A PROGRESS REPORT ON HAITI?

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, today is day 115 of the U.S. occupation of Haiti. For almost 6,000 of our troops still there, the mission remains as open-ended and as ill-defined as it was when it started back in September. Still the White House is very vague about the time line for the withdrawal of our troops. They offer very little substantive commentary on what is the real situation in Haiti today where our troops are at risk.

Mr. Speaker, many Members have questions they would like answered, like:

What is the prognosis for an orderly withdrawal of our troops without a return to a climate of brutal vengeance in Haiti?

Where do Haitian moderates fit into White House plans?

How much is this costing American taxpayers as we talk about balancing the budget?

What is being done about shifting the aid emphasis from commitments for handouts for Haitians to support for investments and jobs that will actually make a real difference in that country's future?

Mr. Speaker, it is time for some accountability from the White House. It is our troops that are overseas.

ON WHOSE BACK?

(Mr. NEUMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, the naysayers and doubters are out in full force scaring the American people about the balanced budget amendment. The question they ask is on whose back will the budget be balanced?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to reverse that question and ask on whose back will the burden fall if we do not balance the budget?

□ 1150

If Congress does not act responsibly to control wasteful government spending and growth, the children of our country are the ones who will pay. We now have over $4 trillion in debt. How far in debt do we have to go before we realize what we are doing to the children of our Nation? The American people want action and they want action now.

They want a government that is smaller, less expensive and more efficient. They want a government that will control its spending habits. Let us not break the back of our children's future. Let us pass the balanced budget amendment and let us do it now.

BASE CLOSINGS

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I stand here to talk to my colleagues about base closure. I think many of us realize we just went through a base closure operation not too long ago and I was involved with it. We are having another one in 1995. I want to point out to my colleagues we had a vote on the House floor to slow down this process and I think it is important we do that.

Now that Republicans are in control, I hope all of us will realize we have an opportunity to preserve some very important bases around this country, which brings me to my point about a very important base in my congressional district in Jacksonville, FL. It is a naval depot. My friends, it is creating a profit.

After all is said and done, here is a government operation that is creating profit every year, so why should we be shutting down something like that? The community is coming together very strongly to protect it. In fact on Monday the First Coast Manufacturing Association kicked off a campaign of 500,000 postcards in support of the Jacksonville depot.

CONTINUING PROCESS OF REFORMS

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, 1 week ago today we passed the most dramatic reforms of the way this institution does business in literally decades. It was done under the most open amendment process imaginable. We had votes up or down on eight different provisions that passed, not by a simple up-or-down vote as we have had in years past when the Congress has organized.

We right now up in the Rules Committee are holding a hearing on the unfunded mandates question so we will not see Congress continue to impose constraints on State and local government without providing the wherewithal to comply with those constraints. There are a wide range of things that are going to be going on during this 100-day period.

But I think it is very important for us to realize that while we did pass these eight major reforms a week ago today, the issue of reform did not end on January 4. We are continuing to review further opportunities to change and improve the operations of the U.S. Congress so that it can in fact become more accountable to the American people and once again be established as the greatest deliberative body known to man.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLILEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members are recognized for 5 minutes each.

UNFUNDED MANDATE REFORM ACT OF 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. MCINTOSH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a critical issue that must be addressed as we address the balanced budget at the Federal level, it is very important that we also protect the taxpayer at the local level. So I wish to indicate my support for the unfunded mandates bill and the need for liberalizing the rules governing privatization of Federal infrastructure assets by State and local governments.

Yesterday, the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight completed its markup of H.R. 5 the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act of 1995. Chairman BILL CLINGER showed tremendous leadership on the first day of committee business by moving the bill so quickly. I strongly support House passage of the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act.

The Unfunded Mandate Reform Act of 1995 is an important first step in right-sizing the Federal Government. The November 8 election sent Washington a clear message—the American people want smaller, less intrusive government. Unfunded Federal mandates is one costly example of Federal Government overreach.

The Federal Government taxes gasoline, cigarettes, payroll for Social Security, and of course, income. But that is not all. Washington also taxes the American people through costly regulations placed on State and local governments and the private sector. The cost of Federal regulations are hidden in increased property and sales taxes, higher fees on services that show up in water and sewer bills, and more expensive goods and services. In addition, these Federal mandates infringe upon the freedom of communities to order their public lives. In short, the Federal Government compels taxpayers of both State and local governments and the private sector, either by force of law or the power of the purse, to pay for its policies. The America people want relief.

The mayor of Richmond, IN, Steve Cornett has indicated that unfunded Federal mandates have prevented that municipality from improving vital public safety and infrastructure. The Environmental Protection Agency compels this community to fit its landfill with a $1 million liner, even though the landfill is clay and not prone to leeching. The city also had to use scarce resources to dig up empty storage tanks