

want to leave off the table is that we also need to reduce our military spending. I'm fully in favor of supporting our veterans. I believe this is an important, worthwhile investment for their health, their education and for their welfare, but there are a number of military armaments and machines that we simply don't need. We don't need to depend on a nuclear arsenal, in my view. We need to engage in international agreements to cut the nuclear weaponry arsenal and inventory in the world.

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We need to make sure that we begin to shut down some of these bases we have all across the country—as many as 174 bases. Do we need this kind of military footprint? I don't think so.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that tomorrow we're going to have a group of leading economists at 11 o'clock to come together and offer their views about the proper direction for prosperity for America. Tomorrow the Congressional Progressive Caucus at 11 a.m. will convene, and we'll have a number of great economists whom we invite everybody to come listen to, including Jeffrey Sachs. I've run out of time, Mr. Speaker, but I urge people to attend tomorrow *The Way Forward for America*.

DEBTOR NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TERRY. "It is the debtor that is ruined by hard times." That was said by our 19th President, Rutherford B. Hayes. It is a timely and insightful comment.

The United States now is the debtor. We are \$15 trillion in debt, rising at a yearly clip of \$1.5 trillion with really no institutional control to stop that.

Yes, we're in hard times—9 percent-plus unemployment for 3 years straight. A report the other day said the real unemployment rate from those that have just given up is probably closer to 15 percent—16 million to 20 million Americans. Our savings, decreasing, mostly because of the dollars that are going towards buying bonds or selling bonds to China.

Now, before us this week, though, is probably one of the most important votes that this Congress will take this year, and that is to pass an amendment to our Constitution forcing this body to balance its budget. Now I know it's stunning to many people that our Constitution didn't have that. There were lots of fail-safes built into our Constitution, and I think that our Founding Fathers never thought that deficit spending other than at a time of war would ever occur in our country, but it has, and it's become the norm.

Why has it become the norm in Congress? Simply answered, because you can. There's nothing to stop it. The easiest way, the most political way so

you never have to say "no" is to deficit spend. My friends, that has to end. It has to end this congressional session.

Now, the balanced budget amendment is a simple one. It says, basically, we cannot spend more than our revenues. That's what most State constitutions have, that's what the Nebraska constitution has, and that's what the city charter for Omaha has. I spent 8 years on the Omaha city council. We had to have a balanced budget. You have to make tough decisions. I've been there when people have come and said, we need new water parks or we need something else. We on the city council, because we had to live by a balanced budget, had to make a decision of raising taxes, cutting somewhere else, or saying "no." Those are your only three options.

Well the time has come that Congress needs the institutional barriers to spending, and it's the balanced budget amendment. It will be the institutionalized discipline that has been lacking here for decades. The time has come to pass it.

I want to leave this one general point, both disappointing and hopeful. There was an article in *USA Today*, November 4 or so, 11, 12 days ago, where it quoted the Democratic leadership saying to their own people, kill the balanced budget amendment. They want to preserve the right to deficit spend our future away at \$1.5 trillion per year. Fortunately, as we have heard from one Democratic Member, he's not following the Democratic leadership's orders here. I hope that we will get enough of our Democratic friends who believe in fiscal discipline to join us. It takes two-thirds of both the House and the Senate to do that. It will be a close vote. So on something as simple as saying that our expenditures can't exceed our revenues, I ask for all of my colleagues' support.

TRUTH-TELLING ABOUT THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN: A FIREABLE OFFENSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, sometimes it seems like the surest way to get in the most trouble is to tell the truth about the war in Afghanistan. Witness the case of Major General Peter Fuller, whom Congressman WALTER JONES just talked about. General Fuller was one of our troop commanders in Afghanistan until he decided to speak his mind. After President Karzai made the outrageous statement that he would back Pakistan in a war against the United States, Major General Fuller delivered a colorful and candid on-the-record reply. He said, "Why don't you just poke me in the eye with a needle?" He said this of President Karzai, whom he also described as erratic and "isolated from reality."

He added that the Afghan Government doesn't properly appreciate the enormous sacrifices Americans are making on Afghanistan's behalf, especially at a time when we have major economic challenges right here at home.

And what was Major General Fuller's reward for telling it like it is? What did he get for expressing the frustration so many Americans feel? He was thrown immediately under the bus. He was fired, relieved of his command by General John Allen, who admonished General Fuller for "inappropriate public comments." An interesting choice of words: "inappropriate public comments."

As *Time* magazine pointed out, the implication there seems pretty clear: What Major General Fuller had the audacity to say out loud—that the Karzai regime is feckless and corrupt—is what most people secretly believe. *Time* correspondent Mark Thompson put it this way: "It is not a good sign when what everyone is saying privately cannot be stated publicly. In that case, only the troops—the ones dying—and the taxpayers—the people employing both Allen and Fuller—are kept willfully in the dark." The writer Christopher Hitchens put it even more bluntly, saying that to silence Fuller "is to establish a stupid culture of denial in the ranks."

Throughout this decade, Mr. Speaker, this decade that we've been at war, the failure of our government to level with us has been a persistent problem.

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Whether it's the phony weapons of mass destruction in Iraq or prisoner abuse and torture or just the refusal to let soldiers' coffins be photographed—that was during the Bush administration—over and over again the American people have been fed a steady diet of misleading spin and outright lies. But the people who are paying for this war in blood and treasure deserve much better. They are tired of propaganda. They are owed an honest accounting of what's going on, what obstacles we face, and what kind of progress we're making—or not making.

Major General Fuller had enough respect for the American people to tell them the truth. By refusing to dish out the same phony platitudes, he may have lost his job, but he maintained his integrity. If the continued rationale for this war is built on a lie that no one must expose, then surely that's a sign that this mission is beyond repair.

The real solution is not to cover up everything that's going horribly wrong in Afghanistan. The solution is to recapture our integrity as a nation and end this war once and for all, not in 2014, not at some uncertain date in the future—now. It's time now to bring our troops home.