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AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA CONCERNING FISHERIES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Resources and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), I transmit herewith an Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Latvia extending the Agreement of April 8, 1993, Concerning Fisheries Off the Coasts of the United States, with annex, as extended (the "1993 Agreement"). The present Agreement, which was effected by an exchange of notes at Riga on June 7 and September 27, 1999, extends the 1993 Agreement to December 31, 2002.

In light of the importance of our fisheries relationship with the Republic of Latvia, I urge that the Congress give favorable consideration to this Agreement at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, January 31, 2000.

BIENNIAL REVISION TO UNITED STATES ARCTIC RESEARCH PLAN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Science:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the provisions of the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984, as amended (15 U.S.C. 4108(a)), I transmit herewith the sixth biennial revision (2000–2004) to the United States Arctic Research Plan.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, February 1, 2000.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE CHALLENGE FACING CONGRESS AS IT DEVELOPS THE NEW BUDGET

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I would like to talk a minute about the challenge facing this Congress as we develop next years new budget. Part of the question is, are we really going to pay down the debt, and do we really have a balanced budget. The answer is no on both counts.

As Members will notice this chart, I have divided our debt into three segments, because there is a great deal of confusion in terms of what our debt really is. Are we really paying down the debt? We hear the candidates running in this first primary today in New Hampshire talking about the importance of paying down the debt. Madam Speaker, the total debt of this country is now \$5.72 trillion. This \$5.72 trillion I have divided up into three categories.

One is what I call the Wall Street debt, or the debt held by the public. That is approximately \$3.6 trillion. The other portion of the debt is the social security surplus about \$1 trillion. Right now, because we are overtaxing American workers, we are bringing in about \$153 billion this year more in social security taxes than is required for the payment of current benefits. For the last 40 years we have been using that extra social security surplus to fund on other government programs. The middle portion of this chart represents what we have borrowed from the other 112 trust funds.

Madam Speaker, I think it is so important that we not, if you will, hoodwink or mislead the American people that we are paying down the debt of the country when we really are not. As Members will see by this chart, the total debt continues to increase. This continued increase in debt is if we have a freeze, and continue to only spend at last year's spending level. Of course, last year we added another \$20 billion of emergency spending. So if we add that spending to what we already spent last year and we froze at that level for that next 5 years, then we are going to continue to increase the national debt.

We talk about the words "balanced budget." Do Members not think it would be reasonable to define a balanced budget as a spending level when the total debt of the country does not continue to increase? I think it would.

I am a farmer. On the farm, a lot of us try to pay off the mortgage so our kids have a little better life, have a little better chance of making it, so we try to pay down the mortgage so their life does not have the kind of sacrifices that some of us went through.

But in this Congress, we are going just the other way. We are adding to the mortgage of the country, and we are asking our kids and our grandkids to sacrifice their living standards because we think our needs today are so great we should overindulge or overspend now. Let us start really balancing the budget. Let us stop borrowing from the 112 trust funds for other government spending.

On the top of this chart we see social security trust funds. That is the largest surplus we have coming from any of the trust funds. But then there is the Medicare trust fund and the

others 111 trust funds. In the gray portion in the middle of this chart, we have represented another 112 trust funds we are borrowing from. Without that borrowing, we do not have a balanced budget.

Let me show Members this other chart. If we stick to our budget caps, this chart represents how we can pay down the Federal debt. It does not start to go actually down until 2003, but at least it starts to go down.

Let me suggest to Members and the President that increasing spending is not good public policy. I see keeping solvent both social security and Medicare a huge challenge. The actuaries at the Social Security Administration estimate that over the next 75 years, over the next 75 years, there will be \$120 trillion less coming in from the social security tax than is needed to pay benefits.

Let me say that again. The social security actuaries at the Social Security Administration estimate that we are going to need \$120 trillion more than what is expected to come in from the 12.4 percent social security tax over the next 75 years to pay the benefits that we have promised; a tremendous challenge in social security, a tremendous challenge of keeping solvent the Medicare program.

I think we have to be very careful about implementing what the President has suggested on increased spending. We cannot continue to expand the size of this government, to increase spending. Let us start solving the problems of social security, Medicare, and start paying down the debt.

Madam Speaker, during good times, it is reasonable, whether you are a family or a government, to have a rainy day fund. A rainy day fund for a government that owes \$5.7 trillion is starting to pay down that debt. I ask my colleagues to resist the political temptation to increase spending.

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

Mr. SOUDER. Madam Speaker, first, I would like to associate myself with comments of my friend, the gentleman from Michigan, on the trust fund. I think it is absolutely important, before we go on some sort of spending spree in this House, that we replenish our trust funds, which are somewhat inappropriately named. We have not kept that much in trust.

However, what I wanted to address this House for a few minutes on is possibly the most important way to achieve social change in this country to help those who are hurting, those who are in need through creative building up and strengthening of charitable and nonprofit organizations in this country.

I was pleased to see that President Clinton in his State of the Union Address has a proposal. I wanted to address a few others.

The Give Act, which I introduced in the last Congress and have many sponsors in this House for, would use the existing tax code by giving a 120 percent deduction for charitable contributions. It also allows non-itemizers who give more than a \$1,000 to charity to deduct their contributions, and moves the filing deadline on the return to April 15 so people can calculate better how much they could get in an extra tax break by giving to charitable organizations.

Along with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), we had an amendment in the Community Service Block Grant in 1998 to allow half of the State funds, which is 5 percent of the Community Services Block Grant, to be used to offset revenue losses associated with State charity tax credits.

So we have already passed one bill in this House. We have also, with a number of amendments that I and others have offered, allowed charitable choice in the human services reauthorization. We had it in the juvenile justice reauthorization and numerous other bills to allow charitable organizations to take part in government grant bidding.

I also support Governor Bush's efforts to advance this; in the name of compassionate conservatism, to expand the charitable deduction to non-itemizers, to provide a tax credit of up to 50 percent of the first \$500 for individuals, up to \$1,000 per couple, against State income or other taxes, to give permanent charitable contributions from IRA accounts for persons over the age of 59 without penalty, extend the proposed charitable State tax credit to corporations, raise the cap on corporate charitable donations, because the proposals of Governor Bush are another dynamic way to address this concern of how best to solve the social problems that are overwhelming many of our inner cities, our suburban areas and our rural areas, as well.

President Clinton the other night proposed the following initiatives: Allow non-itemizers to deduct 50 percent of contributions over \$500 a year when fully phased in, simplify and reduce the excise tax on foundations by eliminating the current two-tiered system, and also to increase the limit on deductions for donations of appreciated assets, such as stock, real estate, and art, to charity from 30 to 50 percent of the adjusted gross income, and to private foundations from 20 to 30 percent.

President Clinton's proposals are an important first step. I hope he expands his charitable proposal. I hope that this House, when we move what is most likely to be some sort of a tax package, will look at Governor Bush's proposals, we will look at President Clinton's proposals, we will consider the proposals that the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. TALENT) have proposed, that we will look at the Give Act that

I and over 20 other Members of Congress have proposed, because I do not think there is a single more important thing we can do to help rehabilitate our communities and families in this country than to get additional dollars into the hands of those who are sacrificing, who day-to-day are working in tutoring, in counseling in the schools, in housing rehabilitation, in drug rehab, in all sorts of outreaches to the families and children in this country who are hurting.

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To the degree that in a tax package we ignore that, it will be on our heads. I really hope that our leadership and the Committee on Ways and Means will carefully consider these charitable tax proposals and include them in any tax package.

THE B.E.S.T. AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, I wanted to talk to the House tonight about the agenda which the Republican Conference is moving. We have worked closely with the White House and some Members of the Democratic Caucus on the BEST agenda, B-E-S-T. It is kind of easy to remember if we keep it in mind.

B: Building up the military.

One of the big problems we have is we are still in a dangerous world, and although the Soviet Union has fallen, we can still see, if we have watched Russia and Chechnya, that Russia really has not changed. Their political system has, but their philosophy of being an aggressive nation certainly has not. And they have a lot of military nuclear weapons over there. The question is what are they doing with that nuclear arsenal? One of the things is they are selling it to renegade countries. We need to keep an eye on them.

Madam Speaker, we cannot disengage from the world military scene. The world is still an unstable place. There are too many Saddam Husseins and North Koreans out there.

Also, we lose lots of soldiers because of the deployments. From World War II until 1989, there were 11 deployments. But since 1989, there have been 33 deployments. And all we have to do as a Member, and I recommend to all of the Members of Congress to do this, they should go talk to some of the military posts and bases in their district and find out how the recruitment is doing and the reenlistment is doing. They are losing lots of good soldiers.

Another reason is, despite the Republican 4.8 percent pay raise that we passed in this Congress last year, there is still a 13 percent pay gap between military and civilian pay.

These things have to be addressed, so the "B" in BEST is to build up the military.

E: E is for education.

The idea behind that is to return education to the local control. Think, Madam Speaker, about those great classic teachers that we were able to grow up and experience in our educational careers. The teachers who were just commander of the ship when we went in their classroom. They may have had a few extra rules. They worked us hard and were disciplinarians, but they changed our lives. And if we got a B in their class, it was worth an A in half a dozen other classes because that teacher got the best out of us.

Madam Speaker, those teachers are rare these days because they are tired of the bureaucracy. Is somebody up on the sixth floor or the third office down to the right in the cubical telling teachers in Georgia and Illinois and in Maine and in California and Miami how to teach? Come on. There is not a bureaucrat that smart in our town.

Return education to the local control. Let the teacher in the classroom get the dollars. Let the teacher run the show.

The S in BEST: Saving Social Security.

Last year in his State of the Union address, the President said let us spend 38 percent of the Social Security surplus on non-Social Security items. Actually, he said let us only save 62 percent, but doing the math, that would mean spending 38 percent of the Social Security surplus. That is not good enough.

We need to protect and preserve 100 percent of the Social Security surplus. Last year this Congress left town with \$147 billion in the surplus trust fund so that our loved ones can retire to an income that is there because of the money they put in it.

And the T is tax relief.

Every day another couple gets married and when they do, they get a bill, \$1400 for walking down the aisle together. We need tax relief for working America.

Madam Speaker, that is what it is. The BEST agenda.

There is one other angle in there that I want to say. Despite all the great prosperity and despite all the millionaires that have been made in the high-tech industry, one industry that has been left behind is agriculture. We need to reach out to America's farmers. Less than 2 percent of the population now feeds 100 percent of America, plus a great percentage of the whole world.

We need to make sure that our farm families are not left behind. How can they grow oats in Millen, Georgia, and compete against the foreign market that is subsidizing their farmer 30 percent in another country? They cannot do that. And yet we let our farmers get