

One day later, the president was more temperate, saying that he did not intend to "vilify" any company or industry and that he appreciated existing efforts to increase lending, such as reviewing rejected applications to see whether loans can be approved. The president suggested Monday that banks should review applications three and four times if necessary.

Bankers also emerged from the meeting in a conciliatory mood, saying they share the administration's goals.

"Every bank in that room talked about adding many, many small-business originators and setting very aggressive goals for small-business lending next year," said Richard Davis, chief executive of US Bancorp.

Bank of America plans to increase small-business lending by \$5 billion next year. J.P. Morgan Chase has committed to an increase of \$4 billion.

"This is simply what a bank should do," J.P. Morgan chief executive Jamie Dimon said in a statement released before the meeting.

This is the second time the president has convened bank executives to urge increased lending. The first meeting, in March, did little to slow the slide. The president said Monday that he continues to get "too many letters from small businesses who explain that they are creditworthy and banks that they've had a long-term relationship with are still having problems giving them loans." But the White House on Monday defended the value of the rhetoric.

"I think that the bully pulpit can be a powerful thing," said press secretary Robert Gibbs.

Obama said he also discussed the need for financial reform, urging the bank executives not to lobby against proposals such as the creation of an agency to protect borrowers from lending abuses. And the president said he once again urged moderation in executive compensation.

"I made it clear that it is both in the country's interest and ultimately in the financial industry's interest to have updated rules of the road to prevent abuse and excess," Obama said afterward. "I have no intention of letting their lobbyists thwart reforms."

Bank executives, however, say that they strongly favor reform—they just differ with the administration about some of the particulars.

The guest list for the meeting included the top executives of 12 of the nation's largest banks, but there were three late scratches. Goldman Sachs's Lloyd C. Blankfein, John Mack of Morgan Stanley and Citigroup's Richard Parsons participated in the meeting by telephone because the flight all three had planned to take from New York to Washington was delayed by fog.

### AMERICANS MAKE THIS COUNTRY GREAT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, at the close of 2009, as we look to and prepare for a new year, I'm prompted to call attention to the remarkable American people who have, once again, weathered a difficult year with dignity and toughness. Sometimes the Washington establishment forgets that the solutions to America's problems lie outside this capital city.

Yes, Americans from almost every walk of life are tightening their belts

and making due with less this year, but Americans continue to be an extraordinarily resourceful people who inspire me in my work every day.

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, entering in a new year, I hope we can all draw inspiration from the American people. We live in a Nation of innovators and hardworking entrepreneurs. Their resourcefulness is unlimited. The spirit of American opportunity lives and thrives among them.

And let's not forget the North Carolinians who, with their characteristic generosity and work ethic, illustrate the greatness at work in America, even in seasons of considerable difficulty. I look to them as a source of inspiration and hope. People like those who call North Carolina home have always been the best hope for the preservation of our tradition of individual liberty and government by and for the people, whether in good times or bad.

Mr. Speaker, Washington would do well to stop and watch, listen, and learn from everyday Americans as they go about their lives and do the things that help make our Nation great.

May God continue to bless us all.

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

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

### AMERICANS WANT THEIR COUNTRY BACK

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we end the month, the year, the decade, this session of Congress, some observations:

Fifteen million Americans are unemployed. We have 10 percent unemployment and higher throughout the United States.

Spending is totally out of control. The country is broke, so we borrow money from China and Japan, and it seems they own our Nation. And the taxacrats have not seen a tax bill they didn't believe in.

Domestic policy is simple: Spend money, spend money we don't have, then borrow it, and then raise taxes on the American people.

The government's financial system is also simple: If it moves, tax it; if it keeps moving, regulate it; and if it stops moving, then subsidize it. Today we raised the debt ceiling so more

money can be spent as soon as we get back in January. Now we're over \$12 trillion in debt.

The House has turned our Nation's health care over to the government. You know, the government who tried to run a health care vaccine program that was a total failure, where school kids didn't get the vaccine while Wall Street fat cats did. And yet the Federal Government wants to now run America's health.

The House voted on a cap-and-trade tax bill that will add a tax on energy consumption for all Americans and punish energy consumption and encourage domestic oil producers to go somewhere else.

Congress has given more money away to foreign countries that hate us while ignoring problems at home.

Many Members of Congress have already left on planes, headed to Denmark to talk about how we must control the climate because man is the evildoer and scourge of the Earth. Of course, the Al Gore warmers have been caught this year hiding data that shows reasonable minds disagree with their theory of global warming. Plus, the warmers want to force Americans to spend millions of dollars to implement changes on their yet unproven theories.

The government, in essence, has taken over Wall Street, the financial industry, the automobile industry. You know, General Motors needs to change its name to Government Motors. The Federal Government has taken over the mortgage industry, the banks, and the salaries of some executives.

More American freedom and liberty has been stolen from us, and more assaults on the Constitution have occurred than at any time in our history. And today, the radical open border crowd has announced new legislation, arrogantly demanding amnesty for millions of illegals in this country with, also, visa preferences for those nations with the most foreigners in the United States. So much for border security.

We have a new military strategy that's implemented. It's called the surge and retreat plan. That strategy is in Afghanistan where we're going to surge and send a bunch of troops in, but yet in 18 months, according to the administration, they're coming home. No strategy like that has ever been used in military history before.

And of course Gitmo, down there in Cuba where we house terrorists, it's getting a new ZIP Code. We're moving it to the United States and putting it in Illinois. And of course the country has seen that we've prosecuted our Navy SEALs and given rides to terrorists.

What an odd year it's been. It is the arrogance of power that says government is the answer to everything. Our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor have been turned over to government opportunists. Reagan said that government is the problem, not the answer, and I agree with him.

But, Mr. Speaker, not all is gloom, doom, and despair. There is great hope. The American people are not fooled. People in our country now fear the government, and people are mad, and people are involved. And even though the D.C. crowd pays no attention to them, I've got news for the elites: The people are not going away in the darkness of the night. They will not give up without a fight, because the American cause is righteous, and the people's actions are just.

Government should not underestimate the American soul and the American spirit. They are a force to be reckoned with. Mr. Speaker, the people want their country back, and they will get it back. After all, the Constitution says, "We the People," not, "We, the subjects."

And that's just the way it is.

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

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

#### HONORING SPECIALIST MICHAEL COTE

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

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. Speaker, this may be the last address given on the floor of the House of Representatives this year. It is fitting that it is a tribute to Michael Cote, a specialist who gave his life while fighting to defend us in Iraq.

Specialist Cote was from Denham Springs, Louisiana. After graduating from Denham Springs High School, he met his wife, Ashlee, when the two were in basic training. They passed notes back and forth during their training and snuck off to church services to be together on weekends. Just days after basic training ended, the two soldiers were married.

Michael was serving in Iraq when their daughter, Brooke, was born in March, but he found a way to be on the phone with Ashlee during the delivery. She delivered in Baton Rouge.

Ashlee tells me that Michael liked to fish and hunt. She says he was an all-around country boy who liked to goof around but always knew when it was time to be a soldier.

Michael was serving as a crew chief when his Black Hawk helicopter went down in Balad, Iraq, in September.

On the day of his memorial service, the people of Denham Springs lined the streets to wave American flags as the procession went by. Families brought their children and grandchildren out to honor Specialist Cote, a tribute to a man friends and family in Denham Springs say they knew would grow up to be a soldier.

His mother, Carol Bass, tells me that she visits the grave daily.

Mr. Speaker, we mourn with Ashlee, Brooke, and Mrs. Bass the loss of Specialist Cote, but let us celebrate his patriotism, his dedication to country, his sacrifice on behalf of our security.

We are forever indebted to the men and women of our armed services, soldiers like Michael Cote, who put themselves in harm's way so that we may live freely and in peace.

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

(Mr. DEAL of Georgia 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### REFLECTIONS FROM 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in the rush of a debate in an earlier 1-minute, I was not able to capture the somberness of the moment. As our colleagues have finished their work and have, in fact, recognized the need of this Nation, I think it is important to summarize how important it is to keep our minds focused as we return back in the new year.

We know that this country is a resilient country. People are tough, and they've gotten tougher. We are blessed by the fact that we have a country of laws. We're a democratic Nation. If there is oppression in our Nation, we have a court system to seek to be redeemed. We have the amenities of life, technology, transportation, clean water. But in every country comes a time when things are not as good as they need to be, and I think we should clarify what has been done over these last couple of months.

I was here during the past two Presidential terms. When I say "two Presidential terms," the past and former Presidents. I voted for the 1997 Budget Reconciliation Act that generated an enormous surplus and created an opportunity for millions of our children to be insured. That was 1997. We had a surplus as that previous administration, the Clinton administration, left office.

We had a tragedy on 9/11, and we had to respond to that enormous tragedy, a terrorist act, and I joined with my colleagues to respond to that by allowing our Nation to defend itself by going into Afghanistan. I did not support the detour into Iraq. However, I support the men and women, and I mourn for those families who have lost loved ones.

So what have we done over this year? We have fought for America, and that is why there was the political sacrifice. Some people say that's your job, to vote for the TARP—not willingly. We didn't want a fat-cat bill. We didn't want a bill that paid people to stuff their pockets. We wanted to ensure that businesses stayed open, that we had the opportunity for small businesses, my friends and neighbors, my constituents to get money to keep those jobs.

All right, it wasn't perfect, but the numbers don't fib. We did create jobs. We kept businesses open. The President has gone to the mat by saying to these fat cats, Look, we are in a capitalistic system. I understand that. But he's gone to them and said, You have to lend to small businesses.

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Mr. Speaker, we have done a lot. And in doing a lot, we have provided the opportunity for the kinds of dollars coming to the districts.

So let me just say this: \$48 billion in highways, transit and other infrastructure. We are going to be able to stop the bleeding by keeping our teachers, our police, our firefighters and job training. That's \$27 billion. We are going to guarantee the loans, guarantee loans to ensure that we will have the opportunity to loan money to our small businesses. That's an important statement.

And I wanted to be sure by looking at what I have to let my constituents know of the kind of projects that come out of the Defense bill. Because someone would make the argument, why support a Defense bill? Let me tell you. I've already spoken about the first post-traumatic stress disorder center in an African American hospital for \$1 million, \$800,000 for the Center for Research on Minority Health-Prostate Cancer research project, jobs; \$800,000 for high-efficiency solar energy generation and storage, jobs; \$1.6 million for science, technology, engineering and mathematics initiative, jobs. And then \$1 million with a private collaborator that is independent of Federal dollars that will give \$1 million to one of the poorest school districts in my community, public and private partnership, Mr. Speaker.

Let us not leave this place in shame. We came from the deep darkness of an economic recession. We have saved jobs. We are creating jobs. We are moving forward. And I want to stop reading articles about mothers who are on the front pages of our newspapers who cannot turn on the lights and cannot feed their children.

Let me wish everyone, again, as I have done, a happy holiday and say that this Congress deserves the recognition for those who have put themselves on the line to be able to help the needy. I look forward to us coming back, passing health care, and going on with the jobs effort.