

editorial in the Washington Post. But I would be willing to guess that Dr. Krauthammer knows more about the subject than whoever at the White House wrote the article for the Washington Post editorial page.

If we want to compare capabilities and knowledge, I would be glad to get into that. I put my money with Krauthammer against anybody who writes an editorial in the Washington Post.

Having said that, I have done what I can do at this point in terms of suggesting that hearings be in order.

Mr. DORGAN. You have suggested.

Mr. LOTT. I have suggested that to the chairman. He has indicated, while he understands and will be working toward that, he has these other issues into which he wants hearings.

But I expect next week to get some feel from him exactly what the schedule would be. When I do talk to him, which will be, I presume, early next week, I will be glad to get back to Senator DORGAN and give him that information.

Mr. DORGAN. I appreciate that.

Let me say I have great respect for the chairman of the committee. We might have disagreements about the policy, but he is the chairman. I have respect for him and in no way denigrate his efforts and his beliefs on these issues.

This is a very controversial matter but very important and one I believe the Senate ought to be entitled to debate. Based on the majority leader's response, I will look forward to further discussing with him next week.

Let me say I appreciate the fact he has initiated an effort to ask that we have some hearings held in the Senate. I think that is movement, and that is exactly what should happen.

Mr. LOTT. I cannot wait to hear how Jim Schlesinger describes the CTBT treaty. When he gets through damning it, they may not want more hearings.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. Schlesinger will be standing in a mighty small crowd. Most of the folks who are supporting this treaty are the folks who Senator LOTT and I have the greatest respect for who have served this country as Republicans and Democrats, and military policy analysts for three or four decades, going back to President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent that the time just consumed during the leader's presentation of consent items not count against the Coverdell morning business time.

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

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I yield up to 15 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

PARDONING TERRORISTS BY THE PRESIDENT

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, today I want to talk about the tax cut. But I can't help but comment, if only very briefly, about the fact that some of the terrorists pardoned by the President are scheduled to be released today. They were imprisoned for up to 90 years in response to the convictions that were achieved following some 130 bombings in America—the worst terrorist assault in the history of the United States.

We are told by the White House that fighting terrorism is a No. 1 priority. But obviously it is not as important as politics. It is outrageous that at a time when the greatest national security threat facing America is terrorism, that the President of the United States is pardoning radical Puerto Rican nationalists who helped carry out the worst wave of terrorist violence in the history of our country. I think it sends a terrible signal.

I notice the President was saying yesterday that among those who had recommended to him that he pardon these terrorists was former President Jimmy Carter. What an interesting paradox it is that this wave of terrorism, in fact, increased in intensity after then-President Carter pardoned the terrorists who were in prison as a result of an attempt to kill President Truman and were in prison as a result of a shooting in the Chamber of the House of Representatives where Members of Congress were wounded. Those acts of violence were perpetrated in the name of the same cause as that espoused by the terrorists who have now been granted clemency by President Clinton.

I don't know how long it will take President Carter and President Clinton to understand that terrorism is a threat to America and to every American. When you pardon terrorists, you lower the cost for committing terrorist acts.

Our Democrat colleagues have objected for the second time to a simple resolution that condemns the President's actions in pardoning these convicted terrorists. I don't know whether they intend to vote no or whether they intend to vote present, but I don't think there is much confusion. You either believe the President ought to be pardoning these convicted terrorists, or you believe he shouldn't. I wish our Democrat colleagues would let the Senate state its opinion on this important subject as the House did.

THE TAX ISSUE IN PERSPECTIVE

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, turning to the whole tax issue, I would like to try to set it in perspective. Our Presi-

dent is a master of defining an issue in such a way as to induce the public to support his position. One of his secrets is, he doesn't always tell the truth. So I will try to set this in perspective by trying to define why we believe there should be a tax cut and then outlining the two options that we actually face.

I have several charts that I think will speed the process along. The first chart shows the 7 years in American history where the tax burden on the American people has been highest. Interestingly enough, the highest tax burden in American history, as one might expect, was under President Truman in 1945. National defense was taking 38 cents out of every dollar earned by every American as we were winning World War II.

The second highest tax burden in American history is the tax burden we'll have on Oct. 1. That tax burden is occurring, by the way, when national defense is taking only about 3 cents out of every dollar earned by every American.

The third highest tax burden we have ever had in American history is right now under President Clinton. The fourth highest tax burden occurred last year under President Clinton. The fifth highest occurred in 1944 under President Roosevelt. National defense spending was 38 percent of the national economy.

The sixth highest tax level was in 1997, under President Clinton, and the seventh highest tax level was the day President Reagan became President. As we all know, soon after his inauguration, we set about an effort, a successful effort, to cut taxes 25 percent across the board.

If you look at these 7 years, you will see that we are facing the second highest tax burden on working Americans in the history of the United States and we have never, except during World War II and under President Clinton, faced tax burdens that approached this level, the only one that was close was the year that we initiated the 1981 tax cut.

As to my second point, while the President continues to talk about how risky and dangerous it is to let working Americans keep more of what they earn and why we shouldn't repeal the marriage tax penalty and the death tax, the reality is as shown in this chart, which shows three circumstances.

First, it shows the tax burden the day President Clinton came into office. The day President Clinton became President, the Federal Government was taking 17.8 cents out of every dollar earned by every American. Today, the Federal Government is taking 20.6 cents out of every dollar earned by every American.

If we adopted a tax cut that took the entire non-Social Security surplus,—and our tax cut is significantly less