

Finally, these power estimates wouldn't be complete without reminding my colleagues that last month the Administration sought to collect at least \$1 billion beyond normal power costs to create a "slush fund" to fund the removal of the four Snake river dams. I was delighted to pass any amendment prohibiting the Bonneville Power Administration from raising rates on Northwest power customers for a project they don't even want.

Second, let's look at irrigation.

The Corps report assumes that there is no economically feasible way to continue to provide irrigation to the 37,000 acres of farmland served by the four Snake River dams. The report assumes 37,000 acres of farmland will be taken out of production as a result of breaching those dams.

What does this loss of water supply mean for eastern Washington?

The loss of irrigated farmland would cost \$9.2 million annually.

The cost to retrofit municipal and industrial pump stations would be \$.8 to 43.8 million a year.

The cost to retrofit privately-owned wells would be 43.9 million annually.

In light of these sobering statistics, what options would be left for irrigators? The Corps estimated the economic effect on dam breaching on farmland value would amount to more than \$134 million. The Corps also considered ways to alter the irrigation system in order to continue to irrigate the 37,000 acres—to accomplish this alternative, we would have to spend more than \$291 million—more than the value of the land. Our farmers and agricultural communities are struggling enough as it is, and removing their ability to even water their crops puts them beyond despair. Therefore, the Corps assumes this irrigated farmland will disappear.

Lastly, let's look at transportation:

The Corps studied transportation impacts of breaching the four Snake river dams.

The transportation costs resulting from breaching the four Snake River dams would rise to \$1.23 per bushel from .98 cents per bushel—a 24 percent increase.

The annual increase in transportation costs to the region would be \$40 million for all commodities.

Breaching the four dams would remove 3.8 million tons of grain from the Snake River navigation system. Of this 3.8 million, 1.1 million would move to rail transportation and 2.7 million tons would move to truck transportation.

According to the report, barge transportation of commodities on the Snake river limits the cost of rail transportation and truck transportation. Removing competition among these types of transportation could drive up costs. According to the report, barge transportation has saved, on average, \$5.95 in per ton when compared with other

transportation alternatives. "Disturbing this competition would be one of the most important regional consequences of permanent drawdown."

According to the Washington State Legislative Transportation Committee, additional costs resulting from road and highway damage range from \$56 million to \$100.7 million.

Further, it is important to note that the navigation system of the Columbia allows enough barge transportation that if it were destroyed, more than 700,000 18-wheelers a year would be added to our already congested state roads and highways to replace the lost hauling capacity. (Source: Pacific Northwest Waterways Association)

I want to put all this together and construct a picture for you and what this scenario would mean in eastern Washington.

In exchange for breaching or removing the four Snake river dams, here's what the citizens of the Pacific Northwest could get:

We would lose four dams that produce hydro-power, which emit no pollutants into the air, for a thermal based power source that would jeopardize the clean air unique to the Northwest and enjoyed by countless residents and visitors to our state.

The 37,000 acres of irrigated farmland in Franklin and Walla Walla counties and the hundreds of employees that help supply food to more than a million people would disappear.

There is a likelihood that there would be a temporary loss of water for well users after dam breaching due to the inability to alter well depths until the actual removal of dams.

The increased truck traffic on our roads to haul wheat and barley to coastal ports will have an adverse effect on air quality and impose an additional financial burden on the family farm, which for many would be too much to bear and force them to give up their land.

So what do we get by removing the four Snake River dams? Shattered lives, displaced families and communities who will have seen their livelihoods destroyed, generations of family farmers penniless, industries forced to drive up consumer costs, air pollution, a desert that once bloomed with agriculture products goes dry, a far less competitive Northwest economy and a Northwest scrambling to repay a BPA treasury debt with less revenue, and scrambling to buy or build higher cost polluting sources of power.

So according to these three latest studies, the bottom line is that if we breach the four dams to increase our chances of bringing a select number of salmon runs back by only 11%, the Northwest will suffer economic impacts of \$299 to \$342 million a year in perpetuity. This staggering figure doesn't even include the estimated \$1 billion it would take to actually remove the dams.

If we remove the Snake river dams, over the next 24 years we only improve our chances of recovering spring and summer chinook to the survival goals set by NMFS by 11 to 30 percent over the current system of barging. Over 24 years, NMFS would like to reach the survival standard of returning 150 to 300 spring and summer chinook to the Snake River tributaries each year.

But there is something else that these numbers, studies and data can't quantify:

What many outside the region don't understand is that the four dams on the Lower Snake river are part of our life, heritage, and culture.

I repeat the call I issued last month to the administration and dam removal advocates: abandon your cause and work with the region on cost-effective salmon recovery measures that can restore salmon runs and preserve our Northwest way of life.

Mr. SCHUMER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent for 5 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr. President.

TAX CUTS

Mr. SCHUMER. I wish to continue the line of discussion we were in before about these two alternative tax cut plans. Again, my greatest worry is not in how the pie is divided, although I certainly very much disagree with the Republican way that is done but, rather, in the overall strength of our economy.

To put a huge tax cut in place now, at a time when inflation is low, unemployment is low, and jobs are being created, has the potential of throwing a monkey wrench into our economy. Targeted tax cuts, things aimed at helping middle-class people with their big financial nuts, whether they be health care or college tuition or retirement—those make some sense. But a huge across-the-board tax cut, in my judgment, could throw the economy dramatically off kilter. Will it? No one can predict. But there is an old expression: If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Our economy has been moving along well, and now, I think mainly because of some ideologues, we are being pushed to do something that risks the great recovery we are now having. That is issue No. 1.

Issue No. 2 is saving Social Security and Medicare. Again, you cannot have the money go for everything. Despite CBO's awful statements in the last few days—and I will talk about those in a minute—when you have a dollar, you can use it for something. You can return it to the taxpayers, you can spend it on a program, or you can put it away

for some kind of obligation that might occur later.

The two great obligations we have to the American people, fiscally speaking, are Social Security and Medicare. If you look at this chart, the Republican plan takes that Social Security surplus and makes it a deficit from 2005 on.

How many Americans, for a quick tax cut—most of which they will not see because it will go, just by definition, to the highest income sector—would risk their Social Security for that tax cut? My argument is: Very few.

How many Americans would risk their Medicare—and, God forbid, they or a loved one became ill—for what have proven to be in the past chimerical tax cuts, things that people do not see? Very few.

So what we are talking about here is very simple—targeted tax cuts that will help the middle class and preserve Social Security, which is the plan the Democrats have put forward, or a huge tax cut, mainly going to people who are doing remarkably well at the highest end of the spectrum and risking Social Security and Medicare.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Senator from New York yield for a question?

Mr. SCHUMER. I am happy to yield to my friend from Illinois for a question.

Mr. DURBIN. Over the course of the last several months we have had a lot of debate on the floor about a lockbox, a Republican lockbox that is going to protect Social Security and Medicare—lockbox, lockbox, lockbox. I think what we are dealing with when we look at the Republican tax break bill is the Republican “loxbox”—it smells fishy—because in the year 2005 they start dipping right into Social Security. They are taking money out of the Social Security surplus to give tax breaks to wealthy people.

I ask the Senator from New York—I am sure I can speak for people from Illinois as well—as you go around the State of New York and ask people what our priorities should be, if we are going to have a surplus, how many of them have said to you: Well, let's give tax breaks to Donald Trump and let's take money out of the Social Security surplus?

Mr. SCHUMER. I say to the Senator from Illinois that, first of all, my constituents say: Preserve Social Security and Medicare, No. 1; and, second, if you are going to do certain tax breaks, make them targeted to help the middle class, not these big across-the-board tax cuts.

I also say to the Senator, in certain parts of my State they would want a “loxbox,” but in many others they would refuse that.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. SCHUMER. I am happy to yield to the Senator from California for a question.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank the Senator.

I say to the Senator from New York, I really appreciate his contribution to this debate. I always go back, in my mind, to who is getting these tax cuts—the Donald Trumps, the Bill Gateses, et cetera. The other chart that was used before by my friend from Illinois showed very clearly that if you earn about \$800,000 a year, you get back \$22,000 a year; if you earn about \$25,000 a year, you get back about \$129.

I want to talk about that for a moment and ask my friend a question.

Mr. President, \$129 is nice to have. No one would turn it away. But if at the same time you suddenly get a bill for \$250 a month more for your Medicare, because the Republican plan doesn't put a penny in for Medicare solvency, now you are behind the eight ball, are you not? That \$129 you get back is gone, plus you may even have to take care of your parents because Medicare is not going to survive.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask for 1 additional minute in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. I say to my friend, could he comment on the cruel irony of this?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I think the Senator from California brings up an extremely valid point. The American people are most worried, not about their present tax situation, although everyone would like lower taxes, no question—particularly in my State, property taxes, which we have nothing to do with, are through the roof. What they care about are the big financial nuts that might bother them.

As the Senator from California said, God forbid a parent becomes ill, God forbid a spouse becomes ill, and Medicare is not there or it is so reduced that they have to shell out tremendous amounts of dollars from their own pocket before Medicare bites in. That is what worries people. That is why, I say to the Senator, I am pushing a tuition deductibility proposal because the average middle-class family is doing fine, but when they get hit with these huge tuition bills, it is tough for them to pay.

One other point, which relates to what the Senator said, going back to what CBO has done in raiding these two plans. I want to come back to this because it is so worrisome. What they have done is, they have said a plan that cuts taxes by \$700 billion reduces the deficit more than a plan that cuts taxes by \$300 billion—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank the Chair, and I thank the Senator.

CBO has said putting \$300 billion aside for deficit reduction reduces the deficit less than putting nothing aside for deficit reduction.

I have, in my 18 years in the House and now my 1 year in the Senate, always relied on CBO as a lodestone, as a morning star—fixed, correct, dealing with the excesses politicians have on both sides of the aisle. That has seemed to be true whether they were appointed by Democrats or Republicans. For the first time, I think we are going to start doubting the veracity of CBO in a significant way because they have so twisted their economic logic that economists across America are scratching their heads.

We need a CBO to be fair and non-partisan. CBO is vitally important to us being honest in reducing the deficit; when either party does fiscal hi-jinks, they are called to the carpet.

Again, I make a plea to the CBO Director: Reconsider what you have said or, at the very least, give it a better explanation because right now people who follow economics across America are scratching their heads and saying: What has happened? How the heck can CBO score things the way they have? The only answer that seems to be available is politics. That would be a shame.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BIDEN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 20 minutes as in morning business or until the managers of the legislation come forward and decide they want to begin the next piece of legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, before I get to the subject I wish to speak to, which is the nuclear test ban treaty, I will address a comment to my colleague from New York, Senator SCHUMER.

I, as all Democrats and some Republicans, think a tax cut should be progressive and equitable. To tell you the truth, I would like to be in a position to give the wealthy a tax cut if that were the case. That would be fine as long as we first gave the tax cut to the poor and the middle class.

I was speaking to the Senator from Illinois a moment ago. In my State, which has, as all of our States, very wealthy individuals, I found an interesting phenomenon. Given a choice, if you go back to my State and ask anybody who made \$1 million last year or is likely to make one next year, and said: We can continue the economy to grow the way it has the last 7 years, or give you a \$30,000 tax cut a year, there isn't any question what they choose. They say: Whoa, leave well enough

alone. I am making a lot more than \$30,000 a year in the market. I am making a lot more than \$30,000 a year in my investments. I am making a lot more than the \$30,000 a year I would get in the tax cut from the lower interest rates. I am making a lot more.

How many times have we heard the only thing that has remained constant in this changing economic environment over the last decade is tax cuts are a stimulus? We have one guy sitting at the helm. His name is Greenspan. He has been doing everything but taking an ad in the New York Times to say: Whatever you all do, if this economy heats up, if you stimulate this economy, I am telling you what I am going to do; I am going to raise interest rates.

He hasn't used those exact words, but the market responds to every word he says.

I don't know anybody who thinks that if there were almost an \$800 billion tax cut, we are not going to have interest rates raised.

I don't understand the math. To be more crude about it, I don't even understand the politics. It used to be good politics for our Republican friends to try to paint us into a corner and say: We are for tax cuts; Democrats are not for tax cuts ever. Therefore, Democrats are big spenders; therefore, we are good guys. Therefore, vote for us.

I understand that. We do the same thing with them on Social Security. We assume no Republican can be devoted to Social Security, and they assume no Democrat could ever want a tax cut. That is politics. I understand that.

The part I don't understand is to whom they are talking. Even their very wealthy constituency—not all wealthy people are Republicans, but it tends to be that way—is saying: Hey, go slow here.

I hear the name of Bill Gates thrown around and others such as Gates. They are an aberration even among the wealthy. But the wealthy in my State, if they could pick any one thing out of the Roth tax proposal, I know what it would be. It would be the elimination of the inheritance tax. There are only about 820,000 people in all of America who would be affected by it, but that is something—I happen to disagree with them—that is a big deal. That is a big-ticket item. That is worth a lot more than 30,000 bucks, but that is not the thing that would fuel a heated up economy. I am not proposing that. I am trying to figure out the politics.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BIDEN. I am delighted to yield.

Mr. SCHUMER. I think the Senator makes a very good point. Our No. 1 argument is the one the Senator made. It is not middle class versus wealthy. It is not redistribution. That is an argument.

The No. 1 argument is a very simple one: The economy is doing remarkably well. The people at the highest end of the economic spectrum have benefited the most. That is how it usually is in America. And here we are, everything is going along nicely, interest rates are low, fueling economic growth, allowing people to buy homes, allowing people to take second mortgages so they can buy other things. We are going to change conditions so that Alan Greenspan would be more likely to have to raise interest rates. And he, a Republican conservative, fiscal watchdog, says: Don't do it. And we are proceeding headlong into a wall to do it.

The Senator from Delaware has asked an excellent question: What is motivating this? I think it is leftover politics from the early 1980s.

Mr. BIDEN. I think that is right.

Mr. SCHUMER. There is a view, first, that Democrats haven't learned our lesson, which we have since 1994, which is we can't spend on everything we want to, even though we would want to. What we have proposed doing with this money is not spending most of it on new programs but putting the vast proportion away into Social Security and Medicare and reducing the deficit.

Second, it is based on the theory that the tax system is out of whack. When you look at it, the percentage of tax paid is going down; the economy is moving. It is almost "Alice in Wonderland." So I think the Senator from Delaware makes an excellent point. Whether you believe in the politics of redistribution or not—and there is a division in this country, in this body, and in our party, as a matter of fact—even if you don't, this tax cut, so massive, so much risking the monkey wrench being thrown in the economic engine that is purring smoothly, is a real risk.

Mr. BIDEN. If the Senator will yield, I would like to make an observation or a comment. I heard some of our Republican friends use the old phrase "if it's not broken, don't fix it." They can't stand status quo. I think they can't stand the fact that it is happening on Democrats' watch. I think part of the problem is they have to say something. It is similar to cops, the very thing they said would not work. It was terrible what Charlton Heston—or "Moses" Heston—said. They are going to have 100,000 social workers.

Regarding the deficit reduction package in 1994, every Republican leader stood up and said this will mean chaos, recession, loss of world stature, et cetera, et cetera. They turned out to be wrong; these things are working. Cops are making the crime rate go down. The deficit reduction package worked. We are now in a position where we are doing better than ever. It is as if they have to have something. We politicians, I know, sit there and say if the other party does something, or my opponent does something, and it works,

instead of saying it is working, we have to think of something better.

I think the public is prepared to give everybody credit. Everybody deserves credit. The people who deserve the most credit are the people in the business community because of their productivity and the way they trimmed down. I can't figure it out. For the first time in my 27 years as a Senator, this seems to fly in the face of the orthodoxy of the Republican Party. I mean, if you had said to me 15 years ago—first of all, I would not have believed what I am about to say. But if you said to me 15 years ago: JOE, in 1999, you are going to be standing on the floor of the Senate, and one of the choices you are going to participate in making is not whether or not we balance the budget but whether we take money and reduce the accumulated national debt or give a tax cut, first of all, I would not have believed that option would be available. I would not have believed we would be in that position. Forget, for a moment, the two pillars: Social Security and Medicare. Leave them aside for a moment. I would have said: First of all, it won't happen. But if it does, on the idea of reducing the national debt, in every basic economics course you took when you were a freshman in college, they said if you can ever reduce the national debt, the impact upon interest rates, the impact upon home rates, the impact upon the economy would be incredible.

And then, if you asked me: OK, what do you think the Republican Party would do? I would say that is easy. They would reduce the debt. These are the pay-as-you-go guys, the guys who say pay off your debts. These are the guys who had a clock ticking in your city, in Time Square, or down by the railroad station, Penn Station, a big clock, saying the national debt is going up. It was paid for, I suspect, by some wealthy Republican. So the clock was ticking. And not only have we stopped the growth of the debt, but it is ticking in a way that we can have those numbers go in reverse.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BIDEN. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I am sure the Senator from Delaware remembers 2 years ago on the floor of the Senate our despondency over the deficits, which led some Members on the Republican side to call for a constitutional amendment to balance the budget, where the Federal courts would force Congress to stop spending. We were so despondent that we were going to really change the constitutional framework. That failed by one vote.

Two years later—the Senator from Delaware is right—somehow or another, the Republican Party is searching for its roots and searching for its identity. It has now gone beyond the

era of Gingrich and Dole, and it is trying to find out what it stands for anymore. As the Senator from Delaware said, they used to stand for fiscal conservatism. We have a trillion-dollar tax cut, primarily for the wealthiest people, that will divert funds that could be spent to retire the national debt, a debt of over \$5 trillion, which costs us a billion dollars a day in interest. We collect taxes from American families—payroll taxes—for a billion dollars a day in interest.

Would the Republicans join the Democrats and say our first priority is to eliminate this debt? No. Instead, they are saying our first priority is tax breaks for the higher income individuals, which could endanger the economy.

I think this Republican Party is searching for identity. I think the Democrats have a situation that I would like to test in an election. If this were a referendum, as in parliamentary forms of government, I would like to take this question to the American people: Do you want a trillion-dollar tax break for the wealthiest people over the Democratic approach to take whatever surplus we have and put it into Social Security, put it into Medicare, and bring down the national debt?

I think ours is a sounder approach. I ask the Senator from Delaware, in his experience in history and in American politics, has he ever seen the world turn so upside down that we Democrats are now the fiscal conservatives?

Mr. BIDEN. No. I must say to my friend from Illinois that I haven't. I really think a legitimate debate—a debate that is a close call, in my view, would be whether or not, for example, we should be spending the surplus to reduce the debt, or spend the surplus—we can do both—or spend more of the surplus to reinforce Social Security and Medicare. That is a traditional debate that we have. Republicans used to argue we are spending too much money on Medicare—not just that it is broken, but we are spending too much; and Social Security is inflated and we should be cutting it back.

If you told me 15 years ago that the debate would be Democrats saying let's not put as much away to reduce the debt, put more in Social Security and Medicare, and with what is left reduce the debt, and the Republicans would have been saying let's reduce the debt, and once that is done, let's try to fix Medicare and Social Security—well, I don't know. The third rail of politics has become Social Security and Medicare. Obviously, they have to be for that; everybody is for that. So nobody really talks about it.

Some courageous guys and women talk about it on the floor, about what we should be doing. But it is just a shame because there is a legitimate debate here. The truth is, for example, if you said to me reduce the debt or spend

more money on cops, I would be for spending more money on cops. So it is true that there are some of us in this party who would want to spend more of the surplus for worthwhile things, such as education, law enforcement, et cetera. And it is a legitimate debate. They would say: Look, BIDEN wants to spend more money instead of putting it onto the debt. But that is not even a debate. That is not even a debate.

The debate now is to give a tax cut that no one seems to want. I would love a tax cut. My total salary is what I make here, and the American people pay me a lot of money. I would love a tax cut. I would love even more—since I have a third child going off to college for the first year, and room, board, and tuition in any private school in this country is about \$30,000 a year, I selfishly would love a tax break there. But what I would not love is my adjustable rate mortgage to change. I would not want that to change. Give me a tax cut and one little bump in my adjustable rate mortgage, and I am up more than I can save by the tax cut. So I don't know.

Both of our parties are going through a little bit of establishing, going into the 21st century, what the pillars and cornerstones of our philosophies are. Ironically, I think for the change we are sort of a little ahead of the Republicans on where we are. It doesn't mean the American people agree with us. The debate over there seems to be that the jury is still out on where they will go. I hope, for everyone's sake, we get our bearings a little bit because it would truly be a shame if, as a consequence of a political judgment, we imperil what is the most remarkable recovery in the history of the world, essentially.

The economy in America has never been stronger within our borders or comparatively internationally. I hope reason takes hold because even I think Republicans and Democrats know more about what the polling data says than I do. But my instinct tells me this is yesterday's fight. This is yesterday's fight, but it could be tomorrow's tragedy if it prevails.

RATIFYING THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, speaking of polls, which are what I stood up to speak about this morning, I would like to turn to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the comprehensive test ban treaty that was signed nearly three years ago and submitted to the Senate nearly two years ago. The American people overwhelmingly support this treaty, yet it has not even seen the light of day here in the Senate.

The Senate, as we all know, is uniquely mandated under the United States Constitution to give its "advice and consent" to the ratification of

treaties that the United States enters into. In a dereliction of that duty, the Senate is not dealing with the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

Why is this occurring? In the view of my colleagues—including some Democrats who support the treaty—this treaty is not high on the agenda of the American people. There is very little political attraction in the issue. It is easy to keep this treaty from being brought up and discussed, because people who care about nuclear testing tend to assume that we already have a nuclear test-ban treaty in force.

President Bush did the right thing in accepting a moratorium on any nuclear tests, but that is not a permanent test-ban. It does not bind anybody other than ourselves. It merely implements our own conclusion that we don't have to test nuclear weapons anymore in order to maintain our nuclear arsenal.

Faced with this perception on the part of many of our colleagues, several of us encouraged supporters of the Test-Ban Treaty to go out and actually poll the American people. Frankly, we wanted real evidence to show to our colleagues—mostly our Republican colleagues—that the American public actually cares a lot about this issue.

I am not going to keep my colleagues in suspense. A comprehensive poll was done. The bottom line is that the American people support this treaty by a margin of 82 percent to 14 percent. That is nearly 6 to 1.

For nearly 2 years, we Democrats—and a few courageous Republicans like Senator SPECTER and Senator JEFFORDS—have tried to convince the Republican leadership that this body should move to debate and decide on this treaty. Let the Senate vote for ratification or vote against ratification. The latest poll results are a welcome reminder that the American people are with us on this important issue or, I might add, are way ahead of us.

I know some of my colleagues have principled objections to this treaty. I respect their convictions even though I strongly believe they are wrong on this issue. What I cannot respect, however—and what my colleagues should not tolerate—is the refusal of the Republican leadership of this body to permit the Senate to perform its constitutional responsibility to debate and vote on ratification of this vital treaty. It is simply irresponsible, in my view, for the Republican leadership to hold this treaty hostage to other issues as if we were fighting over whether or not we were going to appoint someone Assistant Secretary of State in return for getting someone to become the deputy something-or-other in another Department. This treaty isn't petty politics; this issue affects the whole world.

Some of my colleagues believe nuclear weapons tests are essential to preserve our nuclear deterrent. Both I and the directors of our three nuclear