

First of all, I think we need to make certain that the United States has a seat at the bargaining table as it relates to trade talks.

One of the most important things this Congress can do, and I hope we will do it next week, is to vote on Fast Track. As I talk to farmers around my district, and literally I have talked to thousands over the last month, one of the most important things they all tell me is that we need to pass Fast Track. Whether you are talking to the Corn Growers Association, the Soybean Growers Association, the Farm Bureau, virtually any farm group that you talk to put as one of their top priorities passing Fast Track so we can negotiate with our trading partners and get a bigger share of the world market out there.

The next thing we have got to do is make certain we enforce the trade agreements that we currently have with our trading partners. It is no secret that many of our trading partners are not living up to the agreements they have signed with the United States, whether it is the heavy subsidies in Europe or our friends to the north in Canada.

There is clear evidence, and now we finally have the administration filing a 301 petition in the World Trade Organization against Canada for some of the things they have been doing. They have not lived up to their agreements under the North American Free Trade Agreement as far as we are concerned, particularly on the issue of dairy. We see where they are continuing to try to keep American exports out of Canada. They are applying penalties to the United States and using some of that penalty so they can further subsidize their exports into other markets, further putting American producers behind the 8-ball. So we have to do more to enforce the trading agreements that we have.

Another point that has come up in many of my discussions with farmers is we understand that we have got to do all we can as a Nation to help rebuild those economies, particularly in Asia. The issue of the IMF, the International Monetary Fund, has come up at many of the meetings I have been at. I think there is generally support for doing something to try to strengthen those economies, but there is a growing concern, and I share that concern, that much of the money we have given to the IMF has been wasted.

In fact, I think Indonesia and Russia are good examples. When you look at the evidence of the billions and billions of American tax dollars that have been spent in those regions, we see very little evidence that it has made much difference. So I and some of my colleagues are talking to people here in Washington about rather than giving in to the administration's request for another \$18 billion of American tax dollars going into the IMF, why do we not take at least half of that money and provide low interest loans to some of

our trading partners so they can buy some of this surplus grain that we have here in the United States at low prices?

We are like that car dealer or that carpet dealer that is overstocked, and we are having a sale of the century. We ought to move that grain and use that money so that our trading partners can buy that at low-interest loans.

There are a number of things that we can do here in Washington in the next several weeks to improve the lot of farmers in Minnesota and around the country, and hopefully we can get that done.

MOVING FORWARD ON A POSITIVE AGENDA

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take my 5 minutes this morning to stress again, as I have several times on the floor over the last week or so since we came back from our August recess, how important it is for us to move forward on a positive agenda that addresses some of the major concerns that the American people want us to deal with before this Congress adjourns in approximately four weeks.

I have to say the Democrats are united behind a strong and bold agenda which addresses the real challenges that face working families. Democrats have been working together over the last year and will be over the next few weeks to enact our priorities and deliver a clear message to the American people about what we stand for.

There are two main areas which I think need to be prioritized. One is the idea of saving Social Security first, and the other is a Patients' Bill of Rights, or HMO reform.

I am very concerned about what may happen this week with regard to a tax bill that is proposed to come out of the Committee on Ways and Means this Thursday and that will spend a significant portion of the so-called surplus that we allegedly have, but will not address the concerns over Social Security.

In fact, in today's Congress Daily, some of the Republican members of the Committee on Ways and Means who were concerned about addressing the Social Security issue actually were told that they will have to wait until next year to deal with that; we will do the tax bill first and worry about Social Security later.

Well, that is the wrong priority. We should be dedicating every penny, every penny of that surplus, towards shoring up the Social Security system, rather than providing short-term tax cuts that will primarily help the wealthiest Americans.

President Clinton said at the beginning of this year, and he has repeatedly said over and over again, that Demo-

crats want to make sure that whatever surplus there is over the next few years is used to basically make the Social Security system sound, because we know that in another 20 or 30 years there will not be enough money in Social Security to pay for current levels of benefits.

What we also need to point out is that most of the Social Security trust that is in surplus right now has been lent, if you will, to the Federal Government, and has to be paid back with interest.

Well, right now if you look at that trust money that has been lent to the government and essentially been used, we do not really have a surplus in our general revenue funds, because we have to pay back that Social Security money that was lent to the government. So I will insist, I will insist, and I think that most of my colleagues in the Democratic Party will insist, that before any tax cut is given back and any money is spent of this so-called surplus, that we make sure there is enough money left to pay for Social Security.

That is not the case right now. There is not enough money in the so-called "surplus" to pay back what is owed to the Social Security system, and we should not be passing any tax cut bill or giving out or even spending money on new programs or priorities until we make sure that that money is available for the Social Security recipients.

The Republicans are going to try to mask that this week and pretend as if there is a surplus out there. There is no surplus when you think about the money that has to be paid back to Social Security. Let us not pass a tax bill unless we have a guarantee in that tax bill that the money will be set aside for Social Security before any more money is spent or paid out in tax cuts this year.

The second issue that I would like to raise, and I think we need to address before Congress adjourns in the next four weeks, is HMO reform. The Democrats have put forth a Patients' Bill of Rights. The President, again, in his State of the Union address earlier this year, emphasized that we need to pass HMO reform during this Congress. The Democrats have put forth a very good bill called the Patients' Bill of Rights that is real HMO or managed care reform. We need to pass this legislation before we adjourn.

Again, the key elements of this bill, I would just like to list some of the key elements of the Patients' Bill of Rights: Guaranteed access to needed health care specialists, access to emergency room services, continuity of care protections, access to timely internal and external appeal process, limits on financial incentives to doctors, assuring doctors and patients can openly discuss treatment options, and an enforcement mechanism that ensures recourse for patients who are maimed or die because of health plan actions.

The main thing we want to do with this Patients' Bill of Rights is we want

the decision of what kind of care you will get, whether you will get an operation, whether you will be able to say, stay in the hospital a few extra days, have that decision be made by the physician and his patient, in consultation with the patient, and not by the insurance company.

Too many people have been denied care under their HMO policies or their managed care policies, and that should not be the way it is in this country. We have quality health insurance, but people have to be able to assure, if they need a particular operation, if they need a particular procedure, that they can have it.

That is what Democrats stand for, and that is what we will be fighting for over the next four weeks.

CUBAN TERRORISM AGAINST AMERICA CONTINUES

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

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning first of all to commend the FBI. They yesterday carried out a very important operation in furtherance of United States national security, along with, obviously, other law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida.

The United States is indeed blessed to have agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and our other law enforcement agencies, as well as the intelligence community generally, that works day in and day out to protect the national security of the American people.

Yesterday, the arrests that were made, ten in all, were of spies for the Cuban dictatorship, agents of the Cuban dictatorship engaged in activities, in espionage activities, to infiltrate U.S. centers of military, political, economic and academic power, as well as means of communication. That is the mission of the state security intelligence services of the Cuban dictatorship.

So when we see an action such as the one carried out yesterday by the FBI, all of the American people have to feel pleased, supported and protected, and in exchange I think it is the duty of all Americans to support the FBI, to commend the FBI and our other law enforcement agencies.

I think yesterday's arrests of Cuban spies in the United States underlines the true nature of the terrorist state in Havana. These arrests by U.S. authorities of numerous Cuban intelligence agents, I am sure, will serve to remind the American people of the genuine nature and continued threat posed by the Cuban totalitarian regime, just 90 miles from the shores of the United States.

Despite what is evident on behalf of the majority of the media and the

means of communication is a total ignoring of the reality of Cuba. Just the night before, how ironic, CNN, that television network that has sometimes been referred to as the "Castro News Network" because of its fetish for seeking to make Castro at all costs look good, and I know that is something that is impossible, but it is continuously attempted to be done by CNN. CNN had provided one hour of prime time to the Cuban tyrant, one hour of prime time, with the main objective of giving him an opportunity to whitewash and somehow project that he did not in fact in writing call for a nuclear first strike upon the United States of America during the missile crisis in 1962.

Castro, some of you may have seen the interview, pulled out these books of reports and tried to somehow say, obviously with no follow-up, absolutely no follow-up questioning by the CNN reporter, that no, he did not really mean to say that the Soviet Union should launch a nuclear first strike.

Well, how ironic, that just the next day, and a generation later, it is that same regime led by that tyrant that has spies in the United States that were arrested for precisely caring out activities against U.S. military and political centers of power.

So I commend the FBI. There is so much more that has to be done. There is an indictment that is prepared, it is ready, it was prepared by the U.S. Attorney in South Florida, against the Cuban regime. This was leaked out of frustration, by the way, by the U.S. Attorney to the press, when evidently from Washington the order came down that the indictment was not to be issued.

Prosecutors have an indictment ready charging the Cuban government as a racketeering enterprise for a 10 year conspiracy to send tons of Colombian cartel cocaine through Cuba to the United States. This indictment is ready. The evidence is available. It is overwhelming. The Clinton Administration has in fact ordered this indictment to be placed in a drawer and hidden. Because of the frustration, it was leaked to the media.

I have not even had time to address the dangers this morning to our national security from the nuclear power plants that Castro is building, but, Mr. Speaker, in coming days I will address on this floor those threats.

REPAYING THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

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

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, first of all, to commend my colleague from Washington (Mr. SMITH) who spoke earlier today. I was sitting in my office going through correspond-

ence from my constituents when I heard his comments on the plan to spend the interest on the Social Security trust fund on a tax cut that is part of the Republican Party, the majority party's plan either to have this year or next year.

I think this is one of the largest mistakes that we could make in this country. I think we have to go back and take a look at the economic history, the fiscal economic history of the United States, to see where we are, how we got there and the risk that this plan provides to the American people.

It was not too long ago in 1992 when the country was looking at fiscal deficits in the range of \$292 billion a year. In fact, if we go back to 1981, we see since that time the national debt has quadrupled to \$5.4 trillion. In terms of our gross domestic product it has doubled to the level of 677 percent to the level of our Gross Domestic Product, something that no business or no state or local government in our country would allow their finances to get into. Interest on the debt has become the third highest Federal program since 1981, tripling over that time.

Now, after many years of very strong fiscal medicine to get our fiscal house in order, starting with the 1990 budget agreement that was passed by the Democrats in the House and the Senate, the 1993 budget agreement that was passed by the Democrats in the House and the Senate, and followed by the 1997 bipartisan Balanced Budget Act, the Congress has now been able to show the country that we can live within our means and get the budget in balance, and this year in fact we are looking at the possibility of a surplus in the range of \$65 billion in the unified Federal budget.

But that should not cover over the fact that we still have this enormous debt, and it should not evade the fact that the total unified budget would only be in balance because of the huge surplus in the Social Security trust fund.

Some of my colleagues have suggested that perhaps the interest on the Social Security trust fund is not really the property of the Social Security trust fund or the beneficiaries. I would remind my colleagues, and I contacted the Treasury Department to get a copy of the bond that the Social Security trust fund is invested in, and that is a bond just like any American or anyone could go down to their bank or to their brokerage House and buy, and it is a bond backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Government, just like any other Treasury bond. It is not just the principal, but the interest that is paid.

The interest on the Social Security trust fund belongs to the beneficiaries of the Social Security trust fund. The idea that somehow you could bifurcate the trust fund, only giving the principal and not the interest, makes no sense at all. Certainly those of us who come from the business world, and I