

oversight hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee on Forests and Public Land Management of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The hearing will take place Wednesday, February 24, 1998 at 9:45 a.m. in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. The purpose of this hearing is to receive testimony on the use of specialty forest products from the national forests. Those who wish to submit written statements should write to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510. For further information, please call Judy Brown or Mark Rey at (202) 224-6170.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### MILITARY ACCIDENT IN AVIANO, ITALY

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep sympathy to the families of those killed in Italy by a low flying plane. Like all Americans, I was shocked, saddened, and angered that an American plane caused this tragedy.

We do not have all the details at this time and are having to rely on media reports, but I want to be very clear. This tragedy never should have happened. This was a disgraceful act, military training should not be done in civilian areas.

I wish that I could say that this was an isolated incident. Unfortunately, I cannot. Accidents during training missions occur with disturbing frequency.

Last September, the Secretary of Defense was forced to suspend all training flights after a rash of six crashes within one week.

Also in September, a F-117 crashed in Maryland, injuring 4 civilians and burning a portion of a home.

In 1996, a U-2 spy plane crashed in the parking lot of the Mercury-Register newspaper, killing one and injury two others.

In October, a military jet crashed in Pennsylvania. The pilot managed to eject safely, but the plane exploded near a busy interstate highway.

It may be impossible to make training missions 100% safe for the pilots, but we have an obligation to make sure they are safe for civilians.

In the tragedy in Aviano, Italy, the pilot was flying an approved flight path though not at an approved altitude. This flight path led the plane, at a very low altitude, directly over a functioning ski lift. While I have trouble believing news reports that pilots entertain themselves by flying under the ski lift cables, that plane never should have been in the proximity of the ski lift. The potential for tragedy was simply too great. Unfortunately, it took the deaths of 20 people to prove it.

Clearly, responsibility for this tragedy lies not only with the pilot, but also with the commanders who authorized these dangerous flights. There is a certain degree of risk involved in all training missions. That risk should not

fall upon innocent civilians. How many more incidents such as the one in Aviano have to occur before it becomes clear that the potential for tragedy in these missions is too great?

I would like to see the following actions taken:

1. A change in the guidelines over where planes can fly training missions.

2. An immediate report to the American people of the facts of the accident at Aviano. It has been almost a week and we still have no information from the military.

3. If the investigation shows that the pilot was at fault, the pilot should be subject to Italian law. ●

#### “BEWILDERING BUDGET-SPEAK” ON SOCIAL SECURITY

● Mr. KYL. Mr. President, millions of Americans, myself included, listened intently to what President Clinton had to say about Social Security in his State of the Union address. What we heard—or what we thought we heard—was a plan by the President to reserve any budget surplus that might emerge in the next few years to shore up Social Security for future generations.

It was a plan that drew widespread praise from the public. But now it turns out that what we heard is not, according to White House spokesmen, what the President really meant. The Washington Post put it this way in a February 4 report: “the ringing simplicity of Clinton’s call to ‘save Social Security first’ gave way to a fog of bewildering budget-speak from the administration’s top economic advisers.”

Here is what OMB spokesman Larry Haas had to say: “People who think it [President Clinton’s proposal] shores up Social Security were not listening closely.” Testifying before the Senate Budget Committee, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin admitted that the Clinton budget does not include any mechanism that would transfer surpluses to the Social Security trust fund.

Mr. President, why the intricate game of words? Is Social Security first or not? Let us take a look.

Next year—the year covered by President Clinton’s proposed budget—Social Security itself will run an estimated surplus of about \$93 billion. Remember, the system is currently generating surpluses that are intended to build up until about the year 2016, when we will have to begin using them to pay retirement benefits to 75 million baby boomers.

But the Clinton budget does not set aside this \$93 billion Social Security surplus. The Clinton budget spends every penny of it on general operating expenses of the federal government.

The practice of using the Social Security nest egg to mask overall government deficits dates back to President Lyndon Johnson. Colleagues from both sides of the aisle have condemned it for years. It is only because President Clinton employs this sleight of hand—counting the Social Security surplus in the unified federal budget—that he is able to show an overall surplus of \$9 billion for next year. If Social Secu-

rity’s \$93 billion surplus and the surpluses held in other federal trust funds were removed from the calculations, the Clinton budget would actually show a deficit of \$95.7 billion.

Even the relatively small surplus that is created by commingling all of the funds—that is, after mixing Social Security with the rest of the federal budget—is shrunken considerably from what it would have been if the President reserved the entire amount for Social Security, as he said he would. That is because he devotes the bulk of the resulting surplus to a host of new spending initiatives.

Here are just some of the new programs that President Clinton is proposing:

a new clean water initiative for about \$37 million;

two new farm programs for \$14 million;

\$170 million for new mandatory empowerment zones and enterprise communities;

a new program called the Community Empowerment Fund, which will cost about \$400 million;

a new \$10 million Indian land consolidation pilot program;

\$47 million on a new community adjustment program to help areas adversely affected by trade agreements;

at least eight new education programs totaling over \$1.8 billion;

a new Medicare buy-in program costing \$1.5 billion over five years;

\$4.5 billion for five new child-care related programs;

a new smoking cessation program for \$87 million; and

two new law-enforcement initiatives for \$200 million.

The cost of these new programs is estimated to be about \$120 billion to \$130 billion over the next five years, and that does not even count the myriad increases he proposes for other existing federal programs. In other words, some \$120 billion to \$130 billion of anticipated unified budget surpluses are not reserved for Social Security at all, but are used to create brand new programs.

Granted, many of these proposals are appealing, and some address real needs in our communities. Granted, some of the spending for these new programs is designed to come from the proposed tobacco settlement. But if President Clinton is sincere in his desire to reserve 100 percent of the surplus for Social Security, how is it that there is so much money for so many new programs? Why is the tobacco money not used to boost the size of the surplus that could be devoted to Social Security?

Given the programs I just mentioned a few moments ago, it is obvious that Social Security is not really first on President Clinton’s list of anticipated uses of any unified budget surplus. It is not second or even third. It does not make the top 10 list. It is number 26 on

the President's list, after all of these other new programs are created. Remember, too, that President Clinton is proposing to spend the entire \$93 billion surplus that the Social Security system will itself generate—spend it on other things.

So what did President Clinton really mean when he spoke of Social Security in his State of the Union? Here is what he said:

I propose that we reserve 100 percent of the surplus—that is every penny of any surplus—until we have taken all the necessary measures to strengthen the Social Security system for the 21st century.

His budget clearly spends the surplus, so what hidden meaning could there possibly be in his apparently very carefully crafted words?

Treasury Secretary Rubin explained to the Budget Committee that the President was merely declaring his opposition to using surpluses, should they materialize, for any purpose other than paying down the national debt until Congress and the President have agreed on a long-term solution that ensures the solvency of the Social Security program. In other words, nothing may ever be set aside specifically for Social Security.

Mr. President, I am confused, as I think most Americans are, about President Clinton's intentions with respect to Social Security. John Rother, chief lobbyist for the American Association of Retired Persons, told *The Washington Post* that many of his members are also confused and mistakenly assume the surpluses will be used to pay future Social Security benefits.

Crafting next year's budget, let alone tackling the coming problems in the Social Security system and the many other important problems facing this administration and the country, requires straight talk and straight answers. Either Social Security is first or it is not. Either we reserve any surplus for Social Security or we do not. Tell the truth, and the American people will support what needs to be done.

Senior citizens deserve better than to be treated as a political football by this President.●

#### FOOD CHECK OUT DAY

● Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, today we celebrate "Food Check Out Day" and commemorate the day when the average American will have earned enough income to pay for the entire year's food supply. We celebrate the bounty from America's farms and ranches and how it is shared with American consumers through affordable food prices.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, on average, American consumers spend only 10.9 percent of their disposable income for food. When applied to the calendar days, that means that the average American will have earned enough income to pay for his or her family's annual food supply in just 40 days. We commemorate this fact on February 9th, which is the 40th day of this year.

Compared to other expenses facing America's families, food is a bargain. While Americans must only work until February 9th to pay for their yearly food supply, last year they had to work until May 9th just to pay for their taxes. In addition, the percentage of disposable personal income spent for food has declined over the last 25 years. In 1997, Food Check Out Day would have been on February 10. In 1970, Food Check-Out Day would have been 11 days later than it is today—February 20.

This is made more notable by the fact that trends indicate Americans are buying more expensive convenience food items for preparation at home, as well as more food away from home.

The Agriculture Department's latest statistic, compiled for 1996, includes food and non-alcoholic beverages consumed at home and away from home. This includes food purchases from grocery stores and other retail outlets, including food purchases with food stamps and vouchers for the Women, Infants and Children's program. The statistic also includes away-from-home meals and snacks purchased by families and individuals, as well as food furnished to employees.

Mr. President, many states will mark today with an event to raise food donations for their local Ronald McDonald House. The Ronald McDonald House provides a "home-away-from-home" for the families of seriously ill children receiving medical treatment in their local areas. The food donated from these Food Check Out Day programs will be used to help feed visiting families staying at the House.

The bottom line, Mr. President, is that food in America is affordable, in large part because of America's productive farmers and ranchers. Food Check-Out Day allows us to recognize their hard work, the benefits of which we all enjoy. As a fellow rancher, I personally want to salute these Americans and thank them.●

#### 70TH BIRTHDAY OF PRESIDENT EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE

● Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I call the Senate's attention to an individual who has dedicated his life to liberating his people and restoring his nation. Eduard Shevardnadze's career of government service is marked most significantly by his personal journey from being a member of the Soviet hierarchy to being the prominent democratic leader he is today. I am proud to have met him on several occasions and draw the Senate's attention to this extraordinary man's accomplishments in celebration of his seventieth birthday which was January 25, 1998.

Eduard Shevardnadze's career began with a steady rise through the Communist Party. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs, his ability as a diplomat brought the United States and Soviet Union into a better understanding of one another. He was a significant force

in ending the Cold War peacefully and ushering in an historic era of improved world-wide relations. In 1991, however, Eduard Shevardnadze was at odds with the dictatorial policies of the Communist Party. His strong principles ultimately drove him to forego the trappings of the elite political class and he resigned his position.

Upon his resignation, Eduard Shevardnadze returned to Georgia. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, his homeland was destabilized and struggling economically. Eduard Shevardnadze began assisting in the revitalization of Georgia, and in November, 1995, he was elected president. His policies have focused on restoring territorial integrity, as well as promoting economic and political independence. Since his election, President Shevardnadze's notable achievements include adopting and implementing a new constitution, introducing a new currency, cracking down on organized crime, and negotiating important treaties with neighboring countries to secure Georgia's future.

President Eduard Shevardnadze's personal journey from communist to democratic leader is a compelling example of the triumph of the human spirit. His high standing among Western leaders has been earned through his principled democratic leadership and perseverance in the face of adversity. I would like to express my warm regards to President Shevardnadze in wishing him a prosperous seventieth year.●

#### PROHIBITING THE DESECRATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KEMPTHORNE. Mr. President, I rise today to express my strong support for S.J. Res. 40, a resolution to propose a Constitutional amendment to prohibit the desecration of the flag of the United States. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of this resolution.

The people of Idaho have told me, quite clearly, that they feel we must take steps to protect the Stars and Stripes. By way of a resolution passed by the Idaho State Legislature approximately three years ago, my constituents let it be known that Idahoans want the opportunity to ratify an amendment to the Constitution which would prohibit the desecration of the flag. The resolution stated, "...the American Flag to this day is a most honorable and worthy banner of a nation which is thankful for its strengths and committed to curing its faults, and a nation which remains the destination of millions of immigrants attracted by the universal power of the American ideal. . .".

Perhaps nowhere is the desire to protect the American ideal exhibited better than in the men and women who serve this nation in our armed forces. As a member of the Armed Services committee, I have had the opportunity to visit with many of these outstanding Americans who serve our nation