know many of my colleagues on the Republican side came from the business world, as did I, would never do anything like that. They would be laughed out of the marketplace.

But what this comes down to is taking money from the Social Security beneficiaries and using it for a tax cut, which we could not need. But even worse than that, what this would do is add to the national debt, that is already starting to consume a vast amount of our annual Federal budget.

And what does the Congressional Budget Office say? The Congressional Budget Office says even if we stayed within the levels of the 1997 balanced budget agreement, but allowed for demographic growth, no increase in spending, with the growth in Medicare and the growth in the Social Security system as the baby-boomers come on line with retirement, that our national debt could get as high as 200 percent of the gross domestic product by the middle of the next century, which would mean that interest on the debt would become the largest Federal program and would start to squeeze out things like education, like national defense, as well as Social Security and Medicare.

Now, let me also remind my colleagues what the esteemed chairman of the Federal Reserve, who we often hear about on the floor of the House from both sides of the aisle, said about the situation. He was very clear in a hearing before the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services just a few weeks ago that paying down the debt was the most important thing we could do. In fact, he said the paydown of debt associated with the Federal surplus has helped hold down long-term interest rates.

Let us not spend the Social Security beneficiaries' money on a tax cut. Let us pay down the debt.

INFORM AMERICAN PEOPLE OF RESULTS OF ATTACKS ON TERRORISTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago the President addressed the Nation and told the American people that based on convincing evidence he had linked the bombings of the embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to Osama bin Ladin, the Saudi millionaire whose base of operations is in Afghanistan. He went on to say that he had given our Armed Forces orders to launch cruise missile attacks against these targets. The first, of course, was a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan. The second target was a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan where evidence pointed to the fact that it was being used to manufacture chemical weapons.

Mr. Speaker, what troubles me about this is that since these strikes were made, we have not heard anything more from the President or his administration about this matter. The question is, did we achieve our bombing objectives at these two sites? Where is Mr. Ladin today? Is he still alive and still operating in secret and conspiring against the United States, or was he in the training camp when we destroyed its base of operation in Afghanistan?

As the days went by after these retaliatory strikes were carried out, new information surfaced about the pharmaceutical plant in Sudan. On September 1st, the Los Angeles Times reported that Shifa Pharmaceutical Plant produced human and veterinarian medicines for the impoverished nation and the evidence about Mr. Ladin's financial stake in the facility had been overstated.

Mr. Speaker, the President owes this country a full accounting, because the orders he gave, which were carried out, could have far-reaching effects that impact every U.S. citizen living both here and abroad. There is a long history of terrorist activity against the United States. Sadly, our response has been weak at best.

I would like to read you a quote from Mr. Jensen, an international editor of the Rocky Mountain News in Denver in his article entitled ''Responding to Terrorist Attacks.'' He states,

> Our government imposes sanctions on so-called rogue nations that sponsor terrorism, which hasn't altered their behavior one bit, but one makes no effort to go after terrorists on the ground. In most cases it does not even retaliate for terrorist attacks.

Mr. Speaker, we are a civilized nation and thus far have refrained from fighting terror with terror. Is that the answer? Mr. Jensen goes on to say that Israel, through the Mossad, has perfected the art of fighting terror with terror.

Mr. Jensen's article also points out that over the last few years, 90 foreign hostages, including 11 Americans, have been held in captivity by Hezbollah and its operatives. Eleven were killed or died while in captivity.

Such atrocities cannot be allowed. Do we as a nation deal with such vicious attacks against our citizens by seeking to use the rule of law? According to Mr. Jensen, in the few instances where we have retaliated, such as President Reagan's bombing of Libya and President Clinton's use of the Tomahawk missiles, the civilian casualties that resulted have caused such international outrage that our reasons for taking such actions were totally obliterated.

We must make our enemies realize that if they take action against our country, we will take swift and decisive action against them as well.

Therefore, it is not my intention this morning to criticize the President's actions, because I think they were justified, based upon American intelligence and foreign intelligence. Thousands of people were killed in Kenya and Tanzania, and I do not think we should stand idly by and pretend it did not happen. However, I am concerned that we have lost credibility in the international community because of the confusion about why we took the actions we did against these specific targets.

Mr. Speaker, my message is simple today: Mr. President, do you not think the American people have a right to know whether our mission was successful? Please tell us today.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 38 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. EWING) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Kenneth L. Samuel, Victory Baptist Church, Stone Mountain, Georgia, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray. Gracious God, our help in ages past, our hope for the new millennium, and our strength to stand this day, we are deeply grateful for the amazing grace and the wondrous mercies which have established us and sustained us as a people. Lord God, we have seen you move in and throughout our history to cultivate us and to correct us and to challenge us to make real the vision of our national mantra: One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

We know that the challenge to secure the rights of everyone, without denying the rights of anyone, is easier said than done. We know that the distinction between mercy for our weaknesses and judgment for our wickedness is often difficult to discern. But we also know that for every noble vision, You provide sufficient provision. And so we look to You for divine direction to accomplish Your divine directive.

Father, when You have shown us the way, please give us the courage and the faith to walk therein. We thank You today not just for the blessings You have bestowed upon us, we thank You today for the opportunity to make our blessings count. We thank You today for the opportunity to demonstrate our greatness through our service to humankind, and in that light we ask that You would help us to become greater than we have ever been before.

We offer this prayer in the name of the Christ who came that we might have life, and life more abundantly. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the