

in this well and tell the American people we would not pass our problems on to the next generation. Maybe the President does not read his own budget. I would hope he does. He signs it before he sends it to us. Maybe the President is not aware that since the passage of his budget and his tax cuts that our Nation's debt has increased by \$758,108,651,628.89. The first \$2 trillion budget in American history incidentally was not submitted by a guy named Dukakis or a wild-eyed liberal named McGovern. It was submitted by George W. Bush. The first \$2.25 trillion budget in American history was not submitted by a wild-eyed liberal. It was submitted by George Bush.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope someone in this body would explain to me that when the tax cuts take place with great fanfare, they take place during the middle of the day or during prime time TV. But when my Republican colleagues want to raise the debt limit and burden the next generation with these bills, that vote takes place about 3 or 4 in the morning. You will notice there will not be a reporter up there. Most of our constituents will be asleep. If they are proud of raising the debt and seeing to it that an even larger percentage of our Nation's budget is squandered on interest and we are squandering a billion a day, that is a thousand times a thousand times a thousand, then why will you schedule a vote to raise the debt at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning? Why will you change the House rules so that now, by just the adoption of the President's budget, we automatically raise the debt if you are proud of that?

Mr. Speaker, please explain to me and explain to the American people why a group of people is elected to govern this country who promised to balance the budget, who promised to be fiscally responsible, yet in the over 1,400 days that Speaker HASTERT has been Speaker of this House of Representatives, he will not even schedule one vote on a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution. We vote to condemn people across the world. We vote to commend people across the world. We have cast 25 votes since this session started. The way I figure it, thus far Congress is being paid \$1,000 per vote this year. But you cannot find time, Mr. Speaker, to schedule a vote on the most important thing of all, which is balancing the American budget so that this generation does not ask the next generation to pay our bills.

Mr. Speaker, answer back. Would you go out and buy a car, go out and buy a Lexus and say, I don't care what it costs, I don't care what the interest payments are because my grandkid is going to pay for it? Would you go buy a house? The same deal. I want the most expensive house in town; I don't care what the interest payments are because my kid is going to pay for it. That is the way you are running this country.

What is particularly sad is that you promised the American people you would not do that. That is how you got in the majority. And then you flat turned around and did just the opposite. You will not let us vote on the balanced budget amendment, you are running up \$300 billion a year deficits, and your only answer to that is more debt and more tax cuts.

I will remind you, Mr. Speaker, in every other conflict in American history, when we asked our young people to put their lives on the line, the rest of Americans were asked to pay the bill, right then and there. And quite frankly, the wealthiest Americans were asked to pay the most. The inheritance tax was a wartime tax. The luxury taxes were all wartime taxes. The folks who got to stay home and enjoy the benefits of America paid while someone else did the fighting. But at least they paid.

What do you say now, Mr. Speaker? You say those who have the most should pay even less and, by the way, the kids from across town, the kids from across the tracks, let them go get shot in Afghanistan, let them go get shot in Colombia protecting a pipeline owned by Occidental Petroleum. Let that kid get shot in Iraq and, by the way, send him the bill for this war when he gets home.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of good people in this body. A majority of people in this body came to this body saying they were going to be fiscally responsible. Where are they now? Where are they going to be tomorrow when we vote on a \$300 billion bill that not one Member has read, that no one has any idea what sort of stuff is buried in it? Mr. Speaker, where are they going to be tomorrow? Because if those people care about their country, they will let us vote on a balanced budget amendment. If they care about their country, they will vote down this bill tomorrow until they have had a chance to read it. If they care about our country, they will quit sticking our kids with their bills.

IN RECOGNITION OF RESCUE TASK FORCE

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, there is a movie that I saw recently which depicted three actors who became troubleshooters and helped to save a small town in Mexico. The name of the movie was "The Three Amigos." As I recall, they had a slogan that wherever there was injustice or poverty, they would be there. In reality, in real life, there are two amigos who have organized a small task force that is called Rescue Task Force and where there are problems in the world, where people are sick or need medical help or they are victims of a crossfire in a real shooting war, the two amigos are there.

In fact, they are with us today in these Chambers, Mr. Speaker. It is Gary Becks, who works on my staff, and Wendell Cutting, my chief of staff in my congressional district. Wendell is the cochairman of this task force and does it without any remuneration. They have gone to places like Albania. They were the first people into the Kosovo conflict. They went into the first refugee camp, a camp in which every single child had some type of an illness or a malady. They were the first people to distribute food and medicine. And they were the first people to go up into the very remote camps through what was basically a no-man's land where a number of nongovernmental organizations had taken rifle fire just a few days before.

If you look at the outline of what Rescue Task Force does, you can look at the pictures and see Gary Becks dressing wounds in Afghanistan. You can see Wendell in the slums of Thailand teaching sanitation. You can see them both distributing help in Kosovo. You can see them establishing the first-ever dental clinic in the area of the Nicaraguan-Honduran border.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of these two gentlemen and this organization, Rescue Task Force. They also started the program we call Hands Across the Border, where they have directed literally tons and millions of dollars' worth of medical supplies and food and toys for people who hurt, to quote the President, in Mexico. They have gone around the world.

Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, a lot of us in this city are listening to people who are explaining to us why other nations in the world may not like us right now in this particular phase of our foreign policy in the Middle East and explaining that the United States needs to reach out and to educate people as to what we do and what we stand for. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that nobody reaches out as effectively nor is as good an ambassador as these folks, not only in Rescue Task Force but hundreds of American charitable organizations who bring food and medical supplies to Africa, to Afghanistan, to other vast areas of the world, very distant areas where it is obvious that they are not going to receive anything in return. In fact, if you looked at the situation in Afghanistan and you looked at the roster of nations that were supplying humanitarian help in Afghanistan, before the military operations, before we had to go in and find the al Qaeda, you will find the Americans leading the list, supplying most of the food, most of the medicine, and that is reflective of what Rescue Task Force does.

I am very proud of Rescue Task Force, Mr. Speaker. I think it is representative of the goodness that this country has and the willingness of our people to reach out and give some of their resources to other people around the world with no intention to ever receive anything in return except the

good feelings that come from their values, that come to anyone who reaches out to help someone in need.

WHY DEFICITS MEAN SOMETHING

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

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, as everybody knows. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) is here with me. The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) was here earlier, as was the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR). This is going to be a first in a series of, I hope, enlightened or enlightening exercises that we do with regard to why deficits mean something in this country.

I heard some of the most astounding rhetoric I have ever heard in my life when there are some in this town who say deficits do not matter. We are going to try to point out why they do over the next few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, do you realize that today we are passing on to our children and our grandchildren an 18 percent mortgage on this country? We have literally mortgaged our children's future by our spending habits and our inability or our lack of courage to raise the necessary funds to pay for what my generation wants.

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The President has submitted a budget that is another \$300 billion in the red. Let me just say why that matters.

We already are paying, as a people, a billion dollars a day in interest on past consumption. If we do the math on that, there are 129.9 million individual taxpayers in this country, that means that every individual taxpayer last year paid on average \$2,556 on the debt, interest on the debt, a debt tax that will continue to go up under these present economic policies that we are asked to follow.

It gets even worse than that, though, because what happens is, every time we borrow money, we have put a tax increase not only on us, but on our children and grandchildren, that can never be repealed because the interest must be paid. It is a tax increase every day we sit here spending more money or not having the courage to raise the money we need to protect this country and the people who live here.

Every day we do that is another tax on our children and us and our grandchildren that cannot be repealed. That is what the debt tax is. That is what the interest tax is.

And it really is ironic that people would sit here and say, we are not going to pass on the problems of this Congress on this day, in this hour, to those who come after us. If our forefathers had done to us what we are doing to our children and grandchildren, we would not have the standard of living we have today, that we

have had and enjoyed. We would not have the opportunities, because we would not have the discretionary income for education, for health care, for veterans, for the world class military that we all know is necessary for the defense of this country.

We will not have that money. It will continue to go out in the form of interest payments.

What the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) said about Brazil, we are not creditworthy were it not for the full faith, credit and confidence of the people of this country in terms of what we have done in borrowing money. It is a shame what is going on each and every day.

The gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) asked for a balanced budget amendment vote, 1,400-some pages. We do not have one. This Congress, if it does not come face to face with the fact that we are spending a lot of money that we did not count on because of 9-11 that we have to spend to protect this country, our first and foremost obligation as Members of Congress, if they do not come face to face with that and understand that we have to get the money up to pay for it or else pass it on to our children in the form of a debt tax that can never be repealed, then we have shamefully failed not only our oath of office, but we have shamefully failed those who will follow us.

And each and every day a billion dollars goes out of this place to pay interest, and each and every day we operate in the red, it is more piled on. That is why deficits matter and that is what the Blue Dogs are going to be talking about over the next few weeks.

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

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

THE NATIONAL DEBT

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

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago the President stood in where the Clerk of the House stands and told the Nation that we will not pass along our problems to other Congresses, other Presidents and other generations. I stood and applauded that statement because I agree with my President. I agree with my commander in chief.

Then I was somewhat disappointed, considerably disappointed, when the administration's budget came through projecting a \$307 billion deficit for next year and deficits as far as the eye can see. The President's budget protects cumulative deficits of over \$2.1 trillion from 2002 through 2011. That is a \$7.7

trillion deterioration of our fiscal matters of this country in 2 years.

The Blue Dogs stood on this floor and opposed the economic game plan that we are now under. We were not prophetic. We agreed with the majority party on the spending, but we were not even allowed to have our budget on the floor, and we have heard nothing but rhetoric ever since.

But now the results of the economic game plan are coming in, and I want everyone to understand, 60 percent of the deterioration has occurred because of 9-11-01 and the military homeland defense needs of this country and the recession. But 40 percent of that deterioration has occurred because of the economic game plan that we are now under.

I personally happen to agree with the President's leadership regarding solving the Social Security problem while we still had a chance. Again, I am ready to step forward in a bipartisan way and work with my colleagues to take care of that debt for our children. But that is not what we are talking about today. That is not what is being proposed and talked about in the budget.

After 4 years of reduction in the debt held by the public and warnings by administration and Republican after Republican in Congress that the government would pay off the debt too quickly 2 years ago, debt held by the public will exceed \$5 trillion by 2008, a 50 percent increase, a debt tax increase on the American people that every taxpayer will have to pay, a debt tax increase under the administration's budget that is being proposed.

The administration requested the statutory debt limit be increased for the second time in less than a year. That ought to tell us something. When we are having to increase the debt limit so we can borrow more money, it ought to tell us there is something wrong with the game plan that we are now following.

The greatest danger of the deficits in the President's budget is that it will make it harder to address the challenges facing Social Security and Medicare when our baby boom generation begins to retire in the next decade. Instead of saving money to prepare for those costs, we will already be in a deep hole when the \$18 trillion liability facing those programs begins to come due. The analytical prospectus volume of the President's budget, the administration warned us, as the baby boomers reach retirement age in large numbers, the deficit is projected to rise steadily as a percent of GDP. Deficits will grow from 2.2 percent of GDP in 2020 to 5.4 percent in 2030 to 8.8 percent in 2040 under the President's budget policies. How can we continue to ignore that today?

The debt tax is real. It is an increase. But instead of our paying for it today, what are we saying? We are going to give this generation another tax cut. And no one, including the President's