Special Select Subcommittee.

Please be advised that your amendment in the nature of a substitute of $995,000 for the cost of the Select Subcommittee, based on current projections, can be absorbed within the Fiscal Year 1996 funds provided for ''Standing Committees, Special and Select.''

Mr. Speaker, I move the previous question on the amendment and on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. HANSEN). The question is on the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution, as amended.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 225, nays 203, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 152]

YEAS—225

Allard
Archer
Armey
Bachus
Baker (CA)
Baker (LA)
Ballenger
Barr
Barrett (NE)
Bartlett
Barton
Bass
Bateman
Bereuter
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bliley
Blute
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bono
Brownback
Bryant (TN)
Bunn
Bunning
Burr
Burton
Buyer
Callahan
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canady
Castle
Chabot
Chambliss
Chenoweth
Christensen
Chrysler
Clinger
Coble
Collins (GA)
Combest
Cooley
Cox
Crane
Crapo
Cremeans
Cubin
Cunningham
Davis
Deal
DeLay
Diaz-Balart
Dickey
Doolittle
Dornan
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Ehlers
Ehrlich
Emerson
English
Ensign
Everett
Ewing
Fawell
Fields (TX)
Flanagan
Fowler
Fox
Franks (CT)
Franks (NJ)
Frelinghuysen
Frisa
Funderburk
Gallegly
Ganske
Gekas
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Gingrich
Goodlatte
Goodling
Goss
Graham
Greene (UT)
Greenwood
Gunderson
Gutknecht
Hancock
Hansen
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Heineman
Herger
Hilleary
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hoke
Horn
Houghton
Hunter
Hutchinson
Hyde
Inglis
Istook
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Kasich
Kelly
Kim
King
Kingston
Knollenberg
Kolbe
LaHood
Largent
Latham
LaTourette
Laughlin
Lazio
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Lightfoot
Linder
Livingston
LoBiondo
Longley
Lucas
Manzullo
Martinez
Martini
McCollum
McCrery
McDade
McHugh
McInnis
McIntosh
McKeon
Metcalf
Meyers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Moorhead
Morella
Myers
Myrick
Nethercutt
Ney
Norwood
Nussle
Oxley
Packard
Parker
Paxon
Petri
Pombo
Porter
Portman
Pryce
Quillen
Quinn
Radanovich
Regula
Riggs
Roberts
Rogers
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roth
Roukema
Royce
Salmon
Saxton
Schaefer
Schiff
Seastrand
Sensenbrenner
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Shuster
Skeen
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Solomon
Souder
Spence
Stearns
Stockman
Stump
Talent
Tate
Tauzin
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Torkildsen
Upton
Vucanovich
Walker
Walsh
Wamp
Watts (OK)
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Wicker
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Zeliff
Zimmer

NAYS—203

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Andrews
Baesler
Baldacci
Barcia
Barrett (WI)
Becerra
Beilenson
Bentsen
Berman
Bevill
Bishop
Bonior
Borski
Boucher
Brewster
Browder
Brown (CA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Bryant (TX)
Cardin
Chapman
Clay
Clayton
Clement
Clyburn
Coleman
Collins (IL)
Collins (MI)
Condit
Conyers
Costello
Coyne
Cramer
Cummings
Danner
DeFazio
DeLauro
Dellums
Deutsch
Dicks
Dingell
Dixon
Doggett
Dooley
Doyle
Durbin
Edwards
Engel
Eshoo
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Fazio
Fields (LA)
Filner
Flake
Foglietta
Foley
Forbes
Frank (MA)
Frost
Furse
Gejdenson
Gephardt
Geren
Gibbons
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green (TX)
Gutierrez
Hall (OH)
Hall (TX)
Hamilton
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hefner
Hilliard
Hinchey
Holden
Hoyer
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jacobs
Jefferson
Johnson (SD)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnston
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (MA)
Kennedy (RI)
Kennelly
Kildee
Kleczka
Klink
Klug
LaFalce
Lantos
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lincoln
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowey
Luther
Maloney
Manton
Markey
Mascara
Matsui
McCarthy
McDermott
McHale
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek
Menendez
Millender-McDonald
Miller (CA)
Minge
Mink
Moakley
Mollohan
Montgomery
Moran
Murtha
Nadler
Neal
Neumann
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Orton
Owens
Pallone
Pastor
Payne (NJ)
Payne (VA)
Pelosi
Peterson (FL)
Peterson (MN)
Pickett
Pomeroy
Poshard
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Reed
Richardson
Rivers
Roemer
Rose
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sabo
Sanders
Sanford
Sawyer
Schroeder
Schumer
Scott
Serrano
Sisisky
Skaggs
Skelton
Slaughter
Spratt
Stark
Stenholm
Stokes
Studds
Stupak
Tanner
Taylor (MS)
Tejeda
Thompson
Thornton
Thurman
Torres
Torricelli
Towns
Traficant
Velazquez
Vento
Visclosky
Volkmer
Ward
Waters
Watt (NC)
Waxman
White
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson
Wise
Woolsey
Wynn
Yates

NOT VOTING—6

Coburn
de la Garza
Ford
Hostettler
Molinari
Scarborough

□ 1436

Mr. SCHUMER changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.'' Messrs. STOCKMAN, HOEKSTRA, and UPTON changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the resolution as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table

U.S. HOUSING ACT OF 1996

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 426 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 426

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2406) to repeal the United States Housing Act of 1937, deregulate the public housing program and the program for rental housing assistance for low-income families, and increase community control over such programs, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Banking and Financial Services now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered by title rather than by section. The first two sections and each title shall be considered as read. Points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute for failure to comply with clause 5(a) of rule XXI are waived. Before consideration of any other amendment it shall be in order to consider the amendment printed in the Congressional Record of May 7, 1996, pursuant to clause 6 of rule XXIII, if offered by Representative Lazio of New York or his designee. That amendment shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for ten minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against that amendment are waived. If that amendment is adopted, the bill, as amended, shall be considered as the original bill for the purpose of further amendment. During further consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may reduce to not less than five minutes the time for voting by electronic device on any postponed question that immediately follows another vote by electronic device without intervening business, provided that the time for voting by electronic device on the first in any series of questions shall be not less than fifteen minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. After passage of H.R. 2406, it shall be in order to take from the Speaker's table the bill S. 1260 and to consider the Senate bill in the House. It shall be in order to move to strike all after the enacting clause of the Senate bill and to insert in lieu thereof the provisions of H.R. 2406 as passed by the House. All points of order against that motion are waived. If the motion is adopted and the Senate bill, as amended, is passed, then it shall be in order to move that the House insist on its amendments to S. 1260 and request a conference with the Senate thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUNNING of Kentucky). The gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER] is recognized for 1 hour.