

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

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

PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ELLISON. Here we are for yet another Progressive Caucus, progressive message coming to the American people to articulate a progressive vision for the society that we live in.

I'm so happy to be talking about the progressive message today. And I'm going to be joined by our chairwoman, who is none other than Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY, and I look forward to having a very robust dialogue today.

Well, it's budget time, time to discuss the budget. And what better time than budget time to talk about how we're going to reshape our budget in a progressive and effective way that will reflect the needs and wants of the American people. Budget time, where we look at things, where we set our priorities, and where we really examine where we're going.

Tonight we're going to focus on a particular part of the budget. We're going to talk about the defense budget and the need for reform, to review what we've been spending our money on, to make sure that while we absolutely protect the American people, that we do not spend so much money that the American people really can't afford it, and that we try to get that peace dividend that after the fall of the Soviet Union we all thought we would be realizing. This is what we're going to talk about tonight with the progressive message, which we come to you with every single week.

The progressive message tonight: The budget. Tonight: The defense appropriation and how this particular end of the budget needs to be cut so that we, as Americans, can have the money we need to not only keep America safe, but also to keep America in the black and not in the red. Very important dialogue tonight.

Let me invite our chairwoman, LYNN WOOLSEY, to have some open remarks. I yield to the gentlelady from the great State of California.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, as co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, it is my honor to be here again tonight with Congressman ELLISON and other members of the Progressive Caucus who will come down to talk about the Federal budget and our progressive priorities.

When we talk about the budget, it's easy for people to have their eyes just glaze over because they automatically think we're going to be talking about a

bunch of numbers on a page. But, you know, this budget and every budget is so much more than that. While you will hear a bunch of numbers being thrown around here for the next hour, the important thing that must be remembered is that all of these figures represent what we believe. They represent what we, as a Nation, have as our priorities, what that says to every citizen of this country and every nation around the world.

The funding decisions that are included in the budget are the choices that every Member of Congress must make on what our priorities as a country should be for the next—not 1 year, but 10 years. These are choices that affect the lives of every single American. It is choices like whether or not we ensure that everyone will receive adequate health care, or whether or not we build yet another weapons system that we don't need. And these choices speak as loudly as anything on who we are as a Nation. That's why it's so important to talk about this and to understand what the numbers in the budget mean for our constituents, and to let them know that all this isn't set in stone, but that there are real choices to be made.

For the past 2 years, and again this year, the Progressive Caucus will be offering a full budget alternative, an alternative that will bring defense spending under control, that will balance our tax code to ensure that everyone is paying their fair share, and invests in renewable energy, in education, transportation, housing, veterans benefits, and health care for all.

These are our priorities; they're priorities that we, as progressives, have laid out. And I look forward to discussing all this with my progressive colleague, Mr. ELLISON, and others who are here tonight.

Mr. ELLISON. All right. Well, it's good to be here again. Thanks for getting us started.

Let me invite Congressman POLIS from the great State of—

Mr. POLIS. Colorado.

Mr. ELLISON. Colorado. Congressman POLIS, forgive my lack of sharpness on that point. But you're a welcomed friend tonight, and we want to thank you.

Would you like to make some opening comments as we begin to talk about the progressive message, the progressive budget, and we're going to be focusing on responsible defense spending tonight?

Mr. POLIS. Yes, I do. Thank you so much to my colleague from Minnesota. I'm a new member of the Progressive Caucus.

Mr. ELLISON. And we're honored to have you.

Mr. POLIS. I am pleased to inform my colleagues that we have joined as of yesterday. And I'm particularly thrilled that we're willing to look at defense spending as part of the overall picture. It's hard to have a real route to fiscal responsibility and balancing

our budget without looking at defense spending. And whether we're looking at 3 years or 5 years or 10 years out, this is going to be a critical component of the return to fiscal responsibility. I look forward to being a voice for that within the Progressive Caucus.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, Congressman POLIS, you are a very welcomed voice. We agree wholeheartedly.

You know, the American people may be under the mistaken impression that the more money you spend on defense, the more secure you're going to be. Well, tonight we're going to talk about how that isn't true.

What I want to do is start out by quoting our President, Barack Obama, in his first address to Congress last Tuesday. He said, "We will eliminate the no-bid contracts that have wasted billions in Iraq and reform our defense budget so that we're not paying for Cold War era weapons systems we don't use. At the risk of repetition let me just say, "We will eliminate the no-bid contracts that we have wasted billions in Iraq and reform our defense budget so that we are not paying for Cold War era weapons systems we don't use."

When I quote that statement of our President, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, what sort of thoughts come to mind for you?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, the first thought that comes to my mind is, the Cold War is over, it's been over for a long time, and why are we still investing in weapons systems and equipment to fight the second generation of Russian weapons that aren't even being produced in Russia? Why are we doing that? What is it costing us? And what can we do with that money instead of wasting it?

Mr. ELLISON. Well, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, you know every dollar spent is a dollar earned by somebody. And I imagine that these weapons systems may be quite a pretty penny for some people.

Congressman POLIS, when I read that quote from our President—you were here last Tuesday night—what sort of thoughts come to you right away?

Mr. POLIS. Well, you know, there comes a point when more spending equals less security. And you need to look at the whole picture, including the diplomatic picture with regard to foreign aid, with regard to helping developing nations, with regard to promoting peace in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, I think that's dead on the mark.

I want to say that, just yesterday, President Obama began by making good on his promise by signing the Presidential memorandum that will reform government by contracting. What this memorandum talks about is strengthening oversight and management of taxpayer dollars, ending unnecessary no-bid, cost-plus contracts, and maximizing the use of competitive procurement processes and clarifying the rules prescribing when outsourcing is and is not appropriate.

The Office of Management and Budget will be tasked with giving guidance to every agency on making sure contracts serve taxpayers, not contractors. It's important to focus on who really matters here; this is taxpayer and American citizens, not contractors. That's the focus that we need to have. So I'm very happy to see the President taking the focus and really drilling down on getting the most for the American taxpayer.

I think we've also been joined by the gentleman from the State of Washington who has been pitching hard for so long, speaking so eloquently for so long about issues of peace, issues of security, and important issues on the welfare of the American people. I am speaking of none other than JIM McDERMOTT of the State of Washington.

I would yield to the gentleman for any comments you might make on this important topic tonight.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Well, I have to commend you for coming out here and talking about the defense budget.

There's a lot of talk in Congress about entitlements. When we talk about entitlements, people think, oh, you mean Medicare and you mean welfare and you mean Social Security and all these things, but there is, in fact, a defense entitlement in this country. It's as though the Defense Department is entitled to get more and more money every year. And anything anybody can think up for a new defense system, we wind it up, whether it makes any sense or not.

Now, if you look at the wars that we've been involved in or the military actions that we've been involved in, they have not been standard wars where tanks are facing tanks or machine guns; it has been mostly counter-insurgency, guerrilla-type events. And we continue to spend huge amounts of money on a variety of weapons that simply don't deal with what the country is facing today. And I think that the most egregious example of this was when the last administration decided that Iran was a problem; therefore, we have to have a missile defense system in Europe against Iran. So we went to the Czech Government, we leaned on them. They said, okay, you can have a tracking station here. And we went to the Poles and said, we're going to put missiles right on the border with Russia.

Now, first of all, they've made Iran into a boogymen. And they began to create a defense, and suddenly we're selling and we're putting all this stuff out there, and lo and behold, the Russians don't like it. Now, is that any surprise? If you were a sovereign country and somebody came and put missiles right on your border, how can you possibly think that that wouldn't be responded to by the Russians?

The next thing we know, they go into Georgia. And everybody's all up in arms and saying, oh, my goodness, my goodness, what are they doing going

into Georgia? Well, if you go on a pretext to go into Iraq and attack Iraq, the Russians say, look, we went into a next-door neighbor that asked for our help. You went 9,000 miles to a place that wasn't asking for it.

□ 2000

So the military use of our power, in my view, has been greatly exaggerated in its real importance. What we need today is soft power.

I was just in Iraq, and I think that President Obama, one of the things that will be his toughest jobs is to get back control of reconstruction from the military. We fill the military budget with all this money and expect them to go out and build sewer systems and water systems and all these other things.

That's not what the military's job is. That should be the job of USAID and the State Department, and it shouldn't be done by soldiers.

Now, as long as we inflate the military budget and don't put the money over into the areas where it's really needed, we are not going to change the political climate in these countries. Whether you are talking about Iraq or whether you are talking about Afghanistan or a lot of places, you can talk about Pakistan, what we do is we give them a lot of money from the military budget to buy military equipment from the United States.

And, in my view, in the long run, we are not safer. The question is, are we developing a system that makes us secure? And just having tanks everywhere and Humvees and all this kind of stuff does not make us safer.

What should be done with our money is to look at what's happening to these countries who are economically being destroyed by this world economic situation and dealing with helping them reconstruct their country. Now, the irony of being in Iraq this weekend was realizing that we were rebuilding things that we bombed and destroyed. The question comes to your mind, well, what did we get out of that except a lot of destruction and a lot of ways to spend money in this country?

The Inspector General was out there on the trip with us, and here we have military colonels, you have got a colonel that was just sentenced to 9 years in a Federal penitentiary for taking a \$7 million bribe in Iraq. Another colonel and his wife and his sister-in-law were taking bribes and running them through their church, trying to hide them by washing them through the church that they belonged to.

This is what is needed in oversight and a clear plan for what we are trying to do with our money. We have thrown money away endlessly. Talk about waste, fraud and abuse, the military, in my view, is as ripe for an investigation as any part of government. Before we expand the budget, we ought to look at and have investigations, as Harry Truman did, after the Second World War. He made his reputation on looking at

the misexpenditure of money in the Second World War, and that's what ought to be going on now.

We are simply bloating the budget around issues that do not make us more secure and make us, actually, more enemies in the world. For that reason I think your examination, the Progressive Caucus examination of the budget is extremely important.

I think that this is an issue, obviously, people, as you point out, have jobs. People make a living making war machinery. But there have to be other things they can make, maybe things related to green energy, or there's a lot of other places that the workers in this country, with all their creativity, could be put to work rather than simply building more and more arms to sell around the world and for us to use in various situations.

We are talking about leaving Iraq. But one of the soldiers said to me, if we are getting ready to leave Iraq, why are we still building buildings like that one over there, what are we building for?

It is a really good question. I mean, if you listen to the soldiers, they can see that lots of money is being spent wastefully. There is a tower, a control tower for an airport in Iraq. We spent \$14 billion building a control tower for a field where there are two helicopters, two helicopters.

Now, you ask yourself, what was that tower built for and why was it built there? And these kinds of questions aren't being asked, and I think that's why it's important that the budget that the Progressive Caucus is putting out is really raising a whole series of issues, and I think that the members of the caucus, of the larger Democratic Caucus, should think long and hard about how much money is put into the military budget.

At a time when we need things all across this country in terms of health and infrastructure and education, all these issues are going to be sacrificed to the defense entitlement. And Members have to ask themselves are we going to continue to feed the military monster or are we going to take some of it away and deal with the domestic problems of Americans today. So I thank you for the opportunity to talk about it, and I think the American people should be listening and thinking about what makes sense, what makes us safer?

I served in the military, so I am not against war. I am not some kind of a crazy peacenik that thinks you never go to war.

I served during the Vietnam era. I took care of casualties, so I know there is no glory in war, and I know what happens to those casualties when they come back to the United States. We are creating, by this war, a lot of costs in the future that no one is willing really to talk about. They said today in the newspaper that there may be as many as 300,000 brain injuries from this war.

And you think about what that's going to mean as we try to deal with

those veterans over the next 30 or 40 years. These kids are 20, 30 years old. They are going to live to 70, so we are looking at least to 40 years, and that is a cost that's built into this kind of behavior.

I think it really has to be carefully examined, and I think that Barack Obama is correct in bringing as many of those troops home. I think he should bring them all home, but he is talking about bringing 100,000 home and leaving 50,000 over there. I don't know what for. Is that just kind of for them to sit around and if something happens somewhere they will go jump out and do something?

They said they are going to be for training police and training the Army, 50,000 advisers? It doesn't make sense. So thank you for raising this issue. I think it's important that you take an hour tonight and talk about it.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, I just want to say that I think it's critical that we discuss this issue. I believe that a budget is a statement of values. And if we value human life, and if we value peace, then we should have that reflected in our budget. That's why tonight we are talking about taking a look at the defense budget.

I just want to tell you, draw your attention to this chart up here, Mr. Speaker, Cold War-era weapons systems. Things that were mentioned, the anti-ballistic missile system, this is a pretty big-ticket item. If you could look at what we could save by cutting the Bush's fiscal year 2008 request, and then there is a task force that proposed a reduction, these would not result in any reductions in safety and security for the American people, and this chart was generated by the task force on the united security budget.

I just want to talk about it a little bit. Let me frame it this way.

Mr. McDERMOTT. If I could ask a question?

Mr. ELLISON. Yes, sir.

Mr. McDERMOTT. I can't quite read that bottom figure. Is that \$60 billion?

Mr. ELLISON. That's \$60 billion, with a "B."

Ms. WOOLSEY. Over 10 years.

Mr. ELLISON. Yes, and that's quite a pretty pity, quite a bit of money there.

As a matter of fact, let me just say that Congressman FRANK, like yourself, Congresswoman WOOLSEY and many others, Congresswoman LEE, have been working with the Center for American Progress and have adopted one of their proposals for reducing defense spending. That proposal, coupled with ending the war in Iraq, will be at the center of this plan to reduce military spending.

First, a timely withdrawal from Iraq could create \$105 billion of savings in 1 year if the recommendation for the Center for American Progress report, "Building a Military for the 21st Century," is followed. That's where this chart actually comes from.

If we were to take these proposals and reduce the Virginia Class Sub-

marine and this destroyer, if we were to deal in a very sensible way with offensive space weapons. What do we need to be fighting in space for? I have no idea.

To reduce our nuclear arsenal which, you know, under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, countries that don't have nuclear weapons shouldn't get them, but countries that do have them should be reducing them. This could be a significant savings. Then waste procurement and business operations, a 7 percent reduction.

We could save \$60 billion. How many college educations is that? How many teachers, how many cops? Could we afford a universal single pair health care system?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Yes.

Mr. ELLISON. Could we afford the things that will make our country ready for this new age, this green economy.

Let me ask you, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, what are your views on this subject?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, I have some.

Mr. ELLISON. I had a feeling you did.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Probably because I am a peacenik, I just am, have been, I think I was born that way.

But, you know, before we talk about the savings, I think we should, first of all, know that this is the third Progressive Caucus alternative budget in the last three budget cycles that we have introduced, and all of our budgets have been around what our President said in his speech, reforming our defense budget so that we are not paying for Cold War-era weapons systems that we don't use. You said that, I am going to emphasize that.

Now we are working with Congressman BARNEY FRANK. This budget is going to be wrapped around cutting 25 percent of the defense budget so that our colleagues will have an option. They will have an alternative. They will be able to vote their conscience if they want to cut the defense budget. I am not saying they won't vote for the base budget, but they will have a chance to vote for a budget that cuts defense and invests in our national priorities.

But here is why we know we can do this. The United States doesn't just lead the world in defense spending, we almost outspend the rest of the entire world combined.

Mr. ELLISON. Wait a minute, do you mean to tell me that if you take every country in the world from Palau to Brazil, Russia to Israel, from Argentina to Brunei, you add them all up, you mean we still spend more?

Ms. WOOLSEY. That's right, and a full 43 percent of the world defense spending comes from the United States alone. When we add NATO allies into it, it's over 50 percent.

So our annual defense budget dwarfs that of all our biggest rivals, and we spend four times as much as China and eight times as much as Russia. Why?

That's what I ask you, we don't need to do that.

And if you want to put this in perspective, every single person spent, when we add up our Pentagon budget, that's 40 percent of the taxes that every single person pays, 40 percent of their taxes go to the Pentagon. Why, I ask you? It does not make it safer and, in the end, you are less safe.

So what kinds of weapons are we cutting? You have got your chart up there, we are saving \$15 billion a year by reducing the number of nuclear warheads that we have in our arsenal. We are going from 10,000 to a thousand. We don't think we need 10,000 warheads. We need 1,000 to keep us safe, even with the rest of the world. Over time, we should be working to have a non-nuclear world because it's nuclear weapons that can actually do all of humanity in, and shame on us for not knowing enough to stop that.

So we also, in this budget, get rid of the F-22 Raptor. We save \$4 billion because this fighter jet was designed to fight, as I said, the next generation of Soviet planes, which were never even built.

It makes sense to build a plane that fights ghosts? I ask you, no, it doesn't.

There is the Virginia Class Submarine that, like the F-22, was built to fight the Soviets. It's more expensive than the submarines we currently have, and it doesn't have any new capacity or capability.

So there is so much about this that makes no sense.

□ 2015

And the other thing that we have to know is an investment in defense spending on weapons does not nearly enough for our economy. If you want to invest in the economy, invest in jobs and infrastructure and education.

Mr. ELLISON. Early childhood, health care.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Right. Health care. Invest in what gives back to the people of this country.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. McDERMOTT, a great American whose birthday we celebrate every January 15, actually on April 4, 1967, said these words: "A Nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." Those words were spoken by Martin Luther King.

What do you think about that quote?

Mr. McDERMOTT. Well, I think it's obvious that one of the things that President Obama faces is the fact that this country has used its military might all over the world for the last 7 years and lost its moral authority by issues like Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib and a variety of other things. And it is clear, and it was Hubert Humphrey, from your home State and actually was mayor of your city, who said that a country will be judged by how it deals with those in the twilight of life and those at the dawn of life, the children and the old people.

Mr. ELLISON. In the shadows of life.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Right. You know the quote.

Mr. ELLISON. Yes, I do.

Mr. McDERMOTT. A guy from Minnesota should know it.

Mr. ELLISON. Absolutely.

Mr. McDERMOTT. But the fact is that that is the essence of what the government is about. The Constitution and the Declaration of Independence are basic documents that say it is our responsibility to protect the life and liberty of the American people and allow them to develop themselves to the fullest extent possible. And there is a point at which when we don't educate our children and when we don't take care of their health care, when we're the only industrialized country on the face of the Earth that doesn't have universal access to health care, you have to ask yourself how many guns do we need? How many bombers? I mean I would like to take a few of those off there and use them as financing for extending the health care system to everybody in this country. It wouldn't take very much out of this budget. But it would, in fact, make us a safer country and make us a morally responsible government to deal with the problems of our people.

For us not to do that, for us not to do in energy what needs to be done, in the long run it doesn't make any difference how many nuclear weapons we have. If global warming causes the oceans to rise and all these other things begin to happen, nuclear weapons aren't any good to shoot at polar bears or at whatever. I don't know. We'll have this stockpile of weapons, and some day people will come along a thousand years from now and say, I wonder what they were planning to do with all those weapons? They built them and they sat here and rotted. And that's really what's happening.

I really think that making a sensible and reasonable defense system is important. But we have gone way over the top, as has been suggested by some of these weapons systems that people were imagining something. I mean this whole business of Star Wars, it started with Reagan. I mean he said, well, you know, suppose they get up there in the sky and they start shooting rockets down on us. We've got to have this missile defense. And we are spending money even today on that stuff, and it makes no sense whatsoever.

If you look around the world and ask yourself are we really threatened by the Iranians? Are we really threatened by the Pakistanis? Are we really threatened by the Chinese? The Chinese have got so many problems of their own. But we continue to build weapons as though they were sitting over there just about to launch off into attacking us, and it could be nothing further from the truth. Chinese families want food and housing and an education for their kids and a health care system and a government that makes peace and makes a decent life for the

people. They're not looking to attack us. But yet we continue to build weapons systems.

In fact, I think in some cases the military industrial complex was sad when the Berlin Wall fell because they had nothing to justify this stuff. And they've been scrambling around to justify it ever since, trying to find somebody to be afraid of. When, in fact, what we ought to be doing is building a peaceful world and dealing with our own problems at home and the problems of AIDS and hunger and disease around the rest of the world. If we would spend our money on those things, we would have much more peace than we will have building these weapons that are on the chart next to you. There's no security in that kind of continued—

Ms. WOOLSEY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ELLISON. I was going to ask you to react to the quote, if you would, ma'am. Would you react to the Martin Luther King quote, or should I read it again?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Read it again. That would be beautiful.

Mr. ELLISON. "A Nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

How do you react to that? And then add on what other thoughts you may have.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, I believe it with all my heart. That's why I have introduced every year for the last 5 years SMART Security, which has war as the very last option when countries aren't getting along, if we even need that option, and it cuts military spending and invests in soft power and in diplomacy and international relations.

I want to read something out of an article that Barney Frank has in *The Nation*.

Mr. ELLISON. Please do.

Ms. WOOLSEY. The March 2 edition of *The Nation*. And I would like to enter this article into the RECORD. It's a great article, and it supports his and our 25 percent cut in defense spending in our budget. And he says, in the middle of this article, "Spending on military hardware does produce some jobs, but it is one of the most inefficient ways to deploy public funds to stimulate the economy."

Then he went on to talk about when he was talking with Alan Greenspan. He said, "When I asked" Alan Greenspan "what he thought about military spending as stimulus, to his credit, he said that from an economic standpoint military spending was like insurance: If necessary to meet its primary need, it had to be done, but it was not good for the economy, and to the extent that it could be reduced, the economy would benefit."

There is no question. President Eisenhower, before he left office, said beware of the military industrial complex, Americans, because it's got us

going in the wrong direction. And we have a chance now to turn it around. We have a new President who does believe in diplomacy. We have a majority in the House and the Senate and we have our President in the White House, and now it is time for us to stand up and put together plans that will meet Martin Luther King's promise to us, and that's that we would have a world of peace as the world we want to live in.

[From the *Nation*, Mar. 2, 2009]

CUT THE MILITARY BUDGET—II

(By Barney Frank)

I am a great believer in freedom of expression and am proud of those times when I have been one of a few members of Congress to oppose censorship. I still hold close to an absolutist position, but I have been tempted recently to make an exception, not by banning speech but by requiring it. I would be very happy if there was some way to make it a misdemeanor for people to talk about reducing the budget deficit without including a recommendation that we substantially cut military spending.

Sadly, self-described centrist and even liberal organizations often talk about the need to curtail deficits by cutting Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and other programs that have a benign social purpose, but they fail to talk about one area where substantial budget reductions would have the doubly beneficial effect of cutting the deficit and diminishing expenditures that often do more harm than good. Obviously people should be concerned about the \$700 billion Congress voted for this past fall to deal with the credit crisis. But even if none of that money were to be paid back—and most of it will be—it would involve a smaller drain on taxpayer dollars than the Iraq War will have cost us by the time it is concluded, and it is roughly equivalent to the \$651 billion we will spend on all defense in this fiscal year.

When I am challenged by people—not all of them conservative—who tell me that they agree, for example, that we should enact comprehensive universal healthcare but wonder how to pay for it, my answer is that I do not know immediately where to get the funding but I know whom I should ask. I was in Congress on September 10, 2001, and I know there was no money in the budget at that time for a war in Iraq. So my answer is that I will go to the people who found the money for that war and ask them if they could find some for healthcare.

It is particularly inexplicable that so many self-styled moderates ignore the extraordinary increase in military spending. After all, George W. Bush himself has acknowledged its importance. As the December 20 *Wall Street Journal* notes, "The president remains adamant his budget troubles were the result of a ramp-up in defense spending." Bush then ends this rare burst of intellectual honesty by blaming all this "ramp-up" on the need to fight the war in Iraq.

Current plans call for us not only to spend hundreds of billions more in Iraq but to continue to spend even more over the next few years producing new weapons that might have been useful against the Soviet Union. Many of these weapons are technological marvels, but they have a central flaw: no conceivable enemy. It ought to be a requirement in spending all this money for a weapon that there be some need for it. In some cases we are developing weapons—in part because of nothing more than momentum—that lack not only a current military need but even a plausible use in any foreseeable future.

It is possible to debate how strong America should be militarily in relation to the rest of the world. But that is not a debate that needs to be entered into to reduce the military budget by a large amount. If, beginning one year from now, we were to cut military spending by 25 percent from its projected levels, we would still be immeasurably stronger than any combination of nations with whom we might be engaged.

Implicitly, some advocates of continued largesse for the Pentagon concede that the case cannot be made fully in terms of our need to be safe from physical attack. Ironically—even hypocritically, since many of those who make the case are in other contexts anti-government spending conservatives—they argue for a kind of weaponized Keynesianism that says military spending is important because it provides jobs and boosts the economy. Spending on military hardware does produce some jobs, but it is one of the most inefficient ways to deploy public funds to stimulate the economy. When I asked him years ago what he thought about military spending as stimulus, Alan Greenspan, to his credit, noted that from an economic standpoint military spending was like insurance: if necessary to meet its primary need, it had to be done, but it was not good for the economy; and to the extent that it could be reduced, the economy would benefit.

The math is compelling: if we do not make reductions approximating 25 percent of the military budget starting fairly soon, it will be impossible to continue to fund an adequate level of domestic activity even with a repeal of Bush's tax cuts for the very wealthy.

I am working with a variety of thoughtful analysts to show how we can make very substantial cuts in the military budget without in any way diminishing the security we need. I do not think it will be hard to make it clear to Americans that their well being is far more endangered by a proposal for substantial reductions in Medicare, Social Security or other important domestic areas than it would be by canceling weapons systems that have no justification from any threat we are likely to face.

So those organizations, editorial boards and individuals who talk about the need for fiscal responsibility should be challenged to begin with the area where our spending has been the most irresponsible and has produced the least good for the dollars expended—our military budget. Both parties have for too long indulged the implicit notion that military spending is somehow irrelevant to reducing the deficit and have resisted applying to military spending the standards of efficiency that are applied to other programs. If we do not reduce the military budget, either we accustom ourselves to unending and increasing budget deficits, or we do severe harm to our ability to improve the quality of our lives through sensible public policy.

Mr. ELLISON. Congressman, you've been reflecting quite a bit on issues of military reductions and focusing on our country's security, not sacrificing that, but on how we might save more money. But what do you think about this idea of military expenditures not being a good economic investment, not stimulating a lot of jobs? Any thoughts occur to you about that?

Mr. McDERMOTT. If you spend a dollar in a school educating a kid who then does better in the world and gets a job and makes money and pays taxes and contributes to the society, you've created something. When you build a

nuclear weapon and put it on a shelf somewhere, you have developed nothing. It just sits there. Or you build a tank or you build a Humvee.

Ms. WOOLSEY. And it kills somebody.

Mr. McDERMOTT. You have to ask yourself why do we keep building more and more and more? And, in fact, there's a curious thing about Iraq. Having been over there, it reminds me, we have 150,000 soldiers over there and we also have 150,000 contractors. Now, if a soldier is paid \$50,000 and a contractor is paid \$100,000, why isn't it more sensible to hire another soldier than to hire a contractor for twice the money? And that's going on all over Iraq, in fact, all over the world. We are contracting things out that ought to be done by our own soldiers and would be done in a much more reasonable and cost-efficient way. So if you look at this budget, there are a million places where you can find places to save money if you care about that.

Mr. ELLISON. Talking about soldiers as opposed to contractors, I will never forget the hearing in which General Petraeus was asked how much he makes, and I think he makes about \$170,000 a year for managing a whole lot of people and a whole lot of equipment. And then somebody asked Erik Prince, who is the head of Blackwater, how much he makes, and he makes quite a bit more than that, definitely millions. And I mean he runs an operation quite a bit smaller than the United States military and a comparable force. So even when it comes to the leadership in the military arena, we're contracting military leadership and we are paying them a whole lot more than we are those soldiers who are at the head of our military and who are really doing the real hard work and can't just walk away, and it's not just about a dollar and cents for them. When you made your observation about contractor versus soldier pay, that was another image that stuck in my mind.

I yield back to you.

Mr. McDERMOTT. I think that is the whole thing that we have not seriously looked at for the last 7 years. We have been spending, spending, spending. We've had budget after budget, supplemental budgets. They come in and say we need another \$30 billion. We need another \$70 billion. We're going to use \$50 billion for reconstruction. We're going to use this. But no oversight. They've been putting that money out there, but nobody has been actually looking. And that's why you get control towers, as I said, built out in the desert for \$14 million and nobody says to themselves, gee, what's that about? Who did that? Well, it was a contractor. You know, I don't know if it was KBR or which one of the contractors, but we let a contract to somebody to build a very sophisticated control tower. And we talk about the "bridge to nowhere" in our infrastructure. We complain if somebody puts a piece in the budget for a bridge somewhere. We

put military things out like that and we don't even ask a question.

Mr. ELLISON. You've hit on something. Why has it been somewhat taboo to discuss the military budget? What is in operation that would make someone shy about asking tough questions about military expenditure?

Does the gentlewoman from California have any views on this?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, first of all, there's a big fear of looking like you're not patriotic around here. The second thing is it's very embarrassing when you ask the question and nobody has the answer and you're talking about billions of dollars. And that's why BARBARA LEE and I have been working with the GAO to have the DOD implement the over 2,000 recommendations that the GAO has made to the DOD to cut waste, fraud, and abuse. So they now know they have to do it, and we are counting on those cuts of those 2,000 wasteful expenditures in our Progressive Caucus budget.

Mr. ELLISON. Congresswoman, we have just been joined by Congressman SAM FARR, who is a member of the Progressive Caucus.

Congressman FARR, tonight we have been talking about the Progressive budget and how examining the defense budget in a tough way will allow us to save a whole lot of money which we can use for human need. And I just want to know do you have any comments on that, any reflections?

□ 2030

Mr. FARR. Well, without a doubt the way we have been spending and putting the war efforts into just an emergency supplemental doesn't make any sense, because there has never been an accounting for it. The new administration has said they are bringing us in their budget the cost of Iraq and Afghanistan, so there is going to be some fiscal responsibility, and everyone knows there will be a day when we will not be spending that much money, which is a lot of money, and therefore those costs can be cut.

I think that there is no way that we cannot. As we try to balance this budget or get it into sense in the outyears, the largest increase over the years has been the Defense Department, and therefore they are going to be the one that is the most dramatically reduced. I think all of us feel that the plan is to have a smaller military, but without a doubt it has to be a smarter military, and the investment in smartness is not the kinds of things you see on that board.

I am very excited about upgrading the skills of American military, particularly because my background in the Peace Corps is that you find in Afghanistan and Iraq what is missing now is what we call soft power, which is that we have learned to kick down the doors anywhere in the world at any time, but we have not learned to win the hearts and minds of people. If indeed we are going to have peace and stability, we have got to do a lot more work on the soft power side, which is

less expensive and probably more effective. So, obviously there is room for reductions. As we argue the cost of health care, we have to also argue the cost of defense.

Mr. ELLISON. Congressman FARR, one of the things that BARNEY FRANK says is that on September 10th, 2001, we had no idea how we were going to deal with the expenditures associated with an Iraq war. Somehow over the course of time we figured out how to come up with \$10 billion a month to fight the Iraq war. Yet people tell you and they tell me we can't afford universal health care. That is just too expensive. The prior President even told us that and vetoed the State Children's Health Insurance Program because it cost too much money.

But what does that mean to you when we think about reexamining our defense budget for waste, fraud and abuse, and dealing with some of these Cold War era weapons systems? In your view, what do we really need a ballistic missile defense for in this age and day? Do you have any thoughts on that topic?

Mr. FARR. You have the expert on health care here with Dr. MCDERMOTT and the American leader on single payer plans, and certainly he can give a lot of that.

But I think what I see missing in the dialogue here is that a lot of people, conservatives who would not agree with us would argue that government ought to run itself more like a business. You don't hear businesses talking about costs and expenditures. When they spend money, they talk about investments.

Indeed, if America is going to grow and strengthen itself, then it has got to talk about these things as investments. And if you really analyze the investment in education, the investment in health care, not costs in, but investments in, obviously you want to run them well, and if you really look at the military and talk about an investment in peace operations and stability, which is what it is all about, I think you come up with different numbers than just costs. You come up with different priorities.

Mr. ELLISON. Congresswoman WOOLSEY, do you want to reflect on this?

Ms. WOOLSEY. I just want to say you also should put the cost of not doing those things, the cost of not having a healthy community, not having an educated constituency, not having people ready for jobs for the 21st century. Those costs, we never look at that when we are doing our budgeting.

I have a question, if I may, to just throw out to the three of you. Sam, before you came down here we were talking about 150,000 contractors in Iraq and why our military, which is one-third of the cost, each one of our troops, why we just didn't have them doing it all.

My question is, wouldn't we have to have a draft in order to have that

many troops available? I don't think we have volunteers that would be able to double the size of the troops in the units over in Iraq and Afghanistan, because I don't think people are that excited about going over there for \$50,000 a year, for one thing.

Mr. FARR. Well, the difficulty you have is, again back to that investment, if indeed the contracting purpose is to build infrastructure, it is nuts to think that a company from the United States has a vested interest in the outcome and survivability of that project. We learned that with the "ugly American," where we would go and build things in other countries and leave and they would fall apart, because in the process we never got the host country nationals involved in building it, in owning it, in wanting to run it and keep it up and learn how to, as we saw with generators in Iraq that we installed and nobody put oil in them and they all burned out, because they said it doesn't matter, they will wait until they come back and replace them.

So I think this dialogue is really important, because the first line of our national security is investment in a well-informed electorate or well-informed public. So the first line of our national security is investment in education. That is our biggest defense system, security system, and we have to make that investment equal to or greater than obviously it has been historically if we want to build a stronger America.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. One of the interesting things, I am standing here listening to this, and, I don't know, as people are sitting at home listening to this and wondering about all this, this is a sacred cow that we are never supposed to look at. That is why we don't discuss the defense budget, because people are afraid if you talk about it and talk about reducing it at all, you are not a patriot. That is the accusation that is made immediately.

But what happens in the Defense Department is they say, well, you know, we would like to build a submarine, so this year we will put \$1 million into the budget and sign a contract to build a submarine in the next 2 years. So the next budget comes along and here is a contract already signed, and the next \$10 billion goes into the budget, and the next year it is ten more. And that kind of sort of sneaking it in under the door without people actually seeing what is being committed to, that is how this missile defense stuff and all that is done, incrementally. Nobody ever sees the long-term cost of what we are doing and what it is going to mean in terms of what isn't available for the things that this society needs.

The minute anybody raises it and says, why are we doing this, somebody says, well, you don't care about the safety of this country. That couldn't be further from the truth for any one of the four of us. But in fact people will say it and they will think that somehow if you cut one dime out of the de-

fense budget, the whole country suddenly is going to be cowering in the corner and the world is going to be threatening us. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, Congressman, the fact is that in all this exorbitant, precipitous expansion of the defense budget, you really haven't seen the average soldier getting a whole lot more money. We have had to increase the budget for the VA. When you talk about the human element in the military, this almost seems like the forgotten element.

When you think about a weapon like this ballistic missile defense over in Europe, agitating the Russians, the Iranians aren't threatening to bomb America. I haven't heard that one yet. The fact is that this thing in the Bush budget was \$10 billion. The fact is you have got this \$21 billion for nuclear weapons. We live in a time of asymmetrical warfare. What do we need \$21 billion for? Why do we need that?

The fact is that is one of the things that is so appalling. One of the things we are doing tonight is saying it is not unpatriotic to examine the military budget. It is not a sign that you are a coward and you don't want to face the enemy if you want to cut the military budget. It doesn't mean that you don't care about the troops. Of course, we desperately care about the troops. Part of what we are arguing for is for the sake of the troops.

So the thing is that it is so important to be having this dialogue tonight, so critical that we do not shrink from this critical dialogue about cutting this budget. I am so happy that President Obama came right in this Chamber a little more than a week ago to say "we will eliminate the no-bid contract that have wasted billions in Iraq and reform our defense budget so that we are not paying for Cold War era weapons systems we don't use. Let it begin now."

Mr. FARR. You know what is interesting about your comment? I sit on the Military Construction Appropriations Committee. That is the military quality of life. We interview the soldiers, have them come in and ask them to prioritize what they want. Never in my 15 years have I ever heard them ask for a weapons system. What they ask for, their number one issue is quality of housing. The number two issue is childcare. Childcare. That is what the soldiers want. It is quality of life, because they are raising their families in the military. They are getting deployed and they are coming back.

The weapons system, those are all Fortune 500 companies that make those. That is Wall Street. So you have a different lobbying effort between the personnel, the human factor in the military, and the weapons systems or the procurement side of the military, and that is what is incredibly remarkable. And I am really pleased that you are pointing out if we are going to make proper adjustment, we have got

to really scrutinize these expenditures to really make them essential to a new global world order.

We are not fighting conventional wars. We are fighting asymmetrical wars, and I don't know what a ballistic missile system is going to do in an asymmetrical war in fighting people that are using the Internet and public transportation to move their weapons and ideas around.

Thank you for your time tonight. I really appreciate it.

Mr. ELLISON. Congressman FARR, let me thank you for being here. Let me also thank Congressman WOOLSEY, Congressman MCDERMOTT, and also Congressman POLIS was with us for a moment.

This is the progressive message, the progressive message tonight that we came with, to talk about just the defense aspect of the progressive message. We believe that if we follow the program that has been offered by the Center For American Progress that Congressman FRANK has been working on, we can save a lot of money for the American people without any reduction in safety for the American people.

It is not unpatriotic to question the military budget. It is not unpatriotic to talk about waste, fraud and abuse in the military. It is to enhance the quality of life for the soldier and security for the American people.

My name is KEITH ELLISON. I have been happy to be here tonight for the Progressive message. It has been great, another fantastic hour. We will be back, week in, week out, projecting a progressive message to the American people.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POLIS). Without objection, the 5-minute Special Order of the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is vacated.

There was no objection.

FIXING THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here tonight to lead this special order on behalf of the Republican leader and am pleased to be joined by some of my colleagues now on the floor and others who will be coming.

I want to say that we are going to talk about the economy tonight. We are going to talk about the cramdown bill that was passed here today. But I do want to say in response to the Progressive group, I think they call themselves, that was just speaking, is that any time I hear people talking about the need to do less in defense for this Nation, I want to say that I wake up

every single morning and the first thing I do is say thank you, Lord, for letting me live in this country, and the last thing I do before I go to sleep at night is say thank you, Lord, for letting me live in this country, because I believe we live in the greatest country ever, and I know in large measure that is because of the great national defense that is provided to us by the men and women who risk their lives every day to keep us a free people.

Do I think that we should write a blank check for defense? No, I don't believe that. But I do know from reading the Constitution, and all of us are sworn to uphold the Constitution, that national defense is the number one role of the Federal Government.

□ 2045

It has to be mentioned over and over again because, unfortunately, too many people talk about all these things we could be doing for the people of this country if we just didn't spend all this money on national defense.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that States can't provide national defense, the counties can't provide national defense, the municipalities can't provide national defense. And we individuals can't provide for our national defense, except as part of a larger body. So it is our Number 1 responsibility as a Federal Government. And if we have money left over, then, fine. We may be able to do other things. But if we have money left over, the first thing we should do is give it back to the people from whom we take it forcibly and allow them to vote how to decide to spend it.

I want to say that I don't say to people who criticize the defense budget that they're not patriots. But I think they should be very explicit about where they think money is being wasted. And again, if there's money left over, let's just give it back to the American citizens. Let's not spend it in Federal bureaucracies.

So, as I said, we came here tonight to talk about the economy. That's the thing that's probably on most people's minds. Thank goodness we have a military that is allowing us to be safe, allowing us to be here on this floor at night, allowing us, every citizen in this country, to go about his or her job on a regular basis, all their activities, whatever they're doing and feel safe.

But what's on the minds, again, of most of the people is the state of our economy and the inaction and incompetence of the Democratically-controlled Congress and this administration in terms of how they have responded to the problems in our economy.

So I want to recognize some of my colleagues who are here tonight and allow them to share some of their concerns. I'm going to be here for the entire hour. I'm going to let them speak, and then I will come back and, if there are things that still need to be said, then I will take up some time and

share some information with those of you who are listening to us tonight.

The first person that I would like to recognize is our distinguished colleague from Georgia, Dr. BROWN.

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because Americans have bought a product that is not living up to its guarantee. Promises made are not being kept, and the American taxpayer is paying the price for the defective product that they bought.

This body has let the American people down. And I'm not just pointing my finger at the other side of the aisle. Both sides have hoodwinked the American taxpayer for not being fiscally responsible.

If I sound alarmist, it's because I'm concerned that it's only getting worse. I'm frightened about the path that America's heading down with this administration and this Congress in the driver's seat. HARRY REID and NANCY PELOSI are driving this steamroller of socialism and, unfortunately, President Obama isn't putting up any roadblocks, and not even a slow down sign. And it's hardworking Americans who are getting run over.

Right now, in addition to a \$700 billion bailout of Wall Street, a \$1 trillion non stimulus bill, and a \$275 billion housing fix, the middle class is also carrying on their backs the auto industry, Bear Stearns, AIG, Citi, Freddie, Fannie and countless others.

For too long, lawmakers in Washington have ignored the pleas from hardworking families and small business owners in their districts. For too long, lawmakers in Washington have depended upon hardworking middle class to pay for their expensive programs, of which they rarely see a dime.

But there is an alternative. The middle class can demand that lawmakers stop using them to pay for policies that benefit only two ends of the spectrum. That's why I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to offer a vision for those hardworking middle class families who pay for the Wall Street fat cat speculators, who pay for welfare recipients, and who pay for all this.

My vision includes providing tax relief to small businesses and families. It includes offering incentive-based relief for job creators. We must skip the pork wish list and, instead, directly stimulate the middle class and small businesses, since they are America's economic engines. In doing so, jobs are created, faith is restored in the markets, and America's entrepreneurial spirit is once again unleashed.

Contrary to what is being said, those of us who oppose the recent actions of this "Credit Card Congress" are not just saying "no." Unfortunately, our alternatives to help our economy are not being considered.

I want to give a 5 percent, across the board, income tax cut. I want to increase the child tax credit to \$5,000. I want to lower capital gains, dividend and corporation taxes to bring investors back to America that have been