

I have an article here from the Mercatus Center, George Mason University. It is a research summary.

Before I mention that, I want to mention something about one of our Senators, a Senator from Arizona. Some people have tried to take things I said in an inappropriate way.

I know that Senator from Arizona. We owe him a great deal for what he endured on our behalf in North Vietnam. There is no question about it. And I know that Senator would never intentionally hurt this country. But he has made mistakes that have hurt it but certainly it was never intentional.

Let me mention this Mercatus Center, George Mason University research summary. It says, "The Debt-Limit Debate 2013: Addressing Key Myths." Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important the people understand that there are a lot of myths about the debt limit.

One myth is this:

Standard & Poor's U.S. credit rating downgrade in August of 2011 was caused by Washington's brinkmanship over increasing the debt limit. Congress must, therefore, avoid attaching spending cut demands to the current debt limit increase if they want to avoid jeopardizing the Nation's fragile economy.

The reality, it says, is:

Washington's failure to deal with unsustainable Federal spending mostly related to entitlement programs and debt caused the 2011 S&P downgrade and is spurring warnings of another downgrade by the credit rating agencies.

Of course this administration went after them through the judiciary system—after they got a bad rating, they got a downgrade. But they point out that in June of 2011 that:

S&P reported: "If the U.S. Government maintains its current policies, it is unlikely that S&P's ratings services would maintain its AAA rating on the U.S. Government. From the same report: "One contributing factor in our negative outlook decision is our view that there has, as yet, been no significant progress in addressing these long-term cost drivers nor any consensus developing among the Obama administration, the Senate, and House of Representatives regarding the specifics of a comprehensive plan to address the long-term budgetary challenges."

On July 14, 2011, S&P warned it would downgrade U.S. debt if "Congress and the administration have not achieved a credible solution to the rising U.S. Government debt burden and are not likely to achieve one in the foreseeable future."

So the downgrade was because we did not adequately address the massive debt that had been building up.

Another myth—and there are plenty more to back up their contention about that, just facts: "Had Congress and the administration failed to raise the debt limit by the Treasury's stated deadline in 2011, the Treasury would have been forced to default on the Nation's debt." Make it very clear. The reality, "had the 2011 agreement to increase the debt limit been postponed, the Treasury could have met Federal Government obligations, including Social Security benefits and interest on the debt until the end of the fiscal year, possibly longer."

And then it goes into the options that the Treasury Department had. Another myth: "If Washington agreed to significant spending reforms and cuts—and then actually followed through on them—it would cripple the recovery and devastate the economy." The reality is that "the most dangerous thing Washington can do is continue on its current course. The economic literature is clear: Chronic overspending and its result, chronic excessive debt, lead to economic harm. Washington must agree on meaningful spending reforms—and begin implementing these policies immediately to satisfy markets about the credibility of spending cuts.

"Myth number four: The real problem with the last debt limit deal was that it failed to apply a 'balanced approach' of spending cuts and tax increases." The reality is, "Replacing borrowing with higher taxes does not solve the fundamental problem: Federal spending—including Social Security, Medicaid, and especially Medicare—is unsustainable.

"Fiscal reform that focuses on large revenue increases and modest spending reductions is likely to inflict the most damage on the economy. A study of 21 countries looking at 37 years of data representing 107 episodes of fiscal reform, shows that reform efforts that focus on a package of both spending and revenue reductions"—that is, tax decreases—"tend to be much more effective than those that have modest spending reductions but continue to increase revenue.

"Of more than 100 attempts to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio in all developed countries over the past 30 years, some 20 percent succeeded. They had two common components: one, a focus on spending cuts; and two, policy reforms that increased competitiveness." And that is the truth.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

HOOR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. MULLIN (during the Special Order of Mr. GOHMERT). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

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THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S SHUTDOWN AND ITS IMPACTS ON OUR DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY NATIONAL LABORATORIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that

all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order, the Federal Government's Shutdown and Its Impacts on our Department of Energy National Laboratories.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I also want to thank Science Committee Ranking Member JOHNSON for her support of national laboratory employees.

Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress knowing that in the policies I helped and worked to enact and the legislative agenda that I would work on that I could either help people or hurt people. And the decision for me was quite easy, Mr. Speaker: I came to Congress to help people. I came to Congress to think big.

I was very excited when I was told prior to being sworn in that I was going to be serving on the Science Committee. I was even more thrilled when I learned that I would have the opportunity to serve as the lead Democrat on the Energy Subcommittee, knowing that the Energy Subcommittee would have partial jurisdiction over two national laboratories which are in my congressional district in Livermore, California: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Sandia National Laboratory.

These two national laboratories, with about 6,500 employees at Livermore and 1,500 at Sandia, work every day to uphold our national security mission to maintain our nuclear weapons stockpile and also provide for energy security for citizens in the United States.

Prior to being elected to Congress, I had the opportunity multiple times as a city council member in Dublin to visit these national laboratories. And since being elected to Congress, I have had opportunities to visit the laboratories and also interact with their officials here in Washington.

What I have learned about these employees, these scientists, these engineers who work at our national laboratories is they care deeply about our country, but they also care very deeply about the science and the research that they work on every day and the laboratory environment that allows them to do that. So you can imagine how hard it is right now. We are in day 11 of a government shutdown, and laboratory employees were told about 2 days ago that, effective next week, they will be furloughed, too.

As you all know, Federal workers across our country from almost every agency have been furloughed or are working without pay. But at our national laboratories, which operate as GOCO facilities, which stands for government-owned/contractor-operated, these workers are not Federal workers but they are government contractors. They are scientists.