what has killed this issue time and time again in Congress. Avoid the extremes.

Let us concentrate on what we can agree on, the consensus, the common ground. And that resulted in this bill that was produced by this task force, but now has over 70 cosponsors, both Republicans and Democrats, both Liberals and Conservatives. It crosses the political spectrum. Not only is it fair, but it is an improvement in our system.

Now, it is not just a freshman bill. We have representatives all across the spectrum, every class that has sponsored this, that has joined in support of this. We need more support for this bill as it moves to the floor.

What does the bill do? First of all, I think it is very important to say that this is not a Republican leadership bill; it is not a Democrat bill. It is a bipartisan bill in process, in form and result, and I hope that we can continue that process as we move through the House.

This bill, first of all, bans the corporate money from the multinational corporations that comes in huge sums to our national political parties. It bans the contributions in the same form from the labor unions that go to the national political parties. So it is balanced in banning soft money to the national parties.

The second thing it does, besides reducing the influence of special interests, it increases the role of individuals in our campaign process. It increases their contribution limits. It says they should have a greater role in it. It reduces special interests, increases the role of individuals, and then it increases the role of the American public by giving them more information, more information on who is affecting the campaigns, how much money is being spent, what groups are spending that money. And that is the information that they need to make the correct decisions on campaigns, and who are trying to influence them.

It is a basic bill that is good campaign reform, that is true reform, and I am delighted to have an opportunity for it to come to the floor, subject to amendment, as we debate this issue.

So I think that we have come a long way. I look forward to the next 3 or 4 weeks as we debate ideas and we have disagreements; both on the Republican and Democrat side. But what would be more fair to the American public than to debate ideas on the floor of this House and let the majority rule govern? I think that is what democracy is about. That is what this institution is about.

I addressed some eighth graders over the break at Alma High School. They asked me some questions. One was, why did you want to go to Congress? The answer was to reduce cynicism and distrust of our institutions of government.

What we can do by having this full and fair debate is to increase confidence, to increase respect by the American public, and we have done a great service. In addition, we have a good chance of passing meaningful reform, send it to the Senate, and let us see what they do.

PUTTING SECURITY BACK INTO SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on what my colleague from Mississippi was talking about, and that is the surplus.

As we all may know, theologians have a thing, a word, a concept, if you will, called original sin, and the idea is from original sin all other sins flow. And when Washington these days begins talking about the idea of surplus, it seems to me that that is the original sin in Washington, because I just have real questions about the idea of us really running a surplus.

I have got a question from the standpoint of accounting. I mean, in the President's budget that was sent up to the Congress, it listed in it a $9.5 billion surplus, and yet the national debt would go up by $176 billion. That is the equivalent of saying I am going to pay off $95 on my credit card balance, but my credit card balance is going to go up by $1,700.

Mathematically that is impossible, with the exception of anyplace but Washington, D.C. Because in Washington, D.C., if you were to break out the budget, what you would see is $103.5 billion borrowed from Social Security, and as you add up the other trust fund borrowings, it comes to this $176 billion number.

That number actually may be a little less than that because the surplus is supposed to be greater, but the point is that is not the way you do accounting back home in South Carolina, or Nevada, or Illinois, or anywhere else. That is not conventional accounting.

Too, I think the surplus is somewhat fictitious simply from the standpoint of economy. The $225 billion that plugs the gap from where the Congress was and where the White House was built on the economy continuing to roll ahead, and I have serious reservations on it being able to continue to roll ahead.

The third way, I guess, I have questions on the sustainability of the surplus would be simply on the basis of what we send to Washington every year. We are at a post-World War II high in terms of the amount of money that people send in taxes to Washington, D.C.

This last year we hit 20.1 percent of GDP sent by hard-working Americans to Washington. Now, that was only met or exceeded basically at the height of World War II. In 1944, we hit 20.9 percent, and in 1945 we hit 20.4 percent of GDP. Other than that, it has been below 20 percent consistently, which means it only takes people modifying their behavior just a little in terms of a spouse working a little bit less or in terms of a worker spending a little bit more time with the family to all of a sudden have us drop below the 20 percent figure.

If we did, the surpluses would go out the window.

What this means to me as we begin to talk about the issue of Social Security is how do we have security with Social Security? Because what is interesting to me about the Social Security debate, is the President in this very Chamber said at the State of the Union that we ought to reserve every dollar of surplus for Social Security, and yet, given the way the trains have been running in this town recently, it seems to me if $50 or 60 billion comes to Washington, there is a good likelihood that that money will be spent. And if it is spent, it is not saved for Social Security.

So I think that one of the things we really ought to begin looking at is the idea of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH) of Social Security Plus. Quite simply, that would be taking the surplus money, rebating it back to everybody that pays Social Security taxes, and then letting them put that money in their own Social Security Plus account.

The advantage for me of that idea is that by having it in your own account, and we are not talking about a lot of money, about $500, based on the size of the surplus in your account each year, and over the next 6 years, that would be $3,000. But by having that money in your account, Washington cannot reach in and borrow that money.

I think we really need to begin looking at that kind of security when we talk about the word ''Social Security'' if we are serious about, A, having every dollar of surplus go toward Social Security, and, B, on the whole concept of protecting Social Security.

STATE OF MILITARY PREPAREDNESS IN AMERICA

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, we are getting closer and closer to the anniversary of the invasion of South Korea, and I reflected back the other day when I was at my aunt and uncle's house in Fort Worth, Texas, because on one of their dressers they have a photograph of a young marine; his name was Son Stilwell, a Marine Lieutenant killed in Korea, one of the 50,000-some casualties KIA that we suffered in that conflict.

I reflected on that this pending anniversary. We are on the eve of when I listened to our Secretary of Defense and President Clinton's defense leaders as they presented a declining defense budget to the U.S. Congress.

The situation, I think, is a lot like it was in those days in 1950 before that June invasion. To set the stage, Mr. Speaker, we have come down, we have slashed defense and cut down on our forces dramatically since Desert Storm. We have cut from 18 Army divisions that we had in 1991 to only 10 today. That is, incidentally and coincidentally, the same number of Army divisions we had when Korea was invaded.

We have gone from 24 to only 13 fighter air wings, so we have cut our air power almost in half under the Clinton Administration. And we have cut our naval vessels from 546 to 333, about a 40 percent cut in naval vessels.

Now, the theme in 1950 and the reason that so many defense leaders from then Lewis Johnson, then Secretary of Defense, right on down, the theme that they propounded as they presented this declining defense budget to the U.S. Congress, and said that it was adequate, was that somehow we were the dominating Nation of the world with respect to high-tech, and nobody would mess with us. Of course, we had at that time the nuclear weapon. Nobody else presumably had that until a few years later.

Yet we were shocked in June when the North Koreans invaded South Korea and almost pushed the South Korean forces and the Americans that tried to stem the tide into the sea. We tried to hold them up at the Osan Pass, the 25th Infantry Division that we flew in, MacArthur flew in from Japan, was cut to ribbons. The commander, General Dean was, in fact, captured by North Korean forces.

We held the Pusan Peninsula by our toenails and finally started to push it up to the northern part of the peninsula. Then, interestingly, the theme that the leaders had that nobody would mess with us because we had the high technology and the nuclear weapon was further devastated when the Communist Chinese invaded South Korea.

The point isn't that we are any dumber than we were in 1950 and/or maybe we were dumber than we are now, and maybe we have leaders today that know something those people didn't know. My point is that the events of the world are unpredictable and that we today are taking a high level of risk by dramatically cutting our defenses.

The American people need to know that. They need to know that the massive savings, so-called savings that President Clinton is showing the world proudly and showing the American people proudly, the millions of dollars that he has pulled out of programs, have primarily been pulled out of national security.

We have dramatically cut back our national security. And we do not know what this world is going to bring us. I am reminded of the fact that when we had our assembled intelligence apparatus and our intelligence leaders in front of us, and we asked them a few simple questions, such as which of you predicted the Falklands war, none of them could raise their hands. When we asked which of you predicted the downfall of the Soviet Union, that was in all the papers. None of them could raise their hands.

And when we asked them which of you predicted the invasion of Kuwait, one of them actually said before or after the armored columns started moving? We said, no; before the armored columns started moving. None of them had predicted the invasion of Kuwait. It is not that they are not smart, it is not that they don't have a lot of resources at their disposal. The facts are that unexpected things happen in this world.

We are still living in a very unstable world, and we have a declining military to face that unstable world with. One reason we were able to bring home to the American people so many of the soldiers and sailors and marines who went over to Desert Storm, and the reason we didn't have to fill up those 40,000 body bags we took with us in fighting the fourth largest army in the world, was because we were so strong we won the war decisively in a very short period of time with very limited American casualties.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking a big chance today, because under the Clinton Administration's leadership, we have cut our military almost in half. If the balloon goes up today, we cannot win a Desert Storm war as decisively as we did just a few years ago.

SECURITY POSTURE IN AMERICA THREATENED

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

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise as we complete legislative work this week, in anticipation of next week when we will begin the markup process for one of the largest bills we do each year, and that is the defense authorization bill. As my colleague just discussed, we are in a massive downsizing mode that I think is heading us right for a train wreck at the turn of the century in terms of our security posture.

You are going to be hearing significant amounts of comments and speeches and activities over the next four weeks as members of our committee, all 57 members, get involved in educating Members of this body, and the American people about where we are in terms of our state of readiness. I want to call attention to my colleagues two events that will take place next week.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, the largest loss of military life that we have had in this decade was back 7 years ago when 28 young Americans were killed by a scud missile, a low complexity scud missile shot from Iraq into a barracks in Saudi Arabia. That missile devastated the lives of 28 young Americans.

On Wednesday, all day in the Rayburn courtyard off of New Jersey Avenue, we will display a 40-foot-long scud missile, a missile that, in fact, was produced by the Iraqis with assistance from North Korea; that is the same missile that, in fact, killed American troops, the only major loss of life of our troops in this decade.

□ 2030

That missile is now being sold around the world. Rogue nations are purchasing it. It is still a threat to this country that we cannot defend against.

Along with a display of that Scud missile, which will be available for inspection by our colleagues in the House and the other body and by the American public at that courtyard off of the Rayburn Building on New Jersey Avenue and C Street, will be a demonstration of one of our responses. The Army will, in fact, have a full, active deployment of a THAAD battery. THAAD is the Theater High Altitude Area Defense System that we are developing for our Army to deploy in theaters around the world to defeat missiles like the Iraqi Scud missile.

The THAAD battery will allow Members to see firsthand the success we have had to date in building what will become a very capable system. The unfortunate part of this is that it is going to take several years before this system will be available. But I want to encourage Members to walk over to the Rayburn courtyard and see for themselves how far we have come in terms of building a comprehensive system.

In fact, it has been this body, both Democrats and Republicans, over the past 3 years that have increased funding for these programs, at a time when the administration wanted to continually decimate and decrease funding for these very important programs.

The second event will occur the second day, on Thursday of next week, when 2,000 of America's finest American fire and domestic defenders, our emergency services personnel, will travel to Washington for our tenth annual dinner, where on Thursday night at the Washington Hilton we will pay tribute to these brave heroes.

These individuals will come from every State in the Union, they will represent every major community, large cities like New York, small towns across America, and they will come with one common purpose: that is, for us to be able to recognize their services.

But something different will happen that day, Mr. Speaker. On Thursday, at noon, there will be a massive rally and demonstration at this Capitol building, where the fire and EMS providers in every congressional district in this country will gather for a massive rally at noon, after having surrounded this Capitol building with fire and emergency services apparatus, to make a statement.

The statement is a simple one: As this Congress and this administration