cuts and growing domestic obligations. This is not the time for ''country store'' give-aways!! and if we give anything away—we should at least give everyone something to spend and not just those who have it already. We should seek to do something that is fair, responsible and immediate.

Economists nation-wide are in agreement that this type of tax cut will do little or nothing to crate jobs or stimulate the economy. More than 400 professional economists, including ten Nobel Laureates agree that: ''Regardless of how one views the specifics of the Bush plan, there is wide agreement that its purpose is a permanent change in the tax structure and not the creation of jobs and growth in the near term.'' Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that such comments are not politically driven. They do not reflect some partisan attempt to dismantle sound and effective fiscal policy. The in-coming Director of the Congressional Budget Office, a Republican appointee, has testified to the skepticism of these tax cuts either stimulating the economy or paying for themselves.

Mr. Speaker we sought then—as we do now—to provide tax relief that is fair, responsible and immediate. Throughout the day's debate, extension of remarks, special orders and other comments, my colleagues have eloquently highlighted the Democratic alternative: fair, responsible, and immediate have been our cry. I won't repeat the details—Mr. Speaker you know what they are. We were unable to even bring a Democratic alternative up for debate and that, Mr. Speaker, is the real tragedy of this debacle.

TAX BREAKS FOR THE ELITE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, as so many of my Democratic colleagues this afternoon brought forth, it is amazing to all of us on this side of the aisle that the Republicans would bring up this tax cut legislation which basically just gives money back to wealthy individuals and does nothing to help the economy, and at the same time we face this huge job recession throughout the country.

The most egregious part of it was today when the Democrats tried to bring up their alternative as a substitute, the Republican majority under the Committee on Rules refused to allow the Democratic substitute to even be brought to the floor, refused to even have a debate on a Democratic alternative which we believe very strongly would provide economic stimulus, create jobs, grow the economy, and bring us out of a recession, one of the worst we have had now long-term for the last couple of years.

All the Democrats were asking for was an opportunity to debate. I think the fear on the part of the Republican leadership was that if the Democratic substitute was allowed to be considered today, perhaps some of the Republicans might have voted for it, or at least the public and the media's attention would have been focused on an alternative and have shown that the Republican proposal was not a good one and just basically was a tax giveaway to millionaires.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation is in a job recession with 2.7 million jobs lost since President Bush took office, the worst jobs record in 40 years. For 3 years the Republicans have had the power to turn this recession around, and they failed miserably. When I listen to the Republican leadership and the President, it seems like they are just coming into office, and they forget they have been in office almost 3 years; and during that whole time the economy gets worse every day.

For the past 2 years alone, the President and the Republicans in Congress have repeatedly chosen tax breaks for the elite, and the American people are still waiting for one job to be created. Keep in mind, this is a failed economic policy. This Bush policy, the President's policy, he has had an opportunity. He passed tax cuts last year, and since those tax cuts were passed, we have had a loss of another 1.7 million jobs. This is not something new. This is a policy that was tried over a year ago; and after it passed in the time it has had to take effect for the last year, the economic situation has gotten worse.

What do the Republicans say in response? They say let us try it again. They have a bill on the floor that amounts to another payback to the wealthiest Americans in our Nation. Tax cuts last year for the wealthy, and tax cuts again for the wealthy. They disguise it somehow. They say it is a little different this time because it is going to give breaks on capital gains and stock dividends; but these are two proposals that economists conclude will not create jobs or growth in the near future.

When our economy needs a true jolt to reverse America's economic skepticism, the Republican proposal will not stimulate the economy, and the Republican record on economics is uninspiring and one that should not be extended today.

I am not the only one saying this, and Democrats are not the only ones saying this. If we look at some of the columns in the media and the economists around the country, they all are saying the same thing. But one of the best statements was made in today's New York Times by Paul Krugman called ''Into the Sunset.'' I just wanted to read certain parts of it because I think it points out very dramatically that this is a failed economic policy, that this tax cut, this plan that the Republicans had us vote on today, is just an extension of their failed Bush economic policy.

If I can read sections from Paul Krugman's opinion, it says that the tax cut package the House is expected to pass today is a package that relies on exactly the same bait-and-switch tactics used to sell the 2001 year tax. Here is the story:

> In 2001, some swing Senators insisted on a budget resolution limiting the size of any tax cut. No problem. House-Senate negotiators pushed through a huge tax cut anyway, saving several hundred billion dollars by making the whole thing expire in the 10th year. Among other things, this sunset clause implied that heirs to large estates would pay no tax if their parents died in 2010, but would face significant taxes if their parents made it into 2011. At the time, I suggested that it be renamed the Throw Mama From the Train Act of 2001.
>
> So we remember the kind of tricks that were played last year. We were told this was going to sunset, and everyone was running around saying does that mean I have to decide what year I am going to die?

□ 1615

Mr. Krugman says:

> Needless to say, last year's bill was silly by design. The administration didn't intend to compromise. It fully expected to get the sunset clause repealed in a future Congress and President Bush was soon out there ridiculing the way the tax cut was programmed to expire, implying that the expiration date was imposed by scheming liberals when in fact it was a trick perpetrated by his own congressional allies. Now Congress is voting on more tax cuts. This time we're already running a record budget deficit and the long run prospect is bleak. Still the administration claims to be making a concession by agreeing to scale back its $726 billion tax cut to a mere $500 billion.

What Mr. Krugman is basically getting at and I think this is an aspect of this tax plan that we need to bring out, is that the President comes forward and says, I want a huge tax cut that is going to go mainly to millionaires and wealthy people and then some Republicans either in the House or in the other body come forward and say, oh, that is too big, we have to make it half of that or a third of that, and then one House or the other passes a bill that is maybe half the President's proposal and they play around back and forth and ultimately come up with something that is somewhat less than what the President proposed, but the bottom line is it is a huge tax break still, it breaks the budget, it creates a deficit and it primarily goes to wealthy individuals. So they play this game over and over again.

Paul Krugman goes on to say:

> The new tax cut plan echoes the 2001 scam in other ways. In 2001 a tax cut that delivered about 40 percent of its benefits to the richest 1 percent of families was marketed as a tax break for ordinary folks. The same is true this time. In fact the extent to which the House bill favors the rich is breathtaking. The typical family would get a tax break of only $217 next year but families with incomes above $1 million would get an average of $93,500 each. The estimates are that over the next decade, 27 percent of the tax cut, about the share that goes to the bottom 90 percent of the population, will go to these very high income families who comprise a mere 0.13 percent of the population.

So we are talking about very, very few people that benefit from this. But

the bottom line is, it would not matter even if I was a millionaire. I would not want this tax cut to go into effect because it does not do anything to stimulate the economy. Even if you had $1 billion, why in the world would you want a tax cut that does not do anything to turn the economy around, because in the long run you are not going to make as much money because the economy continues to spin downward.

So he says in this op-ed, Paul Krugman:

> Finally, as in 2001, we're being told that this tax cut will create lots of jobs. But why should we believe that? It's hard to find an independent economist who thinks the Bush proposal would create the 1.4 million jobs claimed by the administration. And as I have explained in this column, even that many jobs would be a poor payoff for a tax cut that big. And bear in mind that Bush-style tax cuts now have a track record. Of the 2.1 million jobs lost over the last 2 years, 1.7 million vanished after the passage of the 2001 tax cut.

So the problem that we have is you can look at this in any way. If you are rich, even though you might be getting a nice, big break, the bottom line is your investments are not going to grow and you are not going to make much money because as the economy continues to trend downward, your investments are not going to be worth anything or certainly not worth as much. From the point of view of the budget, it is a disaster because it creates a larger deficit. And as we borrow more money and more money is taken out, that is not available to the private sector, it is very hard for new investments to be made by small businesses or other corporations in the private sector because they cannot borrow the money, it is all being taken by the Federal Government. And so that has a downward impact on the economy. And then the other thing that it does is in borrowing, you are taking money from the Social Security and the Medicare trust fund. So you are jeopardizing those funds as well. There is not anybody who can make a legitimate argument that this Bush plan makes sense. What Krugman is saying and I think is so true is, we already tried it last year and the economy continues to get worse. So why should we repeat it again?

Finally in this op-ed Paul Krugman says:

> The odds are that this scam, like the scam of 2001, will succeed, the tax cut will be passed and the budget will plunge even deeper into the red and one day we'll realize that international investors are treating us like a banana republic, that they won't finance our trade deficit unless they are paid very high rates of interest. Have I mentioned that the dollar has just fallen to a 4-year low against the euro? And everyone will wonder why.

That is the bottom line. I think that the Republicans basically figure, well, nobody is paying attention, we will have this huge tax cut and when we have to pay it back, that will be somebody else's problem down the road. The amazing thing is that it would be so easy to try something different, to try an alternative, one that the Democrats have put forward, that would actually do something to make a difference in the economy. Of course, I am saying this because as a Democrat I like the Democratic plan but I would argue, if the other plan of constant tax cuts does not work and has not worked, why not try something new? We can call it the Republican plan if you like. I do not care. I just want to pass it so that we can do something to turn this economy around.

Let me talk a little bit about this Democratic proposal that we tried to get considered on the floor of the House of Representatives today but, of course, the Republicans would not allow us to consider it. They would not allow it to be even debated. We have several provisions in this Democratic proposal that I think would do a lot to create jobs and stimulate economic growth, both in the short term as well as in the long term. First, tax cuts for working families, not for wealthy people but for the average guy. The Democratic plan provides an immediate increase in the child tax credit to $800 per child. For low-wage working families, this credit is refundable and will reach more than 2.6 million children not covered by the current law.

Furthermore, the Democratic package makes immediate both the expansion of the 10 percent tax rate brackets, now slated to occur in 2008, and key provisions to eliminate the marriage penalty. Within months, these provisions will put money in the pockets of average Americans, boosting consumer demand and the jobs and business investments needed to meet it.

Secondly, investment tax incentives for business. The Republicans act as if they give a big tax break again to the wealthiest Americans, that somehow they are going to reinvest that in the economy. But there is nothing that says they have to and experience shows that they often do not. What the Democrats do is they target any kind of tax credit. We have an investment tax incentive for business. The Democratic plan provides tax incentives to businesses to generate investment and jobs now. The plan allows small businesses to expense up to $75,000 of the cost of new investments through 2004, triple the current limit. For all businesses, the plan restructures last year's bonus depreciation provisions so that firms can write off a 50 percent bonus for the next 12 months and only a 30 percent bonus for the balance of 2004. Domestic manufacturers get a tax break in the Rangel remedy to a World Trade Organization case against the United States. And all business tax components encourage investment now when the economy needs a boost. So we are saying that we are going to give the businesses these incentives but they have got to invest it back into the economy now, create jobs now. That is how we turn the economy around. That is a big part of it.

A third point. The Democratic plan targets assistance to those looking for jobs. A large part of the debate today on the floor was the fact that the Republicans would not consider an extension of unemployment compensation beyond the end of this month. Part of that, of course, is because we are concerned about people and how they are going to make ends meet, but the other part of it is we know that if you extend unemployment that money immediately goes into the economy. People buy things. Because they do not have a lot of money, they have to spend, for food, for necessities, whatever. So the Democratic plan extends unemployment benefits for 26 weeks that expires at the end of the month and that increases the level of benefits and also provides temporary aid to States to broaden coverage to low-wage earners and part-time workers. This assistance for those looking for work is the most effective stimulus for the economy and consumer demand by putting money in the pockets of those most likely to spend it.

Lastly, I wanted to mention money going back to the States. A big part of the economic downturn now is the fact that the States have contracted their spending because many of them have deficits. So they are spending less money, less money is going into the economy and as a result people lose jobs and there is less consumer spending and all the other things that come about because there is less money circulating. The Republicans, we have asked them to do something to give money back to the States. They refuse to do it. It is not part of their plan. So in our Democratic plan, we give money back to the States and municipalities to create jobs through expenditures on infrastructure, homeland security, education and health care. The Democratic plan provides States with funds to avoid the State cuts that have been occurring in New Jersey and other States and to address critical needs in areas including Medicaid, homeland security, transportation and an additional fund for one-time assistance to help those hurt most by unemployment and a stagnant economy. Basically what we do is increase the amount of money that the Federal Government gives to the States for these various purposes. The States have to pay less, the Federal Government pays more, and so the States do not face the fiscal crisis that they now face. That is another way of providing more money into the economy, creating jobs, creating new highways, new infrastructure, water projects, sewer treatment plans, that type of thing.

I just wanted to make a few points in comparison between the Democratic and the Republican plan. Again I know some may say, Why are you talking about this Democratic plan? You didn't even have an opportunity to bring it up today. But I think it is important to talk about it even though the Republicans would not allow us to bring it up

because I think if you make the comparison that I am about to make, you will see that ours is better and that is why they did not want to let it come up because they did not want to let it see the light of day.

First of all, only the Democratic plan maximizes job creation now. It uses a proven approach to create jobs and grow the economy by putting money in the pockets of families most likely to spend it and providing tax relief to businesses most likely to invest it. It will add 1.1 million jobs to our economy this year, 2003. By contrast, the House Republican plan focuses on untested and indirect provisions, such as the dividend tax breaks and capital gains tax cuts.

You understand what we are saying. If you look at the Democratic plan, the money is going directly in the pockets of people, directly into the States for expenditures on infrastructure. The Republicans assume that somehow tax breaks for stock dividends or capital gains are going to be reinvested because that is what people are going to do and there is no guarantee they will. Secondly, only the Democratic plan protects long-term economic growth with fiscal discipline. Our plan, the Democratic plan, is fully paid for. We do not make budget deficits worse over the long term. So you do not have the negative consequences of creating a larger debt that I described and many of my colleagues described before under the Democratic proposal. This fiscal discipline helps to keep interest rates low and builds the foundation for a strong economy now and in the future. By contrast, Republicans are proposing a plan that will make the deficit much worse. I say much worse, a lot worse. Already, the $5.6 trillion surplus President Bush inherited has been replaced by a $2 trillion deficit in the 2 years or so that he has been in office. Now Republicans are proposing tax cuts costing more than half a trillion dollars, part of an overall tax agenda that would add an additional $1.2 trillion in deficits over the next 10 years. Large, long-term deficits harm the economy by driving up interest rates and undermining business investment and job growth. If you look at what the economists predict with this tax cut, we are going to be back into the deficit situations that we were in 15, 20 years ago. And we are going to create a long-term recession. Anyone will tell you that that is the case. Yet the Republicans persist.

Another point. Only the Democratic plan is fair. It puts money directly into the hands of average Americans, the very people most likely to spend the money. It provides a balanced package of tax relief for businesses to encourage additional hiring and investment. But the Republican proposal, because it centers on the stock dividends and capital gains, provides very small tax cuts to the average American while providing huge tax cuts to the very few. So not only does it not work but it is unfair.

Another point. Only the Democratic plan prevents tax increases and service reductions by States. Again I mentioned this before. Because of the fiscal crisis that the States are facing and they are forcing themselves to have tax increases or cuts in critical programs, the States ultimately undermine jobs and economic recovery. But the Democratic plan provides States temporary assistance to avoid these tax increases and service cuts at the State level and prevents the job losses that would otherwise occur. None of the Republican proposals provide any funds to address the States' budget woes or give money back to the States.

Finally, and I think this is very important, too, only the Democratic plan uses honest accounting. The Democratic plan contains no gimmicks or unstated costs. Over 10 years, the cost of the package is fully paid for, so the plan does not increase budget deficits. By contrast, the House Republican plan includes the artificial expiration of many of the plan's components.

As I mentioned in that op-ed by Paul Krugman, at the end of 2005, and because it is unlikely that Congress in fact would allow these provisions to expire, the true cost of the Republican plan is probably even larger because they will make a lot of these tax cuts permanent and that will only burden the economy with even greater deficits.

Again I would like to end my discussion, Mr. Speaker, of the Republican tax and economic plan with some references to some editorials in the New York Times, because I always worry that someone will listen to me and say, well, he's saying that because he's a Democrat. I like to have third-party validators if I could. There were two editorials that appeared in the New York Times in the last couple of weeks that I thought were pretty wise in terms of their analysis of what the Republicans are proposing as opposed to the Democrats. One talks about the misguided nature of the cuts that the Republicans have proposed and the other talks about how because all these cuts are taking place, we are going to see major problems that face the public because there will not be money for education, there will not be money for homeland defense, there will be continued problems for the States, and also the fact that there is nothing in the Republican plan to extend unemployment benefits.

Let me start with that. On April 26, the New York Times did an editorial called The Forgotten Half of Budgeting. It says:

As Congress returns to business this week with leaders bent on pushing President Bush's tax cut, there is little talk about the vital programs that face future cutbacks in the budget. At least $168 billion across the decade is scheduled to be wrenched out of domestic spending as more than $2 trillion in deficits and borrowing is rung up under Mr. Bush's growth program. It may be pitifully wishful thinking at this point but instead of enacting another swath of tax cuts, Congress should keep the revenue and direct it at some of the following priorities. And they talk about them. First, fiscal relief for the States, which are slashing health care benefits for the needy as they wrestle with booming deficits that cannot be rolled over into some other administration's debt-besotted future. Many Senators favor emergency aid on the order of $35 billion, much of it for Medicaid because States are taking children and adults off the Medicaid rolls because they cannot afford to provide health care for low-income people.

□ 1630

''Extended benefits for unemployed Americans whose emergency benefits program expires May 31. The Nation continues to hemorrhage jobs, and everyone who is trying to find employment is not succeeding in this economy. The cost of continuing the emergency benefits is about $1 billion a month, a fraction of the cost of the lowest denominator tax cut.''

So why not extend benefits to these people who cannot find work? They are trying to find work. They cannot.

Next: ''More money for education, which faces a $20 billion cut over 10 years in the budget.''

Do the Members remember when President Bush talked about no child being left behind and we passed his education bill last year that no child was going to be left behind? It is facing major cuts over the next 10 years because of the President's tax cut plan, and many children will be left behind.

The New York Times says that ''if Congress skipped the tax cut, education funds could easily be made whole, and the administration could match the rhetoric of the President's no-child-left-behind promises with adequate financing. Lawmakers could also cover the cost of educating children with special learning needs, a Federal mandate that is short by billions of dollars annually.''

And finally, funds for homeland security. We have talked about the war against terrorism. We have talked about how we have to fight it both abroad and at home. But these tax cuts make it very difficult, if not impossible, to fund the homeland security needs that so many States and localities are depending on.

''The gap is quickly growing,'' The New York Times says, ''between Federal directives to localities and financing. The Senate sought, then dropped, extra financing for vulnerable ports and budget negotiations. And for all the homage to first responders, cuts loom for local law enforcement.'' So, again, we cannot even meet the homeland security needs.

And finally more recently, last Friday, in fact, The New York Times issued an editorial called, ''Misguided Cuts in Washington.'' I think this really kind of sums it up, and I would like to end this portion of my Special Order

by referencing this editorial in The New York Times.

It starts out by saying: ''The political dichotomy is breathtaking: as State and local politicians struggle with deepening deficits and rising taxes, President Bush plays the fiscal Nero, the virtuoso fiddler for ever more tax cuts. If the Washington wing of the GOP is deaf to the cries of pain from the Nation's statehouses, surely it must hear the measured warning from Alan Greenspan, the Nation's economic guru, that new tax cuts are definitely not needed now. They will probably harm the economy, not help it, he cautions, compounding the Republicans' feckless deficit spending while pushing up the national debt along with interest rates.

''But, no, the detaxation mania continues apace as House and Senate leaders press towards a Memorial Day deadline that will be a rendezvous with foolhardiness. By then, they hope to enact a Bush tax cut and spending plan adding $2.7 trillion in deficits to a coming decade of red ink, this only 2 years after the first Bush tax cuts helped wipe out an anticipated $5 trillion surplus.'' We had a $5 trillion dollars surplus anticipated when the President took office.

''No so coincidentally, Congress will have to raise the $6.4 trillion debt ceiling immediately to help pay for borrowing that is likely to last even longer than the easy careers of our detaxation politicians.

''The most feverish concern discernible right now among Republican leaders is not the fate of the emergency unemployment benefits that are due to expire this month, affecting 3.9 million Americans. It is the preservation of as much as possible in the President's disastrous dividend tax cut plan. A pitifully small group of Republican resisters is holding out, demanding $200 billion less.'' We know that is not going anywhere.

''Cutting the dividend tax rate may make some of Mr. Bush's key supporters happy, but there are two things it really will not do: juice up the economy or significantly reduce most taxpayers' total bills as the burden shifts downward. The pending Bush tax cuts will cost the States at least $64 billion more over 10 years . . .

''The Federal Government's failure to help localities pay for critical services during a slumping economy has sent State and municipal taxes soaring. And although the President is selling his cuts as a fast job-creating stimulus, it is hard to find any serious economist who agree, particularly when it comes to the dividends tax . . .

''A private forecasting specialist estimates that the dividend cut will mean very little in comparison with the instant bang for the buck that would come from an extension of jobless benefits and an infusion of emergency aid to the States.''

Mr. Speaker, someone could say he is just saying that because he is a Democrat. The bottom line is we have tried the Bush economic policy. We have tried it now for almost 3 years, and this is simply a repeat of the same thing. It is not working. Normally when something does not work, we say okay, let us scrap it and try something that does; and for the life of me I do not understand what motivates my colleagues on the Republican side, and the President in suggesting that we do more of the same unless I guess we just figure they are catering to the special interests and wealthy individuals because those are their friends and those are who finance their campaigns. But even if I were a millionaire, I would not favor this tax cut plan because I do not think it helps anybody; and ultimately if the economy does not grow, it does not matter whether one is rich or poor, they are going to still not benefit.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my presentation tonight that relates to the economy, and I wanted to mention two foreign policy issues that very much need immediate attention and have been in the news the last few weeks. I would like to start out, if I could, for about 5 minutes talking about the stalled peace process in Northern Ireland. I want to express my disappointment, Mr. Speaker, that the peace process in Northern Ireland has once again been derailed. With Prime Minister Tony Blair's announcement of the indefinite postponement of the elections in Northern Ireland, I worry that Great Britain is bowing to the demands of Unionist radicals in Northern Ireland who obviously oppose the Good Friday Accords.

Mr. Speaker, as the Members may know, last October Prime Minister Blair suspended the Belfast Assembly in Northern Ireland. Since then, Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Ahern of the Republic of Ireland have held meeting after meeting to bring the Good Friday Accords back on track and reinstitute the Northern Ireland Assembly in Belfast.

With the clock ticking towards the scheduled elections on May 29, Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern held numerous and made subsequent statements that led many media outlets around the world to report that the Northern Ireland Assembly was close to being reinstated, but at the 11th hour, Prime Minister Blair asked the Irish Republican Army to declare their commitment to the Good Friday Accords and disarmament. While the IRA was not an original signatory of the Good Friday Accords, they still welcomed the Prime Minister's questions. The IRA, both through a recently released statement and through statements made by Sinn Fein's President Gerry Adams, made several clear and unambiguous statements pledging their peaceful intentions.

The IRA stated quite clearly: ''We are resolved to see the complete and final closure of this conflict. The IRA leadership is determined to ensure that our activities, disciplines and strategies will be consistent with this. Furthermore, the full and irreversible implementation of the agreement and other commitments will provide a context in which the IRA can proceed to definitively set arms aside to further our political objectives. We are committed to playing our part in creating the conditions in which unionists, nationalists and republicans can live together peacefully.''

It is obvious to me that the IRA has clearly stated their peaceful intentions to bring a complete and final closure to the conflict in Northern Ireland and they have committed to disarmament to bring a final end to the insurrections. But in the final days before Prime Minister Blair's announcement of the postponement of the elections, he continued to press the IRA to clarify their intentions. While much of the international community, Mr. Speaker, and the press viewed the IRA's statements as a giant step towards peace, Prime Minister Blair oddly continued to claim that they were not going far enough. Then suddenly the Prime Minister cancelled the elections in spite of opposition from the Irish Government and every political party in Northern Ireland, except the Ulster Unionists.

For the last 5 years, Blair has been urging the IRA to make a statement pledging their support for peace. Now when the agreement is about to fall apart, the IRA stepped up to the plate and the Prime Minister let a home run pitch pass him by. It seems that rather than working for what is truly important, peace, he is carrying the water of the Ulster Unionists.

So the question is, Does Prime Minister Blair really want to see a peaceful resolution to the situation in Northern Ireland, or has it all just been a big political ploy to get the Irish Republicans to pledge peace and then force them back under the control of the British Crown? And I certainly hope the latter is not the case.

I call on Prime Minister Blair to first announce a June date for the Assembly elections in Northern Ireland. Then he must bring the parties back to the table to reinstate the peace process and most importantly the Assembly. Now at this critical time, Mr. Blair must show true leadership and prove that he is not simply a pawn to Protestant Unionist Radicals in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Speaker, this is a truly remarkable and historic time in Northern Ireland's history. I can honestly say a lasting and just peace I think is within reach, but now it is up to the Prime Minister to do what is right and allow the people of Northern Ireland the opportunity to decide for themselves who should govern their provinces.

Mr. Speaker, if I could just turn to another foreign policy issue and then I will conclude this afternoon. I have been very concerned over the last month or so about the fact that even though the time seems to be right for a settlement between the Greek and Turkish sides in Cyprus that it has not

occurred, and we still have not had negotiations start up again since they fell apart a couple of months ago. And I basically came to the floor this evening to highlight actions taken last week by President of the Republic of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos that will help continue the process of reunifying the people of the island of Cyprus despite the fact that a political settlement has still not been reached over Turkey's 29-year illegal occupation of 37 percent of the island.

On April 30, President Papadopoulos announced several measures aimed at enabling citizens living in the Turkish-occupied territory the ability to enjoy all the benefits other citizens of Cyprus enjoy. The President and the Council of Ministers finalized measures covering the fields of transportation, including the movement of goods and vehicles, employment of Turkish Cypriots, measures to help relatives of missing Turkish Cypriots and critical measures working for the improvement of medical care, education, and telecommunications.

While the President said that his government will do everything in its power to effectively implement these measures, he also strongly stated that these measures should not be interpreted as a substitute for the efforts to reach a political settlement in Cyprus.

Mr. Speaker, these measures show the length the Cypriot Government is willing to go to ensure that Turkish Cypriots no longer have to endure the poor economic conditions they have been living under since the occupation in 1974. The measures come less than 2 months after peace negotiations came to an end thanks to the intransigence of Turkish-Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash. Despite the giant setback, President Papadopoulos stressed the Greek Cypriot side will not only continue efforts to reach a solution but also once again pledge to continue the efforts for a Cyprus settlement that would properly serve the interests of both Cyprus communities, and the President's action last week clearly shows he plans to back these words up with action.

Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of weeks, we have witnessed another milestone, the free movement of Cypriots from both sides of the wall, something that has not occurred since the occupation. The action came after the Turkish Cypriot regime eased restrictions on movements of residents to and from the occupied areas. At the same time, the Turkish Cypriot regime said it would allow Greek Cypriots to cross into the occupied areas but put restrictions on this travel, including the showing of passports. The United Nations estimates that since the easing of restrictions, more than 170,000 Greek Cypriots have crossed into the occupied area, while 75,000 Turkish Cypriots have made the reverse trip.

This peaceful and orderly movement of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots during the last couple of weeks clearly demonstrates their shared desire and ability to live together on a reunited Cyprus. The actions have also disproved Denktash's claim that the presence of the occupation army and the maintenance of a dividing wall area are necessary for the security of the two communities. It shows his statements to be both false and, I think, totally unfounded.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to believe that the only solution to the Cyprus question must be sought through negotiations conducted on the basis of the Kofi Annan United Nations plan, and I also continue to believe that the Bush administration did not put enough pressure on the Turkish Government to force Denktash to negotiate in good faith. Turkey must finally realize that by supporting Denktash's intransigence, it is causing harm to its own long-term interests as a potential full member of the European Union. After the setback of the U.N. efforts, the Bush administration must redouble its effort to persuade Turkey and the Turkey-Cypriot leader to work constructively within the U.N. process to achieve a negotiated settlement to end the division of Cyprus; and I am hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that the Bush administration will change its policy and finally exert pressure on the Turkish Government.

I think it is time for all the citizens of Cyprus to be reunified so they can all reap the economic awards available with the nation's recent accession to the European Union; and I only hope that both these cases, in both the cases of Cyprus and Northern Ireland, that we can see a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CLYBURN (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after noon on account of official business in the district.

Mr. COLE (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of examining damage in his district due to severe weather.

Mr. KING of Iowa (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of family commitments.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCDERMOTT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. INSLEE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHERMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STRICKLAND, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATSON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. BALDWIN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LANGEVIN, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LEE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MEEKS of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MARKEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. LOFGREN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SANDERS, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. BURNS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, May 13, 14, 15, and 16.

Mr. BURNS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHUSTER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ROHRABACHER, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 113. An act to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to cover individuals, other than United States persons, who engage in international terrorism without affiliation with an international terrorist group; to the Committee on the Judiciary, in addition to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

S. 165. An act to improve air cargo security; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 44 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Tuesday, May 13, 2003, at 12:30 p.m., for morning hour debates.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

2122. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting requests