high-level government officials. Just last year, Dubai International Capital, a government-backed buyout firm, invested $8 billion in the Carlyle fund.

Another Bush family connection, the President's brother Neil Bush, has reportedly received funding for his educational software company from the United Arab Emirates investors.

And why did George Bush, Sr. accept a $1 million donation to his library in Texas from the United Arab Emirates?

The material previously referred to is as follows:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 23, 2006.

Hon. TOM DAVIS,
Chairman, Committee on Government Reform, Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC.

Hon. HENRY WAXMAN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Government Reform, Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN DAVIS AND RANKING MEMBER WAXMAN: The recent announcement of a contract being awarded by the U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States to Dubai Ports World following its purchase of London-based Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Co. is a matter of paramount concern that should be investigated in the national interest.

It raises concerns of national security as the operator will be a foreign interest, most particularly an undemocratic nation from the Middle East that cannot assure infiltrators will not breach security. We know less than 2% of container cargo is inspected today despite Congressional efforts to upgrade the current system. Iran's growing ties with China which ships the majority of its cargo through the Dubai/CSX hub terminal in Singapore complicates the situation.

In addition, the Treasury agreement raises serious ethical questions regarding those directly responsible for this decision. In particular, given that Dubai Ports World acquired CSX World Terminals in 2004 for $1.15 billion, a company of which Secretary of the Treasury John Snow was Chairman prior to coming to the Administration should raise questions about both the acquisition of the CSX port operations and the recent awarding of the contract. Secretary Snow now chairs the Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States, the very group which approved this contract with Dubai Ports World.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Government Reform Committee to conduct an investigation and a series of hearings to learn more about these matters to determine whether appropriate processes were followed, conflicts of interest explored, and whether or not American companies were solicited in this process.

This deal is not in our national interest most especially during a time of war. Foreign management of key U.S. assets endangers the public and our communities in an era where terrorists seek to infiltrate. I hope you will agree with me that a thorough investigation is warranted.

Sincerely,

MARCY KAPTUR,
Member of Congress.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 23, 2006.

Mr. HAROLD DAMELIN,
Inspector General, Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. DAMELIN: The recent announcement of a contract being awarded by the U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States to Dubai Ports World following its purchase of London-based Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Co. is a matter of paramount concern that should be investigated in the national interest.

I respectfully request that your office conduct an investigation in to the deliberations by the U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment with particular respect to the legislative requirements established by the Byrd Amendment that requires an investigation in cases where: (1) the acquirer is controlled by or acting on behalf of a foreign government (as is the case in this instance); and, (2) the acquisition ''could result in control of a person engaged in interstate commerce in the U.S. that could affect the national security of the U.S.'' While the Committee's role may have been only to review this particular foreign applicant, I believe it is also important to know what specific action was taken to solicit an American contractor for the management of these several strategic ports, or if there had been consideration given to several different American contractors for each or several of these ports, and who was responsible for this solicitation. Certainly one could reasonably assume that this is an issue that should have been reviewed by the Committee in its evaluation of national security concerns.

Furthermore, it has been noted that the Secretary of the Treasury serves as Chairman of the U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment. In this case, Secretary John Snow had previously served as the Chairman of CSX Corporation, which at the time of his service owned CSX World Terminals. Subsequently CSX World Terminals was acquired by Dubai Ports World, the successful bidder on this contract. Given that Sec. Snow had previously disclosed a deferred compensation package with CSX valued at between $5 and $25 million and $33.2 million from a special retirement pension, one would expect that any financial benefit from the sale of CSX World Terminals to Dubai Ports World, including any stock holdings, would have been revealed, especially if there might be any residual from subsequent actions such as these. I ask that you review this matter to determine if there may have been any conflict of interest in Secretary Snow having presided over the decision, and whether or not he should have recused himself from the proceeding.

I look forward to your response to this request.

Sincerely,

MARCY KAPTUR,
Member of Congress.

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

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

DEBT ADDICTION

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, everyone knows our country is deeply in debt. Most Americans decry the rampant growth in government spending. Essentially, however, no one in Washington is concerned enough to do anything about it.

Debt is like an addiction: the political pain of withdrawal keeps politicians spending, so they do not offend any special interest groups demanding that government benefits continue. As with all addictions, long-term dependency on a dangerous substance can kill the patient. Dependency on bad policy also can destroy the goose that many believe lays the golden egg.

Our ever-increasing government expenditures, which perpetuate a runaway welfare/warfare state, simply are not sustainable. The fallacy comes from the belief that government can provide for our needs and manage a worldwide empire. In truth, government can provide benefits only by first taking resources from productive American citizens or borrowing against the future. Inevitably, government programs exceed the productive capacity of the people or their willingness to finance wasteful spending.

The authority to accumulate deficits provides a tremendous incentive to politicians to increase spending. Total spending is the real culprit. The more government taxes, borrows, or inflates, the less chance the people have to spend their resources wisely. The way government spends money also causes great harm. By their very nature, governments are inefficient and typically operate as we recently witnessed with FEMA in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas over the last 6 months. Governments are bureaucratic, inefficient, and invite fraud. This is just as true in foreign affairs as it is in domestic affairs. Throughout history, foreign military adventurism has been economically harmful for those nations bent on intervening abroad. Our Nation is no different.

Largesse at home and militarism abroad requires excessive spending and taxation, pushing deficits to a point where the whole system collapses. The biggest recent collapse was the fall of the Soviet Empire just 15 years ago. My contention is that we are not immune from a similar crisis. Today, our national debt is $8.257 trillion. Interestingly, the legal debt limit is $8.184 trillion.

This means we currently are $73 billion over the legal debt limit. Creative financing Washington-style allows this to happen, but soon Congress will be forced to increase the national debt limit by hundreds of billions of dollars. Congress will raise the limit, quietly if necessary; and the deficit spiral will continue for a while longer.

But this official debt figure barely touches the subject. Total obligations of the Federal Government, including Social Security and Medicare and prescription drugs, are now over $50 trillion, a sum younger generations will not be able to pay. This means the standard of living of a lot of Americans

who are retired will decline sharply in the near future.

Two vehicles are used to fund this wild spending. First, the Federal Reserve creates dollars out of thin air and purchases Treasury bills without limit, a very nice convenience.

Second, foreign entities, mostly central banks, own $1.5 trillion of our debt. They purchased over $200 billion in just the last 12 months, increasing their holdings by 15 percent. This is a consequence of our current account deficit and the outsourcing of more and more American manufacturing jobs. Few economists argue that this arrangement can continue much longer.

Excessive spending, a rapidly growing national debt, the Federal Reserve inflation machine, and foreign borrowing all put pressure on the dollar. Unless we treat our addiction to debt, it will play havoc with the dollar, undermine our economic well-being, and destroy our liberties. It is time for us to get our house in order.

EVALUATING HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS IN THE AMERICAN MINING INDUSTRY

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. Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Education and the Workforce Committee had a subcommittee hearing dealing with the mine safety issues around the recent tragedies that happened in the Sago mine disaster in January of this year. Unfortunately, that hearing was arbitrarily gaveled to adjournment at a time before members could have exercised their rights to ask questions of the witnesses that were there from the Mine Safety Administration, the United Mine Workers, and the mine association of the companies.

Had we had the opportunity without the arbitrary adjournment of the hearing, we would have tried to ask the Mine Safety Administration how they have come to delay and weaken and scrap the 18 regulations that were put forth to protect the miners in the coal mining industry of this Nation and, in fact, regulations that may very well have been able to save the miners, the 12 miners who died in the Sago mine disaster. But we were not allowed to ask that question because of the adjournment by the chairman of the committee.

We would have asked them whether or not they have ignored the requirements of the law that no standard put in place be less protective than the existing standard, as they have continued to chisel away at the safety standards for the miners working in deep coal mines of this Nation, meeting our energy demands for this Nation, for the miners and their families, who every day make the decision to go into the mines in this hazardous occupation.

We would have also asked them whether or not, when they see the failure of the regulations to protect these miners, whether or not this shift of enforcement and the loss of enforcement personnel to a compliance assistance philosophy to work voluntarily with the mining companies, whether or not that led to this mine accident, especially when this particular mine, the Sago mine, had 208 violations in 2005.

It is clear that the owners were interested in maximizing their profits and not complying with safety laws, and it is clear that the penalty system that we have in place does not deter repeat violations, because the Sago mine had many repeat violations, serious violations of the safety rules dealing with combustible gases in the mine and the protection of these miners.

We would have also tried to ask them whether or not they felt that Congress had exercised its oversight authority, since this was the first oversight hearing on mine safety in 5 years.

We would have also asked them to stop shutting out the public in the decision-making process. We would have asked the administration to open up all of its records, including the inspector's notes, to public scrutiny around the Sago mine disaster so that we can be able to do the work to determine whether or not we could have prevented this disaster that took these lives.

We also would have made sure that they would have put in place commonsense rules dealing with the ability to communicate with the miners who were in the mine. We now think we are learning that it might have been possible for those miners to walk out of the mine had they known where they were and had we been able to communicate with them. And while communications devices are available, they are used in some American mines, they are used in some Canadian mines, they are used in Australian mines, they are not very well used, if at all, in the U.S. coal mining industry; and yet the government has done nothing to try to push this technology so we could have had communications with these miners.

□ 1600

Also the idea of locators, so that we would have been able to send a message to these miners about what their situation was and what they might have done to prolong their lives, because we now know they were down in that mine for a very long time waiting to be rescued, but that did not happen.

As we heard from Amber Helms, the 23-year-old daughter of Terry Helms, who died in the explosion, he died in the explosion, she asked us why if she can set up a Web page in her computer, if we can communicate to the solar system, if we can communicate around the world, why couldn't we have communicated to her father and those other men down in that mine that lost their lives?

Why wasn't this put in place when the cost of the items to protect their lives ranged from apparently $20 to $200? It means nothing in terms of the profits of these mines, the revenues they generate and the overriding concern for the safety of their miners.

But, no, we didn't have a chance to ask these questions, because after one round of questioning, the chairman decided that enough was enough, that we were not going to have the opportunity to ask the Mine Safety Administration, Where have you been for 5 years on the issue of rescue chambers in mines and the protection of these miners, and when are their families going to get these answers?

Well, they didn't get them today, and apparently they are not going to get them from the Congress for a very long time.

This Congress has been blind to the need to maintain even the protections that already exist under the law. It was not long ago that some members of our committee, including its former chairman, were actively seeking legislation to abolish MSHA and NIOSH and to cut back critical enforcement provisions.

Under that legislation, 3 out of the 4 mandatory annual inspections at every underground mine would have been eliminated. Inspectors would have needed a warrant before entering mine property. Only miners in unionized mines would have had the right to accompany inspectors as they examined the mine. The circumstances in which an inspector could shut down an unsafe section of a mine would have been restricted. Mine operators would not have had to pay fines for typical citations as long as the hazards were abated. And on and on.

That legislation was defeated. But that apparently hasn't deterred Administration officials from trying to gut MSHA anyway. Now they're just dismantling it and taking it out the back door, where they think no one is watching. Well, we are watching, and legislation must be enacted to ensure that changes are made, changes that make the safety and health of these mine workers a priority, and that prevent the industry from being allowed to get away with further abuses.

I want to commend my colleagues, Congressman RAHALL of West Virginia, and the West Virginia delegation, for their prompt hearings and action on these issues. on February 1st, they introduced H.R. 4695, the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 2006, which enhances and reinforces the original purpose of the landmark Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, as amended by the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977. This legislation is a vital step in this process, and an effort that I am hoping will be a catalyst for change.

Amber's testimony, and the powerful and courageous testimony provided by all

The witnesses at the forum is documented on DVD. I strongly urge all members of this subcommittee to watch the footage of the forum, and the incredibly important questions