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We may have to reduce Social Security and Medicare benefits to do that, but we are going to do it. Things are great in America. People that do not have a job just do not believe this.

It is time for this country and the leaders of this country and this administration to develop some integrity and credibility.

Back in January of 2001, the Blue Dog Coalition reached out to the new administration; and we said, if you want to cut taxes, we will work with you; we would love to do it. Let us work together and cut spending by an equal amount, and let us not get back in the deficit ditch. They sent Vice-President CHENEY over to see us and he said this: we think you are nice people, but we do not need you. We are in the majority in both Houses, and we are going to do what we want to do, and they did.

That very year they projected that the budget would have a \$262 billion surplus in 2004. It has, in fact, a \$521 billion deficit. In 2005, they said we will have a \$269 billion surplus. Now they say we are going to have a \$364 billion deficit. They said the Medicare bill will cost \$400 billion, but now it is going to be \$535 billion. They said the war is not going to cost that much; it is going to be real quick, and it is going to be over with. Now it is \$50 billion now and \$50 billion in a few months, and they do not include it in the budget. They do not even really acknowledge that it exists, but we are still borrowing these moneys from our children and grandchildren.

It is time for some integrity. If we are doing so good, why are we broke? Why are we going in debt by the trillions of dollars? Why are we borrowing this money from our children and grandchildren when they face the perfect economic storm? RECORD budget deficits and a national debt exceeding \$7 trillion, one more than one-third of our debt held by foreigners and growing every day; a trade deficit of \$400 billion that contributes to the exporting of jobs; and the approaching retirement of the baby boomers. This is the perfect economic storm; and yet the administration continues to refuse to sit down in a realistic, rational way with both sides of the aisle and let us face this thing that has been created by the Bush administration.

Let us face what has really happened to our country. Let us face what has really been put on our children and grandchildren. Let us not continue day after day to live in a fantasy land and make up an economy and make up the idea that everything's wonderful, when we know, in fact, there are nearly 9 million people that do not have a job in this country. There are 44 million that do not have health care, and that situation gets worse every day.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, we must be honest with the American people and tell them what is really happening and not continue to deceive our children and grandchildren and put them in a

position where they are going to wake up and inherit this great Nation or what was once a great Nation, and it is going to be so far in debt they cannot even pay the interest; and not only that, but the infrastructure will have crumbled. The education system will have been underfunded so long that they cannot fix it, and then we are going to just dump that on them. What responsible person would do that to their own?

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to give my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONNER). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

#### NATIONAL GUARD

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

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, we hear many outrageous claims and public discourse today on the floor of this House and outside of this House, and the integrity of the President of the United States is impugned over and over again, and we simply do not have time to address all of those issues; but today I rise to address an unacceptable offense against the men and women of our National Guard and the Commander in Chief-of-the United States military.

As my colleagues may know, Mr. Speaker, last month the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Mr. Terry McAuliffe, attacked President Bush by claiming he was AWOL, AWOL from the Alabama National Guard. He also cheapened the service of the men and women of the National Guard by saying that President Bush, as a member of the Guard, never served in our military.

In the time that has passed since Mr. McAuliffe made his unfounded charge, the President has produced military records which reflect his service and honorable discharge in the National Guard.

Mr. Speaker, the President has had the opportunity to exonerate himself; and I believe the men and women who have served their country, our country, as members of the National Guard deserve to be exonerated as well. Mr. McAuliffe's comments discredit, discredit the sacrifices of tens of thousands of National Guardsmen and -women and is a slap in the face to their service, to their families.

I believe the men and women of our National Guard serving this very moment in Afghanistan, Iraq and throughout the globe, including many Minnesotans serving in Bosnia, would disagree with the sentiment that they are not serving their country. More than

193,000 National Guards members and Reservists are currently serving in the war on terror, and over 129,000 are overseas.

While in Iraq last fall, I had the good fortune to spend time with members of the Minnesota National Guard who provided transportation in and out of Baghdad, and I would say it was the best transportation in and out of Baghdad. These men and women are steadfast servants of our military and our country who have given up their own freedom to ensure liberty for others. Whether on the front lines or serving in support roles, these brave Americans are the difference between terrorism and freedom. If that is not service to our country, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is.

This week, yet another National Guard unit from Minnesota will depart to serve our country, another National Guard unit will depart to serve our country; and I challenge anyone to question the sacrifice of these Guardsmen and -women and the families they are leaving behind.

As a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, I take offense to Mr. McAuliffe's demeaning the characterization of our National Guard. His baseless insinuation diminishes the National Guard as an institution, and he owes an apology to the Guardsmen and -women in uniform serving our country and protecting their fellow Americans.

Mr. McAuliffe's comments represent the worst of election-year politics. It is deplorable for anyone, much less the leader of a national party, to denounce, degrade, and dishonor a fighting force that is at this moment fighting for freedom and democracy around the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the men and women of our National Guard and say thank you. We love you; we are with you.

#### ADDRESSING THE FISCAL PROBLEMS OF OUR NATION

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

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, good evening and aloha.

Today, I stand here as a proud member of the 37 Member-strong moderate, independent Democrat Blue Dog Coalition. These Members come from all parts of our country and they are dedicated to these three basic propositions: first, the budgetary and fiscal integrity of our country is of paramount importance; second, our country's finances are royally messed up; third, there is a way out of this cesspool if we are honest about why we are here and what we all must do together to fix it.

I have served here for 15 months now, and when I go home I am asked two questions. Number one, what is our biggest challenge in our country? Number two, what is the biggest surprise in my mind from having served here? My

answer to both is the same: the financial condition of our country now and well into the next generation.

Why is it our biggest challenge? I think it is pretty straightforward and obvious when we think about it because our very ability to provide what we want to provide for ourselves and our children is reliant on a strong fiscal foundation. Otherwise, it is just talk. Need to protect ourselves here at home and overseas. Where is the money? Need to improve education and health care. Take care of the poor and needy, need to provide the infrastructure, need to honor our commitments to Medicare and Social Security. Yes, where is the money? It is not there right now. We know that.

Let us face up to it. Spending exceeds revenues as far as the eye can see. That is the definition of a deficit, when spending exceeds revenues, and total debt accumulative borrowings to match those deficits has now climbed well through \$7 trillion, \$7 trillion.

What is my biggest surprise? My biggest surprise is that all of this is happening on the fiscal watch and under the revenue and spending policies of a Republican administration. Do not jump all over that comment and assume that it is simply a partisan shot. I just spent the better part of a decade in my own home State of Hawaii working as an independent, moderate Democrat with Republicans to right the fiscal ship of my own State. The last thing I expected when I got up to Congress here was to arrive here and see the fiscal irresponsibility, on a massive scale, brought on by the national counterparts of those same people that I had worked with successfully in Hawaii.

My surprise does not arise just as a matter of policy disagreements because, after all, we can handle policy disagreements. We can identify choices. We can debate them. We can let the political process yield the result. That is not my surprise.

My surprise is the manner in which we are dealing with this. It is much worse: denial, concealment, misrepresentation. Let me give my colleagues a couple of examples.

First of all, this administration clearly overestimated job and growth recovery from its version of tax cuts. Second, it did not even include huge chunks of spending, spending we know we have to make, in the 2005 budget. What does that say when we do not even include the cost of the intervention in Iraq, do not even put it into the budget? What are my colleagues scared of? Are my colleagues afraid of the debate that will come from it?

Clearly underestimating expenses like Medicare, projecting the Medicare bill at \$500 billion and turning around mere weeks later and saying, whoops, we made a mistake, \$630 billion after all.

Finally, the one that bothers me the most, this is inexcusable. Bringing to this floor a budget that is only out 5

years into the future. The norm in Washington is 10 years, and I can make a good case to my colleagues that 10 years is not enough. Fifteen, 20, 25 years to account fully for Medicare, Social Security beyond that, and yet we are only going to talk about 5 years. That is like projecting a family's budget for an adjustable rate mortgage with a balloon at the end, but ending before the balloon is due. That is like projecting a family's budget for education, but stopping in the senior year of high school before their kids go to college. Why do you do that? Because you will not want to face the fact of what happens after that year has happened, and that is exactly what we have.

Do not take my word for it. Here is David Walker, Comptroller General of the United States, on the Nation's growing fiscal imbalance: current fiscal policy is unsustainable; the status quo is not an option; faster economic growth can help but it cannot solve the problem. Finally, the one I particularly agree with: the sooner we get started the better.

There are solutions, and what are they? Because talk is cheap. Here is the deal. They are there, they are tough, and they get tougher. We have to face up to those decisions right now, and we have to get to them right now. I urge my colleagues to be honest with the American people and address the fiscal problems of our country.

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

(Mr. COOPER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the gentleman from Tennessee's (Mr. COOPER) time.

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

There was no objection.

#### LACK OF JOB GROWTH IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the lack of job growth in America continues to reverberate, the jobless recovery they call it. That means even as investment increases, new jobs are not created. Now, there might be a recovery for a few in the financial elites that sit in our corporate board rooms, but it is still a recession around the kitchen tables of America's working families.

So where are our jobs? Millions of Americans are asking the Congress and

they are asking the President, Where are the jobs?

Toledo Blade reported this weekend: "Unemployment rises across Ohio." Toledo, the major community in my district, Toledo's rate of unemployment hit double digits, over 10 percent; and even rural counties, not accustomed to unemployment rising, those numbers are now increasing across the State of Ohio.

Even America's economists are starting to wonder what is going on.

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When the Labor Department released the most recent job data last Friday, showing a mere 21,000 payroll jobs created in February, economists were left dumbfounded, shaking their heads. Alan Blinder, a former member of the Federal Board of Governors, told the Wall Street Journal, and I quote, "From an historical perspective, the lack of job growth is stunning, given what is happening to the gross national product."

Productivity is high, economic activity is up, interest rates are still very low, but even Ohio's Republican governor was forced to admit no job growth. So, where are our jobs? Sales at U.S. retail stores rose by 6.7 percent in February, and the consumer continues to keep our economy afloat. But how long can that last?

Household debt is climbing. The Federal Reserve reported on Friday that consumer credit outstanding grew at an annual rate of 8.6 percent in February. Households in America have refinanced everything and they have maxed out on their credit cards and they have borrowed to keep up their spending levels.

They have been carrying the load up till now, but they simply cannot do it by themselves. We have got to start creating jobs in America, and that starts at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Last month, President Bush promised that the economy would create 2.6 million jobs by the end of this year. Instead, we have seen almost 3 million jobs disappear since he was installed in office.

Now, America suffers twin deficits that are sucking the lifeblood from our economy. We have a \$5 trillion budget deficit and a \$5 trillion trade deficit. At the same time, these twin deficits total more than \$1 trillion sucking life and economic strength out of our economy. That is a \$1 trillion in the wrong direction every year under President Bush.

The failed economic policies of the Bush administration are choking any hoped-for economic recovery, destroying wealth and saddling future generations of Americans with more debt than they can possibly afford. How irresponsible.

The failed economic policies of the Bush administration are the reason for the lack of jobs in America. Where are the jobs? They are being outsourced and exported to Mexico and China and