

back scratched to allow such substandard material to be sent.

Now to hear that our fellow congressman, Randy "Duke" Cunningham, was such a Member of Congress on the take makes me both very sad and very angry.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM has made true acts and comments of contrition and humility; but my goodness, how much damage has been done. Not only will he be sentenced to satisfy the requirements of justice, retribution and deterrence, his family and friends will suffer. That is what happens when crimes are committed.

Let us also not lose sight of the fact that the contractors who paid bribes should be barred from ever contracting with the government again. I do not know who it is, and it does not matter to me who they are or with whom they are friends, they should be barred.

But one other thing that has caused me great bewilderment in the last month to 6 weeks or so is the rhetoric against our efforts in Iraq and how it has reached a crescendo and fanatical pitch. In what may well have been the cradle of mankind, the people of Iraq are on the threshold of democratically electing their first permanent leaders under their new Constitution. As a democratic self-governing people, we should as a Nation be uniting in support and encouraging the people of Iraq in their own efforts at self-government.

Some, like our colleague and war hero, Mr. MURTHA, have been expressing concerns of this type about the war for over 2 years. Others have now jumped on the bandwagon, and still others have raised their pitch dramatically. This historic election is 9 days off. It is true that if the election goes well, it not only is a great victory for freedom, democracy and against terrorism, but it will probably help President Bush. It is also clear, and many realize, if the election goes badly, it will probably exacerbate and lower President Bush's popularity still further. But could Members not wait 9 days, wait until after December 15, to make your points about withdrawal or how we are losing and we cannot win.

Obviously, if the people of Iraq think we are about to withdraw before that permanent ink wears off their finger when they vote, they may hesitate to vote or not vote. Heightened rhetoric against our historic assistance in Iraq serves to undermine the election and may assist in its failure. I implore Members, regarding Iraq, please let us put partisan politics aside for the next 9 days until after the election.

Sure, it would make you happy to see President Bush's numbers fall lower; but at the cost of democracy and stability in the Middle East and of our own safety, the price is too high. You can go back to your Bush bashing in 9 days, but how about being statesmen and stateswomen until after the Iraqi election. Show that there is one noble thing you can put above partisan politics for the next 9 days.

We are doing a great good over there. I have seen. Senator LIEBERMAN has seen it. Mr. SHAYS has seen it. We have witnessed it. At this time of year, we can note tragedy as I have tonight, but let us also rejoice in this great thing that may well come to pass next week if you will stop trying to poison it before it happens.

#### 100 DAYS OF EMPTY PROMISES

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

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 100th day since Hurricane Katrina came ashore in south Mississippi. Since that time, we have had a mixture of incredible support from the people of this Nation; but also, quite frankly, there have been a lot of promises made by the President of the United States that have yet to be fulfilled.

In 100 days since the storm, numerous regrets by me, Senator LOTT, Mr. PICKERING and others to try to help those people who found themselves in the horrible situation of having a home that never flooded, or a piece of land that had never flooded since the Europeans settled in Mississippi in 1699, who thought they were properly covered by having wind insurance, who thought they had taken adequate precautions to secure their home in the event of a storm, who found that their homes had flooded.

And now for 100 days, I, Senator LOTT, Mr. PICKERING and others have asked to try to do something to help those people. After all, every aid package the President talks about talks about tax breaks for the fat cats. Well, the fat cats are going to do just fine after the storm. They always do. They have got the money; they know how to invest it; they know how to make more money. They do not need tax breaks. The people who need help in south Mississippi are the average-Joe homeowners: the kid who coaches the Little League team, the guy or lady who sings in the choir, who find themselves now at the end of 90 days that their mortgage is due, they have lost their job, their house has been either destroyed or horribly damaged and they are looking for help from their Nation.

This is an extremely patriotic part of the country, and an extremely high percentage of those people have served in the Armed Forces or are presently serving, and all they are asking from you, Mr. President, is a little bit of consideration.

After 100 days, we had taken care of the people of New York after 9/11. After 100 days, we had taken care of the people of San Francisco. Tonight in south Mississippi, people will crawl into two and three-man tents because 12,000 families are still waiting for a FEMA trailer.

The company you gave the contract to, Bechtel Incorporated, has donated

tens of thousands of dollars to your campaign and to the Republican majority. You are obviously friends. I think you can pick up the phone to the Bechtel family and ask them to finish the job.

After 100 days, only two-thirds of the people who have asked for a trailer since their home has been destroyed have received one. I did not promise those folks a trailer. You did, Mr. President. After 100 days, it has turned cold. A shower with a garden hose in August feels pretty good; a shower with a garden hose when it is 33 degrees outside is a pretty crummy experience.

The contracts for debris removal were let on a per-cubic-yard basis. Therefore, the people who did that had an incentive to work quickly because the more they did the more they got paid. The contracts to deliver FEMA trailers was paid by the month. If you pay anyone to do something by the hour as opposed to the job, it is human nature they are going to do it slower. The people of south Mississippi have waited long.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to call your friends at Bechtel and tell them to finish the job. Folks had to live in a puppet for Thanksgiving and their patience has worn thin.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, I remember when the promise was made that you could cut taxes, increase spending, and pay down the debt. I thought that was a bunch of malarkey at the time, and it has turned out to be \$2.4 trillion wrong.

But to come to south Mississippi and to promise the people in south Mississippi that you are going to get them a trailer, and not fulfill that promise or drag your feet on that promise, that is something people see every day. It is something I see every time I go home, and that is every weekend.

Mr. President, it is time for you and the people at Bechtel to do the job: to deliver the trailers that are sitting in places like Hope, Arkansas, where there are thousands of trailers sitting on the runway. Or Purvis, Mississippi, where there are over 1,200 trailers sitting on the ground, or the staging area in De Lisle or the staging area in Hancock County. They are not doing any—any good sitting in the staging areas.

If you have to void the contract with Bechtel, by all means do so. If the Bechtel family has any respect for their good family name, I am asking them as a Member of Congress representing south Mississippi to replace the management you have in south Mississippi and get the job done because the people of south Mississippi and the people of this Nation who are paying for this deserve better.

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

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will

appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

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

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

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#### BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, for the next 60 minutes, me, along with other Members of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, will come to the floor of the United States House of Representatives to talk about the debt, the deficit, the budget, the cuts in spending as well as tax cuts that will be proposed on the floor of this House this week.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by explaining what the Blue Dog Coalition is all about. It is a group of 37 conservative moderate Democrats. Democrats that are concerned about this country's future, because of today's reckless spending, 37 conservative to moderate Democrats that are concerned about what today's reckless spending means for tomorrow's generation, our children and our grandchildren and their future.

For those who come to our Nation's Capitol, as you walk the halls of the House office buildings, the Cannon House Office Building, the Longworth House Office Building, the Rayburn House Office Building, it is easy to identify an office that houses one of the 37 conservative Democrats that belong to the Blue Dog Coalition, because by the door to each of our offices you will find a sign like this right here, the Blue Dog Coalition reminding every taxpayer in this land of the national debt. Today, the U.S. national debt is \$8.121 trillion and some change. And if you break that down to every man, woman and child, including those who are born today, every citizen of this country would have to pull out their checkbook and write a check to the tune of \$27,000 and some change to pay off this national debt.

There are those in this administration and within this Republican Congress that say debts do not matter. We all know that is not true. We all know that the larger the debt, the more demand there will be for money and the

higher interest rates will go. We are already starting to see it happen. We all know during the last 4½ years that one of the things that kept us out of a recession, just barely, was low interest rates that allowed people to refinance their homes and have some extra cash to buy things and encouraged people to become and be able to afford to become first-time homeowners; and it allowed others to either add on to their house or to sell their house and buy a new one. Those low interest rates are rapidly disappearing as we see interest rates continuing to go up and up and up.

It is hard to believe now, but from 1998 through 2001, this Nation had a balanced budget. This Nation did not deficit spend from 1998 through 2001. And now this President, this administration, this Republican Congress has given us, American citizens, the largest budget deficit ever, ever in our Nation's history. For what? For a fifth year in a row.

Put it another way. The total national debt from 1789 to the year 2000 was \$5.67 trillion. But by 2010, the total national debt will have increased to \$10.88 trillion. Tonight, it stands at \$8.121 trillion. That is \$8.121 trillion and some change. This is a doubling of the 211-year debt in just 10 years, in just the past decade. Interest payments on this debt are one of the fastest growing parts of the Federal budget, and the debt tax, I did not say death tax, the debt tax, a phrase coined by the Blue Dog Coalition, is one tax that cannot be repealed.

And let me tell you what I mean by that. Every day in this land, our Nation is spending a half a billion dollars. That is right, \$500 million every single day simply paying interest on the national debt. How much is that? We could build 100 brand new elementary schools every single day in America just with the interest we are paying on the national debt. It is what we call the debt tax, D-E-B-T, and it is one tax that cannot go away. It is one tax that will prevent us from being able to meet the priorities of this Nation when it comes to education and health care and the economy and so many other important areas until we get our fiscal house in order and pay down this debt and stop this deficit spending.

Deficits do matter. Deficits reduce economic growth. They burden our children and grandchildren with liabilities. They increase our reliance on foreign lenders who now own 40 percent of our debt. That is right. Foreign lenders now own 40 percent of our debt.

Let me put it another way. This President, this administration, this Republican Congress, in the last 4½ years has borrowed more money to run the United States of America than the previous 42 presidents of the United States combined.

Now, let us think about that. This President, this Republican Congress has borrowed more money from foreign governments, foreign lenders and for-

eign central banks to operate our government than the previous 42 presidents combined.

Congressman JOHN TANNER, a founder of the Blue Dog Coalition from Tennessee, said it best when he said if China decides to invade Taiwan, we, the United States will have to go borrow even more money from China to defend Taiwan. What has happened to this country? What has happened to the fiscal responsibility that leaders of this country should share? It is a duty and an obligation that we keep, or at this point, put back, restore fiscal discipline to our Nation's government, and that is what the Blue Dog Coalition is all about.

The United States is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign lenders. Foreign lenders currently hold a total of \$2 trillion of our public debt. You see here, we owe \$8.121 trillion. That is how much money, more money we have spent than we have taken in as a government. That is how much money we have borrowed. In fact, we are borrowing to the tune of about \$907 million a day, we are sending about \$188 million every day to Iraq, \$33 million every day to Afghanistan. And the list goes on and on. Two trillion of our public debt has come from foreign lenders or 45 percent of our total debt.

Some people may wonder where the other 6 trillion is coming from. The majority of it is coming from money that the politicians in Washington are borrowing from the Social Security trust fund with no provision on how or whether that money ever gets paid back.

Now, when I go to my banker to get a loan, he wants to know how I am going to pay it back, when I am going to pay it back and where the money is going to come from to pay him back. And yet, our government continues to borrow money from Social Security with no idea on how or when that money is going to be paid back or where it is going to come from to be paid back. No wonder this Republican leadership and this Republican Congress refused, refused to give me a vote or to give me a hearing on my bill that basically told the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off of the Social Security trust fund.

I mentioned that we were going to have a number of Blue Dogs join us this evening. 37 Members in the Blue Dog Coalition. We are conservative to moderate Democrats and we come from all across this Nation. And at this time, it gives me great honor to be able to introduce a real leader in the Blue Dog Coalition, someone that understands fiscal responsibility, someone that came from a state legislature where he helped balance a state budget, and that is the gentleman from Georgia, DAVID SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you so much my distinguished colleague, Congressman ROSS, from the great State of Arkansas. You continue to do an extraordinary job of leadership in this