policy trying to say that the government can out-guess the weather every year, and the government saying we know how much someone is going to produce next year so we are going to have a farm program that is going to fit that. It has never worked.

We have either compounded surpluses or we have caused crop disaster years to be compounded in a negative way. It has never worked, and the government, with all the infinite wisdom we have around here, has never been able to out-guess the weather.

I am on the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. We have also in this bill fought off the administration in their efforts to undercut crop insurance. Looking at the President's budget this year, they cut dramatically crop insurance which was going to devastate any opportunities for farmers to cover their own risk. We have fought off that provision from the administration.

We continue to put in money to help farmers to be able to export their products. My only hope, Mr. Speaker, would be that in this next fiscal year that the administration will finally use the tools that we have given them to help move our agricultural products overseas.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a very, very good bill for farmers. It is a very good bill for all Americans and I will support it tomorrow.

REASONS TO VOTE NO ON THE OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

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

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, it is becoming apparent that this House will be called upon to vote on approximately a thousand page document tomorrow that is responsible for over half of the appropriations bills that should have been passed separately, and it is going to do some good things.

It is also going to have a lot of things buried in it that I think none of us could possibly defend when called to task back home. As we speak all across America in 435 congressional districts and one-third of the Senate seats, people are out there begging for the opportunity to serve in the greatest legislative body this world has ever known.

They are putting their houses up for mortgage. They are selling their cars. They are asking friends and relatives for loans. They are doing basically anything they can to get the funds to get on television. What do they talk about once they get on TV? They talk about $15,000 that was squandered here or a million that was squandered there. Many of them get elected to this body, and we have got to wonder what happens to them then, because the same people who are outraged at the squandering of $15,000 or one million will tomorrow vote for a bill that is for tens, no, I am sorry, hundreds of billions of dollars and they have not the foggiest idea where it is all going.

They are going to vote for $18 billion for the International Monetary Fund, an international rat hole over which we have little or no control.

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They are going to vote for farm programs that do not work; educational programs that are not necessary, that have little or no supervision, and above all ought to be the States' responsibility. They are going to vote for things for defense that should have been done, absolutely, but should have been done through the normal process where the committees can take a look at it and decide whether or not that is in the best interest of our country. In short, they are going to try to do 2 years' worth of work in one day.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think one of my constituents would sign a document for a $50,000 mortgage that they had not read. I do not think one businessman in my district would sign a document for a $10,000 loan that he had not read. And yet they are asking the 435 people of this body to sign a document that none of us have read.

The people who have read it are the Speaker of the House, President Clinton, and the Majority Leader of the Senate. That is not good enough for me. That is not good enough for my constituents.

So, I am going to encourage my colleagues to vote ''no.'' We have stayed here this long. We can stay a little bit longer. And I am going to encourage my colleagues to continue to vote ''no'' until we are given adequate time to study the measure that is brought before us, and then and only then should we be making a decision for over hundreds of billions of dollars worth of programs and whether or not it is a good idea for our country.

AMERICA'S PROMISE: NATIONAL DEFENSE

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the House tonight with regard to the bill we are going to be voting on tomorrow. I think the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR), some of his comments were completely accurate in that this is a crazy process, the way we have come down here at the end of the year to take these appropriations bills and to lump them together. I do not think this is a good way to do business.

We also have to recognize this is a political institution. Two completely different political parties. Parties do things. Sometimes we scratch our head and do not completely understand and we ask why.

America should be very clear that back in August, the President had a campaign strategy that he coordinated with the Democrats and that was he wanted to shut down the government, so he came over here to the Cannon Building and he met with the Democrat Caucus. They gave him a rounding cheer and applause as they wanted to unite and come together and when we came back together after the August recess, that the President would shut down the government.

Mr. Speaker, he wanted to do that because he thought that he did a good job when he shut down the government before, and Republicans kind of helped him do that. And so he thought, boy, this would be a great strategy. It would be a great distraction from his own problems and a distraction for the Democrats and their failure to accomplish a lot of things they wanted to accomplish.

So what happened? Here we are still in session, a few weeks before an election. And I agree with my colleague from Mississippi, this is not a healthy way to do business. But we also need to understand what put us in this predicament in the first place.

So, there was a political strategy at hand. And, fortunately, we were able to get an agreement. My assessment of the agreement so far is that the Republicans have about 65 to 70 percent and the Democrats, they got what they want. That is what politics is about, is about the art of compromise.

Anybody can stand here in the well and talk about a lot of things they do not like and everybody can find a reason to not vote for it. Likewise, people can find reasons to vote for it. And sure enough, they will do it for whatever particular reason that will be most beneficial for them back in their home districts. But let me talk about something that is more important than either political parties and something that gets my attention with regard to this bill. That is about America's promise, and America's promise is that of our national defense.

When I think about our national defense, we had some testimony by Gordon Sullivan, who is the former Chief of Staff of the United States Army who came and for years and year I used to listen to the Chief of Staff of the Army come and talk to us on the Committee on National Security. He always talked about the Army being on the razor's edge. That is how close we were. This budget will be okay, but we are right on the edge.

Now in his retirement, he talks now about how fragile the Armed Forces are today. He is absolutely correct. In my 6 years here in the House during the Clinton administration, I have seen what he has done to our United States military. They are truly extended in every corner of the world. They have a strategy of working harder and doing more for less, and I can assure my colleagues that is not a strategy for success.

We have Navy ships going to sea undermanned as a result of the Navy