

I would like to urge that the majority leader and the Speaker work together with the minority leader in this body and the minority leader in the Senate to appoint a bipartisan group to come back to this body this summer with a Social Security reform package. It is certain to have elements in it that are not acceptable to one group or another but, on the other hand, at least we would be moving ahead. Such a bipartisan group ought to confer with the White House and attempt to develop a proposal that would have the support of the President.

I do not think today is too late. I do not think that the issue has somehow subsided. Yes, Kosovo has dominated the news, but people throughout America realize the importance of Social Security reform.

□ 1815

I would also like to emphasize that as we begin consideration of supplemental appropriations bills for the Kosovo crisis that we keep in mind that our historic pattern of using the Social Security surplus to pay for other programs will probably end up becoming a necessity in 1999.

Many of us on both sides of the aisle have identified this as an abuse that we can no longer tolerate. We ought to stop it in 1999. It ought to end now. No more borrowing from the Social Security trust fund for other Federal programs.

The budget resolution that we have adopted makes that point clear. Unfortunately, it is for the year 2000. Let us implement it now in 1999.

I have worked with my Republican colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER), to propose that this practice be terminated. And I am going to be meeting with him again and proposing that we take steps that would be effective to make sure that, here in 1999, we protect this Social Security trust fund from any further raids.

We need to ensure, number one, that Social Security reform move ahead promptly; and number two, that we protect the trust fund from any further use.

ILLEGAL NARCOTICS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BONO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, my colleagues, I am pleased to come to the floor again tonight and will be coming to the floor each and every week I get the opportunity to talk about a situation that I think is our number one national social problem, and that is the problem of illegal narcotics and substance abuse in our Nation.

In this Congress, as many of my colleagues know, I was assigned a responsibility to chair the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources of the Committee on Government Reform.

With that responsibility, I inherited a position that was really held by the former chair of the national security subcommittee on which I served, and the chair of that subcommittee was the honorable gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), who is now Speaker of the House.

I may say at this time that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) helped put back together our national effort to begin to address the problem of drug abuse, illegal narcotics trafficking, and address in a very serious fashion for the first time since this administration took office the problem of illegal narcotics that face our Nation and our community. So I am pleased to inherit that responsibility.

I am also troubled by that responsibility because the problem is so enormous. The scope of this problem, my colleagues, goes beyond anything we see on the nightly news. I know the attention of the Nation and the Congress and all Americans has been focused on the tragedy in Colorado; and certainly that was a tremendous human tragedy, with a loss of some 15 precious lives.

I know also, my colleagues, that the attention of the Nation and the Congress is focused today and tonight and will be this week on the situation in Kosovo, in harm's way. But my colleagues, a very, very serious situation faces this Congress, and that is what to do about the rising use of illegal narcotics, particularly among our young people and among our population across this Nation.

And it is not just a question of use. If there was not any damage, if there was not any result, people may very well turn their heads the other way and ignore the problem. But, my colleagues, the problem is absolutely enormous. Over 14,000 and possibly up to 20,000 Americans, depending on whose statistics we use, last year lost their lives in our Nation as a result of drug-related causes. This is an astronomical figure.

And I have said on the House floor since this President took office, approximately 100,000 Americans, the population of some of our larger cities in this country, have died at the hands and through the use and abuse of illegal narcotics and the tragedy that it has brought to their lives and to their families.

So tonight I am back again, with that responsibility, seeking answers; and tonight I plan to focus a bit again on the history of how we got into this situation and review that. Because I think it is important that we learn from the mistakes of the past, we learn from the mistakes of the Congress, we learn from the mistakes of this admin-

istration, we learn from the mistakes of this President and we try to improve on what we are doing both in policy and legislative action.

It is important, I think, also that we focus beyond the past at what we are doing as a Congress now, what programs have been instituted. I will talk about those briefly.

And then I want to talk about another subject that fits into the question of interdiction and stopping illegal narcotics in a cost-effective manner before they ever reach our shores so that we limit the sheer quantity and supply of illegal hard narcotics coming into the United States of America. And that subject will deal tonight with the question of Panama and this administration's failed negotiations, this administration's failed planning and this administration's complete lack of response to a situation that confronts us in the next few days.

In fact, May 1 we must stop all flights from Panama and we are giving up all of our assets in the Panama Canal. I want to talk about how that affects our ability to conduct and advance surveillance, how it is going to cost the American taxpayers a huge sum of money to deal with the failed negotiations again of this administration.

Incidentally, I will be holding a hearing next week on the Panama Canal situation as it relates to the narcotics trafficking issue. But later in this month I will be holding a hearing on the question of drug legalization.

Since I have taken over as chair of this subcommittee, I have received many requests to look at decriminalization, legalization, and other alternatives to incarceration. And I think that that subject deserves a review by the Congress, a serious study, and an examination as to how we can better address this growing problem of the people who are affected through the problems of trafficking or use of illegal narcotics. So those are some of the topics I plan to discuss tonight.

I would like to go back to the situation for a minute. I hate to repeat this. But I have to review how we got in this situation. I think history records it first, so the American people pay attention to it second. And thirdly, that we do not repeat these mistakes.

The first thing that was done was by this administration and this President was to in fact, basically, throw out the window all of the programs that had been instituted back in the 1980s, first by President Reagan and then by President Bush, to address a problem that we had with the cocaine epidemic and some hard drugs coming into the country at the beginning of the 1980s.

Many programs were put into place and cost-effective programs: interdiction, eradication of illegal narcotics at their source in the country, interdiction as the drugs left that source country, use of the military, use of other

United States assets to try to stop illegal narcotics coming across into our borders and increasing the supply of hard drugs available.

Each of these programs in 1993, when the President controlled, of course, the White House as chief executive, had complete control and wide margins of majorities in both the other body and the House of Representatives.

What took place, again, was an error we should not repeat. The first thing he did was to cut the drug czar's office and budget dramatically. The next thing, and I think one of the most damaging things and something we are really feeling the ravages of across our Nation today, is our young people.

Our young people are smart, and when our young people hear a leader of the United States or someone who wants to be leader of the United States to say it just does not matter, they can do these things, something is wrong.

This President appointed a surgeon general, the highest health officer in the United States of America, to an important position of responsibility, Joycelyn Elders, who came up with this policy of just say maybe.

So we fail to have leadership from the President. We fail to have leadership from our chief executive medical officer of the Nation. And I think we are still suffering from that lack of direction, lack of message.

The message during the Reagan administration was very clear, "just say no." It was very simple but it was very direct, and even our young people understood it. But this just say maybe and then cutting the programs that were instituted, again under President Reagan and President Bush, to cost-effectively stem the tide, the shear tide, of illegal hard drugs coming into the Nation, these things were cast aside.

The military was taken out of the war on drugs. The Coast Guard's budget was cut dramatically, which protects our borders. I know in Florida we saw the Coast Guard budget dramatically cut around Puerto Rico. And that directly affected Florida, the citizens of Florida, because drug dealers started using Puerto Rico, without that protection, as an entry point for illegal narcotics.

Our State has been flooded, particularly with heroin, and we have experienced in central Florida and throughout Florida record deaths weekly through the use of heroin which is coming through that route.

Moreover, we saw something happen that should shake up every Member of Congress and every citizen of this country. The use of heroin by our teen population from 1993 to 1997 jumped 875 percent, use by teens of a very hard and deadly drug.

What was different about some of the narcotics that came into 1980, including marijuana, heroin, cocaine, was that in those days and that decade we

had a very low purity level. The heroin that we have been seeing come into the United States both from Mexico, from Colombia and transited through other areas is of incredible purity, sometimes 80, 90 percent pure. Cocaine has also increased. And marijuana's potency has also increased.

So, particularly with heroin, we have seen young people mixing it with alcohol or some other substance or first-time users getting a dose of these high proportions of purity and not recovering, dying the most horrible deaths imaginable from their use and sometimes experimentation and addiction to heroin.

□ 1830

Madam Speaker, the cost of all this is absolutely astronomical. We are putting together right now a bill that will be close to \$18 billion. I might say that this new majority, the Republicans, again under the direction of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), put together all the programs that were dismantled, again the cost-effective programs of interdiction, close to the source, and first of all eradication at the source, very cost effectively. A few millions of dollars do an incredible amount of good there.

I use as an example what has taken place in Peru and Bolivia in the last couple of years. This new majority has worked with the leaders there, President Fujimori and President Hugo Banzer of Bolivia. We have, in fact, dramatically decreased the production of cocaine from those countries. Unfortunately, this administration has had a policy of trying to stop any aid, assistance, resources, helicopter, ammunition, anything to fight in the war on drugs, to Colombia; and Colombia has now become the major producer of heroin entering the United States. And also it was not in 1993 on the charts as any type of a producer of coca and is now the largest coca and cocaine producer in the world.

So the policy of this administration, in fact, has caused us to fail in a very important area, that is, Colombia, as a direct result of policies of this administration.

The second area where we are seeing actually the majority of hard drugs transiting into the United States is Mexico. I have spoken many times about the problems with Mexico, in absolute frustration. We have given Mexico trade assistance. We have backed them from a financial standpoint in all of the international financial agencies. We have been a good ally. We have opened up our border from a commercial standpoint. What we have gotten in return is a flood of drugs. Again a policy of this administration has been to certify repeatedly Mexico and its officials as fully cooperating in our effort to eradicate the production of illegal narcotics and the trafficking of illegal

narcotics. By any measure, Mexico has failed to assist and fully cooperate as required under Federal law. But again this administration repeatedly certifies them, fails to hold their feet to the fire.

This Congress requested Mexico, time and time again, to aid in some simple request to curtail the drug trafficking. First we asked for extradition of major drug officials. Two years ago this month, this Congress passed a resolution by a rather wide margin, and we find that to date not really one major drug trafficker who is a Mexican national has been extradited from that country. We have asked Mexico to sign a maritime agreement so we could stop some of the drugs that are transiting through the seas off the coast of Mexico and dealing with Mexican nationals, and still they have not signed a maritime agreement. We have asked Mexican officials again to allow our DEA agents to protect themselves, actually to increase the presence of our DEA. We have a very limited force down there working with Mexican officials. Again these requests have been denied. Radar to the south to keep drugs coming from Colombia and Panama, transiting through the isthmus and up through Central America, again almost no action.

And then we have asked for enforcement of laws that the Mexicans have passed and actions against illegal narcotics traffickers in Mexico. What have we gotten in return? Our customs officials uncovered one of the most incredible banking scandals in the Western Hemisphere. It involved Mexican officials. This sting operation was conducted with full knowledge of the highest Mexican officials. Unfortunately, sometimes we cannot give them the entire story because corruption goes from the bottom to the top in that country, but they were aware of what was going on. Did they fully cooperate as required by our law to receive trade, aid, financial benefits? No, in fact they threatened to indict our United States customs officials who were involved in that operation.

Then if we look at the hard facts about Mexico and what it has done in the last year to deserve, again, extended United States trade and aid benefits and financial support, all the things we give them, what have they done? It is almost pitiful. The seizures of cocaine are dramatically down, over 30 percent in Mexico last year. And hard heroin and opium, also dramatic decreases in seizures by Mexican officials. The number of vessels that are seized has also decreased. We have seen the takeover of the entire Baja Peninsula which is now raging with narcoterrorists, 315 killed last year, some horrendous murders where they line up women and children and gun them down in these drug wars; and the Yucatan Peninsula where our President went to meet with President

Zedillo of Mexico. Totally corrupt. The Governor, we were promised, of the Yucatan Peninsula would be arrested, would be confined the minute he left office. We were told that they were not going to arrest him before he left office because Mexican law gives him immunity and it is difficult to prosecute. So they were going to go after this guy after, in fact, he left office. But our latest report is that he fled, the Governor of the Yucatan Peninsula, in Quintana Roo, left several days before he left office. Some reports have him on an island off of Cuba at this time.

So that is the kind of cooperation that we get really dirt kicked in our face. And some people turned a blind eye to it because of the trade relationship. Some people do not want to upset the Mexican Government.

What was astounding was we recently held a hearing on this subject and we will also be holding a hearing, I believe the week of the 11th of May for the information of my colleagues, on the situation in Mexico. But the last hearing we held, we had testimony of another Customs agent who testified that 1 out of 4 major Mexican generals, one Mexican general was trying to launder \$1.1 billion. Where does a Mexican general get \$1.1 billion, I ask?

So this is what we get in return. This is the policy of this administration. Unfortunately it has created a disaster. The disaster, as I said, will cost us over \$18 billion, direct costs that we will be funding in the next few months.

The cost to the American society is estimated at a quarter of a trillion dollars. Drug and substance abuse costs the taxpayers, the citizens, all Americans, a quarter of a trillion dollars, \$250 billion in social costs when we add in all the lost wages, when we add in the welfare, the social payments, the cost of the criminal justice system, the incarceration, not to mention the heartache and the deaths that have been incurred by so many by this tragedy.

So I wanted to review and I will continue to review the past errors of this administration. I do want to also say that I think it is important that we as a new majority be responsive to the errors that were made and correct them. I think we have done that.

Last year we have added over \$1 billion, and I think in very cost-effective areas, to increase education almost \$200 million, and that program is now underway. That program requires public service announcements which you may or may not be seeing on your television or in your media. Both newspapers and other forms of media should have that proposal.

I was concerned that our education effort was somewhat diminished in the past era of this administration. I was concerned that during, again, their control of the Congress and also the White House, that they did not pay

proper attention to what should be done. I did propose, almost 4 years ago, legislation that would require an increase in public service announcements paid for really by those that hold Federal communications licenses. Each year if we look at it since 1990, those folks have lessened their public commitment, their public trust responsibility in my opinion, and should be doing more rather than less.

The White House proposed as an alternative to spend a rather large amount of money. We ended up with a compromise. For every one of the \$190 million that the Congress has appropriated, we must have donated the equivalent time or resources towards these public service announcements and this education effort.

That is a small part of everything we have done. We have restored the cuts in the Coast Guard, we have restored the military's involvement in the interdiction effort. And most importantly and most cost-effectively, we are going back and making certain that the source countries, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Mr. Speaker, 99 percent of the cocaine comes from Bolivia, Peru and Colombia that is entering the United States. It is a no-brainer to use a few dollars to stop these drugs at their source from getting into the United States and penetrating our borders. So we can do that very cost-effectively, those things.

Again, the new majority has restored those programs and getting the assets to Colombia so that the new President, in working with General Serrano, the head of their national police force and others, that we can make a difference where those drugs are being produced and at their source, again so cost-effectively.

I believe that it is important, as I said tonight, that we also focus on the situation of those drugs that are coming in in huge quantities into the United States, and what is happening to our efforts to curtail those narcotics, again, source country I think is so important, and interdiction before they get to our borders.

Something that has been brought to my attention and I think should be on the radar screen of every Member of Congress and every citizen this week is the date of May 1. I say May 1 is an important date, because May 1 will be the day that the United States of America will no longer be able to have any flight operations in the Republic of Panama or the Panama Canal or at any of our bases there. This really is the result of an incredibly failed negotiation by this administration that most people have not paid much attention to. But the United States is about to turn over the keys and lower our flags on our bases and facilities in Panama as part of the Panama Canal transfer.

By the end of this year, the United States military will have returned

property consisting of about 70,000 acres, not to mention the improvements thereupon, including one very expensive canal, plus 5,600 buildings. These assets are estimated with a value of \$10 billion. So what President Carter started, President Clinton is finishing with a bang, that we have in negotiations totally lost any rights, any ability to have any presence in Panama.

Now, that might not be a big problem, Mr. Speaker, but, in fact, all of our forward-operating operations for the war on drugs, for our international surveillance over these areas I just described of Colombia, Peru, Bolivia where these drugs are coming from, from sources, not to mention where they are being transited from, every bit of our forward observation locations, every one of those and our ability to launch reconnaissance flights from there are ending this week, May 1.

□ 1845

Again, it is incredible that the negotiations which the administration and State Department and others said were coming along, were coming along, fell on their face. It was not until we took a congressional delegation down there several months ago to ask the status that we found out there were not even interim agreements.

In the past few weeks the administration has scurried and has managed to put together several interim agreements. Let me show you what we are facing with this situation.

All of our operations have been located, again, in surveillance on illegal narcotics production and trafficking from Panama. To deal with this situation we had hoped that the administration would negotiate some agreements with Panama to continue launching these flights there, and we have conducted annually some 15,000 flights there. We had 10,000 troops; we are down to 4,000 troops, and they will soon be out of that area and unable to conduct these flights or these operations.

Now, in addition to losing the \$10 billion in assets, the buildings, the canal and a little bit of pride, what is absolutely incredible is the taxpayers are going to foot the bill to relocate these operations to a very big tune, and that is going to be \$80 to \$100 million dollars on an interim basis. Madam Speaker, this is so disorganized that they really do not know where they are going to house the folks who serve this country who are responsible for these flights.

But scary is if we look at this chart, this chart shows the ability of our operations, our forward operations, to cover the areas. If we took 100 percent as what we are covering right now for surveillance and observation, come the end of this week we may have just an incredibly reduced capability even with the interim agreements that are being

signed with Aruba, and Curacao and Ecuador; we may at best some time in May get up to 70 percent, and even after we spend the \$100 million, we will be lucky if we get to 80 percent.

So, we have gotten ourselves kicked out of the Panama Canal, lost our assets that our taxpayers have helped contribute, again, buildings and resources there, and we have also gotten our advance international narcotics Western Hemisphere forward surveillance operations and all flight operations canceled.

Most folks did not pay attention, but several weeks ago we turned over the keys to our naval operations, and that brings to mind something that I want to bring before the Congress, the House, tonight, and that is my concern about what has taken place, and I learned that in a meeting with our officials and also with others who have been involved in observing what is going on in Panama.

The situation in my estimation has the potential for a future disaster. This administration allowed our naval bases, former naval ports, of course to disappear, and the two ports in the Panama Republic have now really been turned over to others, and to describe what has taken place I want to read from an article that Robert Morton, and I do not want to say this, I want someone else to say this; but let me tell my colleagues what has taken place and quote from Robert Morton in an op-ed he did March 4, 1999:

"The Clintonesque government of Panama in effect sold Chinese rights to two prime, American-built port facilities that flank the Canal Zone both to the east and the west. The 50-year contract awarded Balboa, on the Pacific side, and Cristobal, on the Atlantic side, to a giant Hong Kong shipping firm, Hutchison Whampoa, Ltd. By any analysis this company, headed by Li Kashing, is an interesting operation."

And he goes on to report "Hutchison has worked closely with the China Ocean Shipping Co.," and that is COSCO, which we have heard about before, and let me go on, on shipping deals in Asia even before Hong Kong reverted to Beijing's control in 1997. COSCO, you may remember, is the PLA, and the PLA," is the Chinese Army, "PLA-controlled company that almost succeeded in gaining control of the abandoned naval station in Long Beach, California," and there was quite an uproar about that.

"Li Kashing has served on the board of directors of China International Trust and Investment Corp., a PLA," again, Chinese Army, "affiliated giant run by Wang Jun whose name may ring a bell. Yes, the very same Wang Jun enjoyed coffee at the White House in exchange for a modest donation to the Clinton-Gore 1996 slush fund," and let me continue here.

"As retired U.S. Navy Admiral Thomas H. Moorer testified before the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee on June 16, 1998, 'My specific concern is that this company is controlled by the communist Chinese. And they have virtually accomplished, without a single shot being fired, a stronghold on the Panama Canal, something which took our country so many years to accomplish.'" That is one quote that I thought that the Congress should have on the record.

Another observation that I found that I thought was interesting about what is taking place in Panama was really expressed by a Panamanian last year who was running for president, and there is an election in Panama coming up. But this presidential candidate, and I will quote his comments and his concerns, and this is approximately a year ago:

A Panamanian presidential candidate has asked the U.S. Justice Department to investigate China's activities around the canal and the possibility of a quid pro quo between the Clinton administration and the Asian Communist power.

"Concerned about possible executive branch complicity and China's gatekeeper status at the Panama Canal, Panamanian presidential candidate William Bright Marine," and Marine is a dual U.S.-Panamanian citizen who was born and raised in the Canal Zone, I might add, but according to him, he wrote to the Justice Department on May 4 last year and said, "I have yet to speak with one single American who is not outraged at the fact that the Clinton administration has allowed Communist China to obtain control of U.S. ports, U.S. basis, and functions of the Panama Canal. They today, effectively control access to the Panama Canal."

This agreement could not have happened without the consent of the Clinton administration. The executive branch has been copied by my correspondence regarding communist China dating back to 1996. They cannot claim ignorance.

And just one more word on this from a retired Lieutenant General, Gordon Sumner, who also observed recently, and let me quote his quote:

"The deal grants a 2-year waiver of labor laws and veto rights over the use of abutting properties, in clear violation of the Panama Canal Treaty." A Hutchison lawyer by the name of Hugo Torrijos was also the head of the port authority that awarded the contract.

So these contracts have been let, these ports are already lost, and I am told confidentially and I am also told publicly that these tenders for control of these two ports were very corrupt tenders and, in fact, also greased with Red Chinese influence. In fact, Red Chinese influence in Panama is growing in many ways. Recently the Bank of China extended a 15-year, \$120 million loan to Panama at 3 percent interest to finance the government's investment program.

So we have a situation where the Panama Canal, an important strategic asset to the United States, 13 percent of all the shipping, the international shipping and commerce, flows through the canal, and it has an incredible amount of trade that relies on the use of the canal, and this again this Saturday will be second turning over of the canal and its properties to Panama and a prohibition against any further flights by the United States in our war on drugs. This, in fact, is going to strain our Department of Defense's ability to keep a watchful eye on drug shipments and transit routes and will really hurt our efforts in eradicating drugs at their source, which again is, I believe, so cost effective.

Either more assets will be needed to provide the same relative level of coverage, or we are trying to do the same job with again a limited number of coverage areas, which I showed on the chart, and we will greatly diminish our ability to cover those areas that were previously cost effective. They were covered by our bases out of the Panama Canal and Panama Canal Zone, and again the taxpayers are going to pick up the bill for this \$100 million to relocate these operations which will not be by any measures as effective, at least at the beginning on the short term will be somewhat disorganized, because this administration again has not completed any long term agreements, only short term.

And I am told that the next round of expenses that we can expect, in addition to this \$100 million expense, will be a tab for up to \$200 million for repairs and for improvements in the Ecuador situation. Even the Ecuador agreement, which is an interim agreement, is only a short-term agreement, and we will face a serious problem because that government right now of Ecuador and that country is undergoing some very difficult political and domestic turmoil.

It is sort of sad to think about it and reflect on it. President Bush about a decade ago sent our troops into Panama, and why did he do that? To stop drug trafficking, to stop the chief executive of that country, General Noriega, in his tracks as he was charged with illegal narcotics trafficking, money laundering and other offenses dealing again with the illicit drugs. Our troops went in there, our troops fought, wounded, and others lost in that effort, but we made an effort. We took that country back.

Now that was the approach of the previous administration to deal with a corrupt chief of state and others who were responsible for, again, illegal narcotics trafficking.

□ 1900

General Noriega still sits in jail in the United States for those offenses.

This is the policy of this administration: to fail in a negotiation to maintain any of the assets, to maintain any of our locations or capability to launch a drug effort.

What concerns me tonight, my colleagues, is we are looking at some potential dramatic costs and disaster for the future. One of the things that the United States did when they went into Panama was to really help dissolve the military organization which was corrupt, which was the tool of General Noriega, and also involved in some of this illegal and corrupt activity.

We have in fact dismantled most of the military in Panama, leaving them with a weak national police force. What concerns me is that Panama has had on its border and within its border the FARC organization and a Marxist rebel group which are conducting operations, both from Panama now and also in Colombia. As they see the opportunity for corruption to take hold, as we lose control of any assets, any military presence in the Canal Zone, I think we are creating a vacuum, and I think some of these rebels from the south, again, will move further into Panama and create a very unstable situation.

So we may be back in Panama at great cost, at great sacrifice, in the future, but it is in fact the failed negotiations, again, that have gotten us into this situation, into this cost and into this potential for future activity by these Marxist guerrillas who are already located in Panama and, I think, again will take advantage of this.

Panama has always been a major narcotics route and it always will be because of its location as an isthmus and as a route linking South America and Central America and North America. Again, I believe that we are going to pay a very high price in the future by the decline of our ability to conduct advanced surveillance operations from the location we have had.

Panama historically has had a notoriously corrupt political class, and, again, we are faced with only a small police force to deal with this impending situation with the departure of the United States forces. Both the country and the canal, in my estimation, are in danger, and we are about to turn over this entire operation at great cost and great loss to the taxpayer. We will hear more about this in the hearing that we will be conducting next week as that action takes place on May 1.

I also want to just talk briefly tonight about the national debate that is raging on the question of use of illegal narcotics in this country. I said earlier, as chairman I have pledged to hold a hearing and will do that, I hope, later this month on the question of legalization and also decriminalization of illegal narcotics.

I myself do not favor that action by our government, by our Congress. In

fact, what I think from what I have learned since taking over this responsibility and my past work on this issue is that sometimes tough enforcement, tough eradication, tough interdiction, does in fact work. I welcome the opportunity to have this debate before our subcommittee, but I must say that, again, all the evidence I see points to the contrary.

Let me just, as I may in closing, comment on what I have learned about the question of tough enforcement versus legalization. I have here a chart, and I will put it up here for a few minutes, and it is narcotics arrest index crime comparison for New York City.

This chart dramatically shows as the numbers of arrests for narcotics offenses increased, that in fact the incidence of crime dramatically was reduced. This is pretty dramatic, and it covers the period from 1993 to 1998 under the regime of Mayor Giuliani. So when drug arrests are enforced and executed, in fact crime goes down. The proof is in this chart and in these statistics, and I think is not refutable.

I would like to compare that. I got this chart from Tom Constantine, who is the United States Drug Enforcement Administrator. He looked at New York and saw a dramatic decrease in crime in that city. Then, by comparison, he looked for a city which had a more liberalized philosophy and tolerance of drug use and programs to provide alternative substances to drug users.

A great example, of course, is Baltimore. Baltimore in 1950 had a population of 949,000, and it had an addict population of 300. In 1996 it had a population which was reduced down to 675,000. It had 38,985 heroin addicts. Absolutely startling statistics. Again, a policy of liberalization, not the tough enforcement. New York's statistics are absolutely dramatic, not only the crime index that I showed you, but the loss of lives.

Let me, if I may, put up as a final exhibit this chart that shows the numbers of murders in New York City in 1993; nearly 2,000, 1,927. In 1998, I believe it is a 70 percent reduction, 629.

Therefore, I think that the question of legalization will be interesting. The question of decriminalization will be interesting. I think we do need to look at some other ways rather than incarceration for so many individuals who have ended up in our jails and prisons, nearly 2 million Americans at this point. But the facts are, my colleagues, that tough enforcement does work.

Madam Speaker, tonight I have had the opportunity to again raise before the Congress and the House what I think is our biggest social problem facing this Nation, 14,000 to 20,000 drug-related deaths last year across our land, hundreds of them across the district that I represent, with heroin, just tragic deaths, cocaine and other hard drugs that have taken their toll, particularly

among our young people and across this Nation at great loss, not only in dollars and cents that the Congress must expend and public policy that demands, but also the incredible human tragedies.

I cannot describe how difficult it is to face a parent who has lost a son or a daughter in a drug overdose. I cannot describe the agony that they as a family must experience, to lose a loved one to this tragedy.

So as we focus on all the other problems, we cannot forget, again, what I consider is the major problem facing the Congress and this Nation, the social problem. I do feel confident about learning from the past, as I said, not making the mistakes of the past, putting our money on programs that work, that are cost effective, looking at some alternatives. And I welcome those suggestions from my colleagues and others that are interested in this subject so that we can do a better job for all Americans, and particularly for young Americans who are the biggest victims today of this epidemic facing our land.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to address the House tonight to talk about the subject of illegal narcotics and drug abuse.

CHANGING U.S. POLICY ON CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BONO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Speaker, distinguished colleagues, as I grieved along with the rest of America this last Sunday, this weekend, about the senseless bloodshed, the condemnable violence against innocent victims last week in Littleton, Colorado, and my heart goes out to the victims and their families, I was reading some news reports from various wire services. I noted two news reports that I placed copies of in my files.

One was titled "Portugal Concerned Young People Will Forget Coup of 1974." It is an Associated Press wire.

"Bloodless Action Toppled Dictator, Brought Democracy. Lisbon, Portugal. The coup was swift, bloodless and effective, so smooth and neat that as Portugal marks the 25th anniversary of the Army coup that brought it democracy, some citizens fear it is at risk of being forgotten. An older generation that lived under dictator Antonio de Oliveira Salazar's heavy hand, proudly recalls the courage of the dissidents and the outpouring of joy when disgruntled Army officers led the coup that toppled the dictatorship."

The article went on, "The coup paved the way for the country, Portugal, to join the European Union in 1986, a coming of age that accelerated the pace of change as development funds poured in and Portugal scrambled to make up for