APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO THE MEXICO-UNITED STATES INTERPARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276h, and the order of the House of December 18, 2005, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group, in addition to Mr. KOLBE of Arizona, Chairman, and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Vice Chairman, appointed on February 16, 2006:

Mr. DREIER, California
Mr. MANZULLO, Illinois
Mr. DELAHUNT, Massachusetts
Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, American Samoa
Mr. ENGLISH, Pennsylvania
Mr. WELLER, Illinois
Mr. REYES, Texas
Mrs. DAVIS, California
Mr. FORTUÑO, Puerto Rico.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Mr. Speaker. And it has been interesting to listen to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

For the last number of years we have had the privilege on our side of the aisle of the leader giving the 30-something Democrats the opportunity to take the floor each night at least for 1 hour, if not 2, to talk about the things that are important to America and, in particular, important to our generation. So now it is nice to see that at least the other side is beginning to recognize that this is an important venue to get some information out to the people. As I said, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

There are times, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to agree and times that we are going to disagree. The gentleman from Texas and I were just commiserating, and he and I were both elected just over 13 months ago and sworn into this esteemed body. And I was just joking with him that the chart that he just brought out and talked about related to the United Arab Emirates voting record with the United States and the United Nations is actually a document that I had with me right here in my hand and was one of the things that I was going to discuss as well.

Because I think this port deal, normally we talk about our differences in the 30-something Working Group with the Republicans on the other side of the aisle; in this case, I am heartened to see, at least for some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, we have not differed on the really deep concern that many of us have as a result directly of our constituents' feedback on this port deal with Dubai Ports World and the administration.

When I can concur with my colleagues, I will do that. In this case, the administration has repeatedly indicated what a good friend the UAE is to the United States. And we only have very few examples that we can utilize to determine what the definition of ''friend'' is.

One measure of friendship is certainly how often they support us in terms of human rights and the other important issues that come up in the United Nations. There is a pitiful record that the United Arab Emirates has. And in terms of supporting us in the United Nations, not only is it pitiful but it was not so good before 2001, and it has only gotten worse since 2001.

So I stand here and am able to say that I am glad to see that our colleagues have at least pointed out that there is deep concern on the part of the legislative branch, at least some of us in the legislative branch, about the continued rapid-fire movement forward on this port deal.

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I continue to scratch my head, we continue to scratch our heads on our side of the aisle, at the brazen nature of the defense that the President has engaged in of this deal. The revelation that came to light less than a week ago now that this is a deal that the President was not even aware of. And I sit on the Domestic and International Monetary Policy, Trade and Technology Subcommittee, which had a hearing today. Not only did we learn that the President did not have any knowledge of this deal but neither did the Secretary that was responsible for each of these agencies that is part of the process to approve the deal nor the Deputy Secretary nor the Under Secretary under them nor the Under Secretary under them. Three levels below the Secretary of each of the agencies responsible for reviewing the foreign investment deals that are proposed to occur in the United States, that was the level of awareness that there was in the agencies like the Department of Homeland Security, like the Department of State, like the intelligence agencies that are involved in the process of approving this. That is so disturbing, it is hard to explain.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in the time that I have been in Congress and, quite honestly, since I spent 12 years prior to being in Congress in the Florida legislature, and I will even include the 13 years combined that I have served in public office, I have not seen or gotten feedback this quickly and in this enormity in as short a period of time on an issue as I have on this proposed port deal. And I am talking about compared to Social Security privatization, the Medicare prescription drug program.

I get a lot of responses and feedback on those issues, but they are lengthy and voluminous over a period of time. I have little old ladies and elderly gentlemen call my office, I represent a large senior citizen population, calling my office crying because they are in fear. I represent an area that includes the Port of Miami. My district abuts the Port of Miami. I had an opportunity to tour the Port of Miami Terminal Operating Company and saw firsthand what the potential threat is in the event that this company owned by the United Arab Emirates goes astray in the event that we no longer consider them an ally down the road, that there is absolutely no question that there is a potential national security risk. And for the President and his administration to continue to insist that there is not a national security risk when it is clear that they have not even begun to examine this potential risk closely, that is just shocking.

We have had a number of different revelations that have occurred over the last week, not the least of which is that the Coast Guard brought up their concern during the process, the CPS process, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. During that committee's process, the Coast Guard raised concerns. The Department of Homeland Security raised concerns. And let me back up for a second because although there are millions of people who have been paying attention to this, let me take this opportunity to back up for a second and just explain what it is I am talking about.

Of course, so many people are aware that there is a proposal that was considered over the last several months but that only recently came to light by most people in this administration, most people responsible for this decision. It only recently came to light in the last several weeks where we have learned that Dubai Ports World, which is a company, a foreign corporation, owned 100 percent by the government of the United Arab Emirates, is in the process of closing a deal. The deal is supposed to closed tomorrow. They have purchased an interest in P&O, a stevedoring company; and after tomorrow when the deal closes, they will now own and operate the terminal operating companies at six of our major ports. Six major ports.

When you have a proposal like that in the United States, it is supposed to go through the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. That is made up of a number of different agencies in the United States. It is supposed to include people like the Secretary of Homeland Security, Secretary of State. The Secretary of the Treasury chairs it. You have numerous intelligence agencies that have the highest level, or are supposed to have the highest level, of Secretaries serving on that committee, and they go through a review process, by law. This is a law that they are supposed to follow whereby they take it through a 30-day review process. And after that 30-day review, if there are national security concerns, then that is supposed to

trigger an additional 45-day review, a national security review, so that we can investigate whether there are national security implications to the foreign investment in the United States.

Now, given that the United Arab Emirates just 5 years ago was referred to 58 times in the 9/11 Commission report as having some level of involvement with the 9/11 attacks, knowing that just on the surface, how is it possible that a 45-day national security review was not triggered? Where were the alarm bells? Where was the concern? I mean, one has only to tour the terminals, like I did last week at the Port of Miami, downtown Miami, literally just across the water from the port, and see the devastating potential impact if you have just one or two people. There were not thousands of people that planned the 9/11 attack. It only takes a few determined terrorists to wreak havoc and horror on our Nation. And honestly, it would take almost no one to engage in a terrorist act, God forbid, in the event that our relationship with the United Arab Emirates somehow changes in the near future or down the road. But we will have no mechanism to remove them from our country.

What happens, and what I learned when I went to the Port of Miami to see firsthand the problem, what happens is that it is not that the United Arab Emirates or Dubai Ports World is going to run our ports. That is not accurate. But they are going to have control of the largest terminal operating company, and this is just in Miami, the largest terminal operating company that is responsible for loading and unloading containers in the Port of Miami. There are a million containers that go through the Port of Miami every single year, a million. And this company that is owned by the UAE is going to be in charge of the loading and unloading of those containers. What I learned when I went to the Port of Miami was that while they are not in charge of the security or running the port itself, each terminal operating company is responsible for their own security internally in their terminals and on their property. So because you have a million containers going through the Port of Miami, that is a whole lot of the security measures that are taken on the Port of Miami and that this company, and as a result the UAE, is responsible for.

In addition, what is equally disturbing is that the individuals in the companies that run these terminal operating companies, they have an intimate knowledge of the security measures that are taken on the port grounds itself. So we know two things. One, they are responsible for security within their own terminal for those million containers. One million containers at least at the Port of Miami go in and out of there over the course of a year. And their personnel also have intimate knowledge of the security measures taken at the port every single day. It only takes one or two rogues, it only takes one or two bitter people, it only takes one or two people who differ even with the government of the UAE, if they currently are our friends, and I would argue that given their track record in terms of the support or lack of support for things we care about in the United Nations and for a number of other reasons that they are not the friends that President Bush represents that they are, but it does not take more than one or two people who hold hate in their heart for the United States and our people to wreak havoc on us. They are not just this close. They would be here. They would be here on our ports on our grounds.

Let us take this a step further because beyond just the United Nations votes that my colleagues talked about and that I just mentioned, we also have the United Arab Emirates that is a member of the Arab League of Nations. The Arab League of Nations is currently engaged in a boycott of the State of Israel. The United Arab Emirates supports that boycott. Now, Israel is the United States' strongest ally in the Middle East. So now we have a second layer of evidence that the United Arab Emirates is not a very good friend of the United States. How could we allow, both for national security reasons and for economic fairness reasons, a country like the United Arab Emirates to do business and to purchase a very significant terminal operating company in our six major ports and allow them to do that kind of business here when they refuse to do business with the State of Israel, our strongest ally in the Middle East? That is unconscionable.

And with all due respect, the President touts his support for the State of Israel and what a good friend this President has been to the State of Israel. Well, I think we have one example here where he is not being such a good friend to the State of Israel if he could turn the other cheek and vociferously defend a business deal even in spite of the fact that this country denies the State of Israel's legitimacy in terms of their existence and engages in harm to the State of Israel by supporting an economic boycott. So to me the proof is in the pudding. I think words are nice, but actions are a whole lot better. Up and down this deal is disturbing.

Now, another colleague of mine, Congressman BACHUS from the State of Alabama, again I want to cite he is also a colleague of mine from the other side of the aisle, in the subcommittee hearing today, he talked about the fact that in the United Arab Emirates, they will not allow the United States to have 100 percent ownership of a company on their port; yet we are allowing the United Arab Emirates to have a 100 percent ownership of a company in our port. And when he asked the administration to explain that, they had no explanation. He was going to have to get back to us. Well, of course he was going to have to get back to us because there is no explanation for that. This is a matter of fairness. This is a matter of what is wrong versus what is right, and this is a matter of national security.

Now, here is where I am going to part company with my colleagues on this because it is wonderful that many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are opposing, rightfully so, this port deal and joining Democrats on our side of the aisle in our concern, our deep and grave concern in opposition to this port deal. However, it would have been far nicer if they had not come so late to the dance in terms of their recognizing that port security is a deep and troubling problem that we have in the United States.

We currently check less than 5 percent of the containers that come through our ports in the United States. Now, that is bad enough. But over the course of the last 5 years, and this is something else I learned when I went to the Port of Miami last week, the difference between our appropriations for airport security, in 5 years we have appropriated an additional $18 billion for airport security and less than $700 million for port security. Now, I just could not believe when I learned how lopsided the difference in security measures were. If I am a terrorist, and I am not, but if I am a terrorist, it really does not take a smart terrorist to recognize that if you have that lopsided a difference in terms of the money we have spent to shore up our security at our airports versus our ports, where do you think the weak spot is, and where do you think they are most likely to zero in on in terms of attack?

They are most likely to zero in on port security and that weakness. And now what do we do? Without a national security review, without any concern expressed by this administration whatsoever, we allow a country that just 5 years ago was involved in terms of financing, allowing the financing, housing the 9/11 terrorists, allowing the financing of that attack and, in addition to that, allowing the transport of nuclear material through their country to the state of Iran. That is not allowing, it is not even strong enough to say that that is allowing the fox into the hen house. It is not strong enough to say that.

Where we part company with our friends on the other side of the aisle is in terms of our support for port security, because time and again, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats in this Chamber have proposed increases in funding for port security. We have proposed going from the 5 percent to 100 percent in terms of checking the containers that come through our ports.

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Each time we have offered an amendment that would do that, that would accomplish that. The Republicans in this body have rejected it, rejected it with their red lights on that board right above your head, Mr. Speaker.

And that is just so incredibly disturbing, because it is very nice to

stand here on this floor and verbally oppose this ports deal on national security grounds, but when we have an opportunity to do something about it, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see my colleagues join us not just with words, but with their actions as well.

I would like to see them support the Appropriations Committee ranking member on our side, Mr. OBEY from Wisconsin. He proposed last year and the year before just a 5 percent decrease in the tax cuts for our wealthiest Americans who make more than $1 million a year, the wealthiest, arguably no skin off their noses; and to spend that money, I believe it was an additional $750 million, I have to double-check that number, but to be able to come close to spending an additional $1 billion on port security just by dropping the tax cut for our wealthiest Americans by 5 percent.

And that was rejected. The Democrats voted for it and the Republicans voted against it.

So it is very nice, and I am pleased to see, and I have been yearning as a freshman, it is the thing that has caused me the most concern, consternation. Over the course of the last year, my good friend from Texas and I have talked about it many a time; we serve on the Judiciary Committee together. There is too much animosity in this Chamber. There are too many differences. We focus more on our differences than we do on our potential alliances.

This is a time when we have an opportunity to come together. I would like to see us come together in words and in deeds. We have that opportunity here, and it would be great. I am hopeful that henceforth we are going to be able to lock elbows and move together to oppose this deal and to address the national security concerns that deals like this present.

I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend from Florida yielding.

We get into Washington, we get up here around the Capitol, we all have our committees and subcommittees, all these things we are trying to oversee and do. I was not aware that it was as easy as apparently it is for a foreign company to manage, own, lease terminals in our ports. Were you aware of that?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. No. I wasn't aware of that either. I was shocked.

Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate the gentlewoman's comments, and I hope we can work together, not only to shore up an avenue of entry through our ports, as you pointed out. We would not let somebody, a foreign government, a foreign-owned company, even our close friends, I would not think, operate an airport or bring their own planes in. Yes, you can check them, we will let Customs do their thing. We wouldn't do that.

We wouldn't lease a bridge to someone else to operate or manage, I wouldn't think. Gosh, I would hope not.

Anyway, I hope that we can work together towards securing the avenues of entry into this country, because I don't know if you heard me saying it earlier, the gentlelady from Florida, but we all want to be secure. But if we don't secure our outer perimeter, then people that want to hurt us will come in, and then you lose due process rights at that point in order to be secure. I don't want to do that.

So I appreciate your comments and your heartfelt notions on this issue, and hope we can work together.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I look forward to that, and I appreciate the gentleman's comments.

I have legislation that I have introduced just today that your colleague from Texas, Mr. POE, has joined me on that would prohibit foreign-government-owned companies from owning terminal operating companies. I would love to have you as a cosponsor of that legislation.

I hope you lead your conference beyond this port deal and your opposition to it to trying to shore up the port security at our Nation's ports, because unfortunately, your party has been less than supportive of trying to do that. I appreciate you being willing to engage in some dialogue with us. Thank you so much.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman would yield, I thank the gentlewoman for taking this time and for making the remarks that she did.

I was in my office working and listening to your presentation, and not only did you lay out a cogent case why this deal with Dubai World Ports makes no sense at all in terms of the security interests of our country, but also the other reasons that you pointed out in terms of their role, in terms of the boycott on Israel and all the other issues of concern there.

But as I left my office, you were also talking about the fact that we have a port security system that still has an awful lot of holes in it. The number of containers, we were told by the CIA that the most likely attack on America would be in a dirty bomb or weapon of mass destruction inside of a container. Now, 4 years later, we still find ourselves where we are inspecting those containers once they arrive in Florida or the San Francisco Bay area in my district, which is far too late.

So even if you thought it would be a good idea to outsource the ownership of these ports to a foreign entity, you certainly would not do it when you have the kind of port security system that we have in place today with so many, so many flaws in that system.

There has been a lot of suggestions about how to get this done. There are ports around the world engaging in very serious screening of these containers, but not all of the ports from which we receive cargo.

So I just wanted to join the gentlewoman in her remarks, because I think there are two issues here. One, this is a real bad deal and doesn't make any sense. People in my district were stunned when the President would say one day he was going to veto it and the next day he hadn't been told about it. He was so well informed he was going to veto it, but not well informed enough to discuss it, because he hadn't seen the deal.

Then, secondly, they think about the problems that we are having trying to secure this worldwide traffic in containers, and they just think that somebody has lost their mind in terms of starting at this point the outsourcing of these ports to foreign ownerships and then, of course, to a country-owned company that has a lot of questionable activities in its background with respect to terrorism and other items.

I just want to thank the gentlewoman for raising these issues. I think it is important, and it is important that they continue to be raised during this 45-day period.

Thank you and the other 30-Somethings for doing this.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is a privilege to have you down here. The gentleman from California has been a leader for many years. Obviously, there are some significant national security concerns that the State of California has.

We have got to make sure that we have the long-term security interests and needs of this country addressed going forward, and that this debate and dialogue not just be isolated just to this deal. This deal affects six ports in our country, six significant ports. Dubai Ports World will also own terminals and other interests at many other ports in our country. This is actually bigger than this one-port deal.

This is a matter of national security. This is a matter of trying to ensure that, going forward, we fill this gaping hole in our national security.

The two of you sit on the Armed Services Committee. Obviously, you are engaged every single day. Mr. MEEK serves on the Homeland Security Committee and has intimate knowledge of the significant problems we have.

Before I turn it over to one of the two of you, I think that what Mr. MILLER just said is really important to note. Actually, let me go back to what the gentleman from Georgia was saying before you all got here and before I began the 30-something hour.

The gentleman from Georgia made reference to how wonderful it is that we have a legislative process and a system of checks and balances and that the Congress can engage in oversight. It should be noted that the oversight we are engaging in now, we are forcing, we are taking it upon ourselves, because it certainly hasn't been oversight supported by this administration. In fact, the President threatened last week that if we dared to pass any legislation that halted this deal, his all-important business deal, he would veto it.

Now, that doesn't really sound very democratic. It appears to me that this President cares a lot about exporting democracy and not a lot about practicing it.

So I just think that is an important piece of information that our citizens in this country should understand: who is concerned about looking out for our national security interests. It doesn't appear that the administration is.

I would be happy to yield to either of the gentlemen.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, I 100 percent agree with you.

You know, the fact that they could even claim that there is some kind of oversight going on is an absolute joke. Anybody who has even been paying the least bit of attention to what has been happening here the past 4 or 5 years can see that there hasn't been any oversight.

The discussion tonight has been about foreign countries running our ports, as if this is the first time, or as if this hasn't been going on. Other countries have, piece by piece, been taking more and more of the United States of America.

In the last 4 years, this has been the increase in our national debt: $1.18 trillion has been the increase of that debt that this Nation, the Republican House, the Republican Senate and the Republican President have run up. $1.16 trillion of that has been borrowed from foreign interests.

Of this number, this is what we get from foreign interests, and this is what we borrow from domestic interests. This is piecemeal, piece by piece by piece by piece, selling off the United States of America.

So it is not just the ports, as Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ was saying. This is about the debt, the interest, our country. Who is holding the debt? Japan, China, the Caribbean, Taiwan, OPEC, Korea, all own bits and pieces of the United States. If you look at Japan and China, they own almost $900 billion, almost the whole kit and caboodle of the $1.18 trillion that we have. Most of that is owned by Japan and China.

Again, I ask my friends, including the judge who was down here, give us a good, solid way to explain this scenario of our country raising the debt limit, the Republican House and Republican Senate and Republican White House raising the debt limit by $3 trillion since President Bush has been in, more debt than we have borrowed from foreign interests in the past 224 years, the Republican Congress and the President. How do you explain that and make it sound good, make it sound positive? Because there is no way.

But our constitutional obligation, Mr. MEEK, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, is that we are here to oversee what this President is doing, and if we feel that this President and this Congress, Republican Congress, is not doing what they need to be doing to strengthen the United States of America, then our job is to call you out on it; not because we want to, but because that is our obligation here. Not because we like it.

This is our second hour tonight. We could be doing a lot of other, different things. But this is important to the country because this President and this Republican Congress is selling this country off piece by piece by piece.

I say this to our friends in Congress, Mr. Speaker, who may be watching in their offices, that if you are a business person, you can't just keep going out and borrowing money and borrowing money and borrowing money; and if business isn't going so well, borrow money. Get it from China, get it from Japan, get it from Korea. You can't go out and borrow and borrow. We have an obligation. The trade deficit with China, $202 billion from $84 billion just a few years ago in 2000.

I yield to my friend, who has been just a strong advocate on being a deficit hawk and getting us to balance our budget. I appreciate your leadership.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You know, Mr. RYAN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, I think it is important for us to continue to say it and say it again, that this Congress, the majority side has the President's back. It has the President's back.

I think it is important, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, that we continue to explain that and let it be known they are more committed to the President's back versus the American people's back, and I think it is important that you continue to outline that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Well, it has been clear on a number of different levels that they have the President's back much more so than the Republicans' back. We can see that when it comes to their support for the President's budget, when they support the President's initiatives at every level.

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You see the red and green lights up on the board, and even when the more moderate Republican colleagues of ours obviously desperately want to vote differently, they hold the board open for as long as humanly possible so that they can twist arms and get those colleagues of ours to change their votes and vote differently than obviously their conscience has told them that they should vote.

We are facing down now a need to increase the debt limit. The Treasury Secretary has indicated that we are going to bump up against our debt limit any day now, really within the next month. And we still have not voted to do that. One of the interesting things that I have found politically over the years is that the Republicans often accuse Democrats of being tax-and-spend Liberals. All I ever hear is tax-and-spend Liberal, almost like equating it with curse words.

What has been clear is that the Republicans, since they have been in charge of this government, and in total control of this government, they have been borrow-and-spenders. We have reached the point in America now where this administration, this President, has spent more than the previous President certainly, and other Presidents combined.

We have spent more money now than the previous administration, yet Republicans continue to accuse Democrats of being tax-and-spend Liberals. It is really just funny. It has reached the point of sardonic humor.

Let us look at the issue of the debt limit. You see here that we have increased the debt limit not just on one, not just on two, but on five occasions. We had had $3 trillion of increases of the debt limit. In billions of dollars, you have in June of 2002, $450 billion increase in the debt limit.

In May of 2003, $984 billion increase in the debt limit. November of 2004, $800 billion increase in the debt limit. The pending increase now is another $781 billion for a total of over $3 trillion in increasing of the debt limit. That means that our future generations, my children, their children, are going to owe incredible sums of money, have debt to foreign nations, and that is not even talking about the deficit.

So many people really have trouble getting their arms around the difference between the debt and the deficit. We have a problem with the deficit in this country. And we have examples of that in chart form as well.

The deficit in this country has now reached $8 trillion. $8 trillion. Next week, Mr. Speaker, when we come back and do the 30-something hour, we are going to have a chart that will try to illustrate for people just what that means, what a billion dollars will do. Because it is really staggering when you think about it. People have trouble getting their mind around that concept: $8 trillion translated to every person in this country means that every person in this country owes $27,000. And when I am talking about a person, I am talking about infants as well, babies as well.

Let us look at the budget deficits of prior Presidents. If you start with President Reagan in 1982, he had a deficit of $128 billion. We had a deficit of $128 billion. You go all of the way down to this President, and we are at $323 billion.

Now that is just for fiscal year 2006. And that is obviously increased, except for one year where it was a little bit higher. In 2004 it was a little bit higher, $412 billion. So I feel heartened that we had somewhat of a drop, but it is on the increase again.

We have got to make sure that we get back to the point that we were at during the Clinton administration when we did not know from the term deficit, because we had a surplus. What we were debating during the Clinton administration was what we were going to do with that surplus: Were we going to use it to shore up the difficulties we were having with social security? Were we going to use it to shore up the difficulties that we were having with

Medicare? We cannot have those discussions any more because we are operating at our biggest deficit in history.

What we have proposed, and what Republicans have consistently rejected, is going back to the PAYGO rules, the pay-as-you-go rule, which means you do not spend it if you do not have it.

The Republicans have repeatedly and unanimously rejected going back to the PAYGO rules. These are two examples of amendments that were offered by Mr. SPRATT from South Carolina in the 2006 budget resolution and the 2005 budget resolution.

In 2006, it failed 165–264. And you had zero Republicans supporting it, 228 Republicans opposing it. In the 2005 budget resolution, it failed 194–232. Zero Republicans supporting it, 224 Republicans opposing pay-as-you-go.

Now, who is fiscally responsible and who is not? I really ask you to think about that. We have got to make sure that we return to pay-as-you-go, because even though it is difficult, that is a hard policy to adopt, making sure you have the money before you spend it, anyone who lives, if you think about it in terms of your household budget, Mr. Speaker, it is hard to only spend the money you have.

But we all know that you are obviously in the best fiscal shape, you have the most fiscally sound budget in your home when you are only spending what you take in.

There are a lot of Americans that do not do that. There are a lot of Americans that have credit card debt. There are a lot of Americans in this country who struggle every day to make sure that they can pay their bills. And quite honestly, the only way that they are often able to cover the needs that they have is by deficit spending in their own household.

But they know that it is not the right thing to do; and ideally if they could afford it, most of these families would not engage in that practice. The problem is that they are not in very good shape fiscally in their own household, so they have to. The Federal Government does not have to. You definitely cannot argue that we do not have the money to adopt this practice. We do. We have the money; we just do not have the wherewithal.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership here has not had the nerve. I guess for lack of a better term it has not had the nerve to adopt that responsible policy. I really do not understand it. I come from a State legislative background, 12 years in the Florida legislature. Anyone who comes from a legislative background and was an elected official in their home State in this body understands that every State in the country has to operate in the black, according to their constitution. You cannot deficit spend in a State budget. You cannot do it.

You have only the ability to spend the money that you have. The Federal Government has, I guess it is a luxury, but it is a luxury that comes back to bite you very soon as you progress down the road, and you end up throwing your own future into tremendous debt.

There is a USA Today editorial that was just from the other day, and it talks about who is really the party of small government and big spending and who is not. It was really interesting. USA Today said tax cuts, they say, forced hard decisions and restrained reckless spending.

The last time we looked, though, Republicans controlled both Congress and the White House. They are the spenders. In fact, since they took control in 2001, they, meaning the Republicans, have increased spending by an average of nearly 7½ percent a year, more than double the rate in the last 5 years of the Clinton era budget. That is really telling.

So who is fiscally responsible? Who is for smaller government? Who is for responsible fiscal policy? Clearly, given this chart, where it indicates in USA Today's opinion, our third-party validator and this chart right here, which shows the increase, drastic increase of the deficit over time from the Reagan administration to now.

Let us look at the blue area right here. See the blue years. The blue years are surplus, Mr. Speaker, surplus, when we did not have a deficit, when we had PAYGO. When we only spent the money that we had.

We had some Members, Mr. Speaker, in our caucus that lost their elections because of that vote, that lost their elections ensuring that we would adopt responsible fiscal policy. That is because we stand on principle.

We do not blindly support our President, we do not walk in lock step, we vote our conscience. And I wish that I had not seen the angst in so many of my Republican colleagues' faces when they had their arms wrenched behind their backs and were essentially forced to vote differently than you know in their heart they believed.

It is really sad. I feel so free to come on this floor and, you know, Leader PELOSI, she tells you, you do what you feel is right. I know we are not always going to agree. You have to be able to do what you think is best for your district. Now, of course, she would like us to be unified. And because we have such strong beliefs and values in our caucus, we have the most unified caucus that we have had in history, really since the 1950s, the most unified caucus.

The Democratic caucus in this Chamber knows that we can take this country in a new direction, that together America can do better, and that if we work together and work through our differences and build consensus instead of forcing our colleagues to do what they do not necessarily believe in, then we are going to make sure that we can come up with sound policy.

The Clinton years we had surplus. The other chart that you just had up is also telling. Again, we do not force people in the Democratic caucus to do what they do not believe. I cannot imagine that my Republican colleagues in every single district in this country stood in front of their constituents during their campaigns and said, you know what, I believe in deficit spending. I believe in an $8 trillion deficit.

I just doubt that if I were in their districts at a town hall meeting, that they would be telling their constituents they were glad that we had an $8 trillion deficit. But yet they come up here and they vote to continue to support policies like that.

I do not get it. Other than blind loyalty, I do not get it. Blind loyalty is what is hurting our constituents here in the United States of America.

Let us look at how just the interest payments on the national debt, we are going back to talking about the debt, the money that we owe to other countries now. Just look at what the interest payments would pay for if we did not have to spend them on covering the national debt.

If we did not have to spend them, we could spend them on education, we could spend them on homeland security, we could spend them on improving the quality of life for our Nation's veterans. You have about $50 billion that we could spend on helping our Nation's veterans. You have about, I think that is about $30 billion that you could spend on shoring up homeland security.

We are talking about domestic discretionary funding, the kind of funding that we can specifically direct to port security and airport security and making sure that our Nation's borders are not infiltrated by terrorists; but we cannot spend that money on those things because we are paying interest on our debt to other countries.

You could spend almost $100 million, I think it is about $75 billion dollars, excuse me, we get the Bs and Ms confused sometimes, $75 billion on education.

Now, one of the biggest frustrations that I know I get in terms of feedback from my constituents, Mr. Speaker, is the No Child Left Behind Act and the fact that this President committed from day one, and Mr. MILLER, my good friend from California who was just here, championed that legislation on our side with the administration's commitment that they were going to support full funding.

We have not had full funding on No Child Left Behind. We have not had the ability to really implement that legislation and ensure that our children in our public schools are prepared for the path that they choose in life. What we have done instead is we have had to spend that money on things like interest on the national debt. We have had to spend that money on tax cuts, because it is tax cuts that have been the top priority of this administration.

Still today this President's and this administration's highest priority appears to be making the tax cuts for our

wealthiest Americans permanent, in the face of the national debt being the size that it is, in the face of us having an $8 trillion deficit where each American owes $27,000 apiece.

How is that possible? There are times when you just have to say, we cannot afford it. It would be nice, but we cannot afford it. When does that happen here?

Mr. MEEK, I do not understand when that happens here. You know, I am a mom. I have three little kids. There are times that I have to disappoint my 6-year-olds, my twin 6-year-olds, and my 2½ year old. I have to tell them no, we cannot buy that toy. We cannot buy that toy. I would like to buy you that toy, but we have to save somewhere. We have to do some belt-tightening.

No just is not in the equation with this administration. Sure we can have billions of dollars in tax cuts for the wealthy. Sure we can spend money on whatever we want. Sure we can continue to spiral our deficit bigger and bigger and bigger, and we can go more and more in debt to foreign countries. You know what? It is time for us to act like responsible parents do and occasionally say no.

Occasionally remember that the household budget is something that we have to be responsible about and return to the days when we were only spending what we had, return to the policy of PAYGO.

□ 2000

I just do not understand it. I really do not.

Mr. MEEK, I have been talking about national debt. I have been talking about what we could spend if we had the interest payments on the national debt, what we could do for veterans and homeland security and education. Instead, the net interest that we are spending is $250 billion. We can see what that would buy and it is really disturbing.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. RYAN and I had to run down to an Armed Services Committee meeting. We had a roll call vote. And of course we want to be there for every vote. That is the reason why the people sent us to Washington.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is important to verbalize that those of us on the Democratic side of the aisle have tried to do everything we could to stop the Republican majority and the President from running this country literally into the debt where it is now. Foreign nations owning what they own.

I just want to come for the record because I believe in third party validators. March 30, 2004, Republicans voted 209 to 209, Republicans vote against our resolution 209 to 209 to reject the motion by Representative MIKE THOMPSON to instruct conferees to include PAYGO requirements in that budget, in the FY 2006 budget resolution, in 2004. I am sorry. That was 2004 vote number 97.

A similar measure was on May 5, 2004, Republicans voted 208 to 215. They voted 215, we voted 208 to reject a similar motion by Representative DENNIS MOORE of Kansas, Democrat. That is 2004 vote number 145.

Another resolution or a vote that we put forth, an amendment similar to November 18, 2004. Republicans voted to block a consideration by Congressman Stenholm at that time to not raise the debt limit which also had PAYGO requirements, not to increase the debt limit. It also had PAYGO requirements. That is 2004 vote number 534.

There are a couple of other votes that you have, Mr. RYAN. Would you call those out.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would be happy to. This is the pay as you go. This is if you spend money or you give tax cuts, you have got to find other areas to cut spending or raise another kind of revenue. There will be no budget deficits. Everything will be deficit neutral. Pay as you go.

Mr. MEEK just gave 3 scenarios where the Democrats put forth amendments or motions to try to control the spending of the Republican Congress, and in each instance the Democrats all voted for balancing the budget and the Republicans all voted against balancing the budget.

Again, Mr. SPRATT, our good friend from South Carolina who is our ranking member on the Budget Committee, who was the architect of the Clinton balanced budget from 1993 that led to 20 million new jobs and surplus revenue, Mr. SPRATT offered a substitute amendment. Rollcall vote number 87 on March 17, 2005. It failed. Not one Republican voted for the PAYGO that was included in Mr. SPRATT's substitute amendment.

Again, Mr. SPRATT offered another amendment. Rollcall vote 91 March 25 of 2004. Again, pay as you go. Deficit neutral. Help us reduce the deficit. Help us get back to balanced budgets. Again, not one Republican voted for that substitute.

Time and time again, Mr. MEEK, we have offered solutions to this problem to quit selling off our country piece by piece, and the Republican Congress has voted against it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, as we come in for a close there is so much information to share there is just not enough time to do it, but it is important that we go through that to make sure that not only Members on the majority side know, the American people know, Mr. Speaker, that we are doing everything in our power to be able to stop them from selling our country off to foreign nations.

Let me illustrate this a little bit more. The U.K. owns $223.2 billion of our debt, Mr. Speaker. I think that is important to identify. You also have Germany. Germany owns $65.7 billion of U.S. debt. That is what they own of this country. OPEC nations, including Saudi Arabia and other countries, $67.8 billion of our debt. This is what they own of the United States of America.

It troubles me to put this on the silhouette of our country, but I think it is important that we break this down so the Members know exactly what they are doing.

Taiwan, some may have products and toys from Taiwan, and you say ''little Taiwan.'' Guess what? Little Taiwan owns $71.3 billion of our debt.

People are so concerned about China, Mr. Speaker, and I am a member of the Armed Services Committee. We are all sworn to protect this country. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, yourself included, Mr. RYAN and other Members in this Chamber, but guess what? Red China, Communist China owns $249.8 billion of U.S. debt.

The Republican majority is so much out of control until we are running to countries that are communist countries saying, buy our debt. We need it. We cannot stop ourselves. We cannot help ourselves.

Canada, some folks up on the northern border like to go over to Canada but guess what they own? $58.8 billion of the American pie. You also have Korea, Korea, $65.5 billion of the American apple pie. And guess what, Japan, the island of Japan, some folks look at Japan on the map, Mr. Speaker, and say, well, it is not as big as the United States of America. But guess what? They own $682.8 billion of U.S. debt.

We are well on our way, Mr. Speaker, to half of our debt being owned by foreign nations, some that we have some issues with.

So Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ talked about secret port deals and all this stuff, this is what is going on right now. Mr. RYAN, we are going to bring this out as many times as possible. I want the majority side to figure out a positive way to talk about how we owe these countries that I have put here, and others that are unnamed, this kind of money.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Like you said, what is our benefit? We get to fund our deficit and that is about it. We do not go belly up. But what is our benefit? We do not have more money to invest in education as Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ pointed out. We do not have more money to invest for our veterans. This is money that is going to pay the interest on the money that we are borrowing.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, you go back and you say, well, the majority side says, well, we are doing fine. We want to cut the deficit in half. Do not worry. Let us do it. Trust us.

Well, ''trust us'' has gotten us to this point and this has to stop, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Let me say real quick, trust us, this is the debt limit increases just since 2002. Since President Bush, Republican House, Republican Senate, $3 trillion in new borrowing from the Republican Congress. This is third party validator. This is fact.

The Truth Squad can come out and check the facts and maybe help us find

a positive way to talk about it. June 2, 2002, the Republicans raised the debt limit by $450 billion. May of 2003, $984 billion. November of 2004, $800 billion.

Now, the next increase is going to be for $781 billion more. $3 trillion since President Bush and the Republican House and the Republican Senate have been in charge of this operation here. And we just keep going and borrowing and borrowing and borrowing from the Japanese, the Chinese, the OPEC countries. And at the end it is mortgaging the future of this country.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. When I began the hour I talked about imitation being the sincerest form of flattery so it is interesting to see that they have now engaged in a little dialogue here.

This whole conversation has really been a reflection of the culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence. Whether it is the debt that foreign countries owe, whether it is the $8 trillion deficit that we have, whether it is the pitiful and disgusting response to Hurricane Katrina or this port deal that is deeply disturbing and that brought up no national security implications for this President or this administration.

Before we close it out, Mr. RYAN, Mr. MEEK, I do want to urge people to go on the Washingtonpost.com website and see the video that has just been released of President Bush being warned about the dangers of Hurricane Katrina before the hurricane hit and him not asking a single question; him being warned about the levee breaks, warned about the people in the Superdome. There is video. Washingtonpost.com.

We want to thank the Democratic Leader NANCY PELOSI for the opportunity to be here and to spend time with the American people. I know Mr. RYAN will detail how people can reach us, if they have comments, on our website.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would like to thank Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is good to have you back.

Mr. MEEK, congratulations again for being elected to chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. You are such a young member. Congratulations for getting that reward from your peers.

Www.HouseDemocrats.gov/30Something. All of the charts that the Members saw tonight can be accessed off this website. The third party validators. This is not KENDRICK MEEK and DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and TIM RYAN making this stuff up. These are facts. And hopefully these facts will lead to us recognizing that we are not doing everything we can and hopefully we can get the country going back in the right direction.

MAKING IN ORDER AT ANY TIME CONSIDERATION OF S. 1777, KATRINA EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2006

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time to consider in the House Senate bill (S. 1777) to provide relief for the victims of Hurricane Katrina; that the bill be considered as read; that the amendment that I have placed at the desk be considered as adopted; and that the previous question be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, to final passage without intervening motion except 1 hour debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and one motion to recommit which may not contain instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Mr. SOUDER.

S. 1777

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Katrina Emergency Assistance Act of 2006''.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in the case of an individual eligible to receive unemployment assistance under section 410(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5177(a)) as a result of a disaster declaration made for Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita on or after August 29, 2005, the President shall make such assistance available for 39 weeks after the date of the disaster declaration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

COLOMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I sat here and listened to the last special order. It was the longest extensions of remarks devoted to how to increase taxes in America that I have heard.

It is one thing for the other party to criticize us in spending and then vote against every attempt to control the budget. They can criticize us simultaneously as they did in the last hour for not spending enough in education and then not controlling the budget. There was such inconsistency. We are clearly in the season of partisanship, but the harshness and tone and the misrepresentation has been very uncomfortable. And I hope that as we go through this year we can have reasonable debate over very, very difficult questions on international trade, on how we manage our deficit, on how we manage our tax code, on how we manage our spending without the tremendously aggressive tone of partisanship that is increasingly happening in America.

I want to talk about a subject that will hopefully be relatively bipartisan as we move through. It certainly has been in part. And there is a broader issue that has come up, and that is related to the issue of Colombia.

Colombia, most of us think of, if I ask you what do you think of, probably the first thing you think of historically would be coffee. Colombian coffee. Juan Valdez and Colombian coffee. I know in Indiana and at least me from Indiana and many other people would think Colombia is spelled like the District of Columbia. But it is not. If you think it is not, just listen to the accent when they go ''Colombian coffee.'' It is C-O-L-O-M-B-I-A.

Colombian coffee and Juan Valdez were established images in the United States until about the eighties when the number one thing Americans started to think about with Colombia was cocaine.

□ 2015

Almost all, 90-some percent, of the cocaine that comes in the United States and all around the world comes from Colombia. Almost all of our heroin and a high percentage of heroin around the world comes from Colombia. Now Afghanistan has kind of dominated the world on heroin, but in the United States while Asian heroin and Afghan heroin is coming into the west coast, most of the rest of the country has either Colombian heroin or some variation of Mexican heroin.

So now when many people think of Colombia, if I say, oh, I am going to Colombia, people go, well, do not get shot. They do not think do not drink too much coffee. They think do not get shot, and that is partly because of the book by Tom Clancy and then the movie, ''Clear and Present Danger,'' which talked about kind of the height of the Medellin cartel. Then the book, ''Killing Pablo,'' which then was followed up with a movie about Pablo Escobar running the Medellin cartel, and the visions of Colombia from those movies and books have really driven the definition of Colombia.

What I want to do a little bit tonight to lay this out is to tell you a little bit about the history of Colombia; then how, in fact, the drugs because of the American drug habit and the European drug habit, it is not domestic consumption of cocaine and heroin that drove the problems and the violence in Colombia. It was U.S. and European drug addictions that drove Colombia to the situation where they are today.

Then what we have been doing in Congress, starting under the Clinton administration, moving to the Bush administration, with Plan Colombia and the Andean Initiative and some of the impacts of that, and then finishing up with some of the hope of Colombia, which on Monday President Bush and President Uribe of Colombia signed the Colombian Free Trade Agreement and what that would mean both for us and for Colombia and for the Central American region.