

My colleague and I, I believe, are here tonight to remember Normandy and remember those many crosses that we have seen across the land and above the cliffs of Normandy and remember that those crosses do not stand for Jesus Christ or for religion. Those crosses stand for the men and women buried below.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), my colleague, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding, and I think it is appropriate to recall the days of Normandy.

The gentleman said those days when the world waited to find out whether or not that very difficult mission would be successful, and you know, the theme I think that we should take from Normandy or the message from Normandy was that our soldiers came not to conquer but to liberate. That is consistent with the American theme throughout the last century, and it is consistent with the theme that is being carried out by about 130,000 men and women in the sands of the Iraqi desert right now.

And that is, that all the wars that we fought in the last century, wars in which we lost 619,000 Americans killed in action on the battlegrounds and the oceans and the airways of the various wars, we did not conquer, we did not covet land. When we won the Spanish American War, we gave back Cuba and the Philippines, gave them their freedom. When we went to save Europe the first time, we gave back all that ground that had been hard won by the Marines at Bellawood and by the U.S. Army and so many difficult battles. In World War II, having liberated Europe a second time in that century, we gave back all that land that had been so dearly won.

And today, in Iraq, we are not engaged in military operations so that we can somehow derive material benefits from that country or somehow enslave the inhabitants of that country and turn them toward our political benefit and our economic benefit.

We do it because we think that it is in the interests of the United States to spread freedom, to change the world, and I think lots of Americans understand that if we do not change the world, the world is going to change us.

Those heroes who have won now some 45,000 Bronze Stars for meritorious service and for valor in the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan I think are every bit as courageous and, in many cases, are related to and the descendants of those incredible people who climbed the cliffs at Normandy and went up those beaches.

Some of those landing craft opened up and the Americans were machine gunned before they could get out of the craft, and there were men bobbing in those waves, some of them dead before they hit the water. Others got to the beach and went down, and you can see the dramatic newsreels that show

Americans falling as they are taking that beach, and then still others got to the base of the cliffs, and then some scaled those cliffs.

Of course, we had others that came in, paratroopers, some of whom landed in dug-in positions that the enemy had established and were killed before their chutes could reach the ground. Others that went in in gliders, not an avocation that is conducive to longevity, and others simply went in the old-fashioned way, but they went in for freedom. They went in for America, and they liberated, and that is the theme of Normandy.

I thank my colleague for yielding this time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and I thank the Speaker for the opportunity to remind the world that the only land we ever covet are the small plots around the world in which we bury our dead.

□ 2330

THE DEBT, THE DEFICIT, AND THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for half the time remaining before midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise on behalf of the 37-member strong fiscally conservative democratic Blue Dog coalition. We are 37 fiscally conservative Democrats that are united in the name of fiscal discipline and common sense. We are very concerned about the debt, the deficit, and the future of this country that we are leaving for our children and grandchildren.

As you can see right here, today, the United States national debt is \$3,369,917,837,082 and some change. And if we divide that number by every man, woman, and child, including those being born today, everyone in America's share, including the children, amounts to about \$28,000. It is what we call the debt tax, D-E-B-T, and that is one tax that cannot go away until we get our Nation's fiscal house in order.

Because, Mr. Speaker, you see, our Nation is spending about \$5 billion a day not paying principal but simply paying interest on the national debt. One half billion dollars a day. Give me 3 days' interest on the national debt and I can build Interstate 69 through Arkansas. Give me another 3 days' interest on the national debt and I can complete Interstate 49 in Arkansas. Give me less than a day's interest on the national debt, and I can complete the Hot Springs Expressway. Give me less than a day's interest on the national debt, and I can complete I-530 through Arkansas. Give me a couple days' interest on the national debt and I can make the Red River navigable all

the way up to Fulton, Arkansas, at Interstate 30.

It is these type of priorities that can create economic opportunities and jobs for our people that will continue to go unmet until our Nation, until this Republican Congress gets its fiscal house in order.

You will find these posters, Mr. Speaker, that change daily. Unfortunately, the number continues to increase daily. But you will find these posters by the door to every one of the 37 members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog coalition. You will find this by our doors in the halls of Congress because we want America to know. We want America to know that this reckless spending, this reckless spending that has been provided to us under the leadership of this Republican Congress must stop.

You know, this is the first time in well over 50 years that the Republicans have controlled the White House, the House, and the Senate. And what have they given us? They have given us failure after failure. They failed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. They failed with their energy policy. They have failed with their war policy in Iraq. They have failed with their Medicare prescription drug plan implementation. And they have failed by giving us the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history for a fifth year in a row.

The projected deficit for fiscal year 2007? You will hear a lot of people say it is \$350 billion. Not so. The real deficit for fiscal year 2007 is \$545 billion. Because, you see, when the Republican leadership tells you the deficit is \$350 billion, and that is bad enough, it is one of the largest deficits ever in our Nation's history, but the reality is when they say it is \$350 billion, they are counting the money that they are borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund. Without the Social Security Trust Fund, the real deficit projected for fiscal year 2007 is \$545 billion.

The first bill I filed when I got to Congress was a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security Trust Fund. Now I am beginning to understand why the Republican leadership refused to give me a hearing or a vote on this bill, because today they are using the Social Security Trust Fund to help pay for this reckless spending, this deficit spending.

But this is not new. In fiscal year 2006, the deficit was \$372 billion. In 2005, it was \$318 billion. In 2004, it was \$412 billion. In fact, this Republican administration, this Republican Congress has given us a deficit every year since 2002. It is hard now to believe that we had a balanced budget in this country from 1998 through 2001, but we did.

And why is this important? Why is this important? The total national debt from 1789 until 2000 was \$5.67 trillion. But by 2010, the total national debt will have increased to a whopping \$10.88 trillion. Mr. Speaker, this is a doubling, a doubling of the 211-year

debt in just 10 years. Interest payments on this debt are one of the fastest growing parts of the Federal budget, and the debt tax, D-E-B-T, is one tax that cannot be repealed.

The current national debt: \$8,369,917,837,082 and some change. Each individual's share of the national debt, including every man, woman, and child alive tonight, is somewhere around \$28,000. Well, the average household income in my district is not much more than that, Mr. Speaker. Yet it would take that amount of money from every living man, woman, and child in this country to wipe out this national debt.

It is time for this Republican Congress to stop this reckless spending. It is time for this Republican Congress to address our Nation and its spending habits with a good dose of common sense.

Now, why do deficits matter? Deficits reduce economic growth. They burden our children and grandchildren with liabilities. We spend today, and it is our children and grandchildren that get stuck with the bills. They increase our reliance on foreign lenders, who now own about 40 percent of our debt. That is right, this President and this Republican Congress has borrowed more money from foreign central banks and foreign investors in the past 5½ years than the previous 42 presidents combined.

The U.S. is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign lenders. Foreign lenders currently hold a total of about \$2 trillion of our Nation's public debt. Compare this to only \$23 billion in foreign holdings back in 1993.

So who do we owe all this money to? The top ten current lenders are: Japan. We have borrowed, our Nation has borrowed, this Republican Congress and this Republican administration has borrowed \$640.1 billion from Japan. China, \$321.4 billion.

As my friend John Tanner has pointed out, if China decides to invade Taiwan, we will have to borrow more money from China to defend Taiwan. This is a dangerous path that we are going down as a Nation, owing all this money to foreign central banks and foreign investors.

The United Kingdom. We have borrowed, our Nation has borrowed \$179.5 billion from the United Kingdom. OPEC. And we wonder why gasoline is approaching three bucks a gallon. Our Nation has borrowed \$98 billion from OPEC. Korea, \$72.4 billion. Taiwan, \$68.9 billion. The Caribbean banking centers, \$61.7 billion. Hong Kong, \$46.6 billion. Germany, \$46.5 billion.

And Mexico. Imagine that, our Nation has borrowed \$40.1 billion from Mexico. To do what? To finance the war in Iraq, to finance tax cuts for those earning over \$400,000 a year. And the list goes on and on.

□ 2340

Again, our national debt is \$8,369,917,837,082 and some change, and this is just a small sampling of where

\$2 trillion of that debt has come from. It has come from foreign central banks and foreign investors.

Mr. Speaker, if you have any questions or comments or concerns about what I am talking about tonight as it relates to the debt and the deficit and trying to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government, I invite you to e-mail us at BlueDog@mail.house.gov. Again, there are 37 members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. Our mission is to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

Again, Mr. Speaker, if you have any comments, questions or concerns to raise with us, I would encourage you to e-mail us at BlueDog@mail.house.gov.

I do not raise these issues to simply beat up the Republicans. They are doing a pretty good job of that on their own these days. Public opinion polls indicate that. There is an all-time low approval rating with their leadership in this House and the Senate, with the White House and the Supreme Court.

But I raise these issues to set the stage for the Blue Dog 12-point reform plan. We have a 12-point plan for curing our Nation's addiction to deficit spending.

Number one, require a balanced budget. Forty-nine States require a balanced budget. I know at the Ross home in Prescott, Arkansas, my wife requires us to have a balanced budget. I do not believe it is asking too much of our Nation to have a balanced budget.

Number two, do not let Congress buy on credit. Every time a Member of Congress comes down here and wants to introduce legislation to fund a new program, they should have to show us which program they are going to cut to fund that new program.

Put a lid on spending. This Republican Congress just from 2001 to 2003, their government spending soared by 16 percent. We want to put strict spending caps to slow the growth of runaway government programs.

Number four, require agencies to put their fiscal houses in order. According to the Government Accounting Office, 16 of 23 major Federal agencies cannot issue a simple audit of their books. Worse, the Federal Government cannot account for \$24.5 billion it spent back in 2003. This is the kind of leadership this Republican Congress has given America. Government auditors should be doing a better job of tracking taxpayer dollars. We want to restore accountability to our government.

Number five, make Congress tell taxpayers how much they are spending. Many spending bills slide through Congress on a voice vote with no debate, and many Members vote on bills without knowing their true cost. The Blue Dog Coalition proposes that any bills calling for more than \$50 million in new spending must be put to a roll call vote.

Set aside a rainy day fund. That is common sense. We all know we are

going to be faced with unexpected happenings and disasters.

Do not hide votes to raise the debt limit. We should have a separate stand-alone vote when this Republican Congress proposes raising the debt limit instead of hiding it in another bill.

Justify spending for pet projects.

And ensure that Congress reads the bills it is voting on. Now we cannot do that, but think about this, over the past few years, some of the largest spending bills in American history have been voted on after only a few hours of consideration. For example, the Medicare prescription drug bill, remember that one, now estimated to cost \$720 billion or more over the next 10 years, went to a vote barely a day after the final version of the 500-plus-page bill was made available to Members of Congress.

As members of the Blue Dog Coalition, we propose that Members of Congress should be given a minimum of 3 days to have the final text of legislation made available to them before there is a vote.

Require honest cost estimates for every bill that Congress votes on.

Make sure new bills fit the budget. That is why we have a budget.

Finally, make Congress do a better job of keeping tabs on government programs. Again, getting back to the word "accountability."

So, Mr. Speaker, I am not here tonight to simply lay blame on this Republican leadership for the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history. I am here to offer up a plan, the Blue Dog Coalition's 12-point reform plan, for curing our Nation's addiction to deficit spending.

OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for the remaining time before midnight as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to take these few short moments and bring a little more positive perspective, a brighter outlook, and hopefully a little more unifying message than we have just heard and, frankly, than we often hear in the United States House Chamber, especially by some of my good friends from the other side of the aisle.

We call this the Official Truth Squad. I thank the leadership and the conference for allowing me to come and share a few words tonight.

The Official Truth Squad grew out of a frustration on the part of the freshmen class of the Republican Conference. We all were elected in 2004, 24 strong, now 26 of us here in the United States House of Representatives. After a relatively few number of months, we grew frustrated with the fact that there was a lot of misinformation and a lot of distortion and a lot of frankly