

Success in Iraq was never ensured, but it was made far more likely by the presence of Ryan Crocker. As Ambassador from March 2007 to February 2009, he was instrumental in carrying out the diplomatic tasks required to implement the counterinsurgency strategy, and to successfully defend that strategy before a skeptical Congress. He also carried out the negotiation that produced the Status of Forces Agreement, and he helped Iraqis through provincial elections. In all this, Ambassador Crocker forged a strong partnership with GEN David Petraeus that protected our Nation's interests in Iraq at a moment of peril.

Ryan Crocker has served his Nation with honor, and our country owes him a debt. He is a diplomat's diplomat, the best of the best, and a tribute to the State Department that he has served. He is also a very fine man, and I wish him well in retirement and the best of luck in the future. Ambassador Crocker may be leaving the stage, but his service to our Nation will not be forgotten.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, what is the order?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half.

The Senator from California is recognized.

THE BUDGET

Mrs. BOXER. I came to the floor to talk about the budget debate. I think it is very important that we let the American people know where we are on the budget and what this debate is really all about.

We have a new President and we have a new budget, thank goodness. We have a budget that reflects the hopes and dreams of the American people. We have a budget that is going to cut the deficit in half by the time this President's term is over. We have a budget that is absolutely open in terms of the way it spends our money and the way it saves our money.

It is important that we take a look at the type of economy this young

President inherited: Record deficits. Record deficits that President George W. Bush's own party supported. It is very important that we remember that when George W. Bush got the key to the Oval Office, we had surpluses. Then we saw a 50-percent increase in spending. We saw a debt that was about to be put away go up in major proportions. We are seeing the playing out of the worst recession since the Great Depression, a financial market in crisis, and a housing market in crisis because of the deregulation that was the centerpiece of George W. Bush's and the Republicans' leadership.

We are paying the price of those years today. We have a young President who came into office and said: Be patient, we are going to change the way we do business in this country. And we are going to do that. We started with the stimulus bill that got not one Republican vote on the House side, although some of my Republican friends over there are running around my State taking credit for the bill they voted against. We had three Republicans over here, whom I praise mightily for having the courage to do the right thing and get this economy back on track.

We have seen the loss of 3.3 million jobs in the last 6 months. The President is dealing with two ongoing wars that, by the way, were never paid for in the budget. They were taken off the budget. He now puts them in the budget so that the American people can see the truth. President Bush put them in emergency spending even though we knew he needed to fund them.

What we have in the President's budget is a refreshing change of reality, honesty, integrity, and investments that have to be made. What are we getting from our Republican friends? We are getting just what we got when the Clinton budget passed without one Republican vote. I want to take us back to that because I think it is very interesting, intriguing, and enlightening to see what our Republican friends said about the last Democratic President's budget. You would have thought the sky was falling. You would have thought the universe would never survive. I have some of the quotes they made about the Clinton budgets.

If people will remember, Al Gore, as Vice President, had to come over here and cast the tie-breaking vote on that budget. Here is what happened as a result of that budget; we will talk about that first. As a result of the Clinton budget, we saw 23 million new jobs created in this country—not millions of jobs lost but 23 million jobs created. What happened to the deficit under the Clinton budget? It went down, down, down, and we wound up with a surplus. We voted for the Clinton budget, the first Democratic budget in a while, and what happened? Twenty-three million new jobs were created and the budget was in balance.

As a matter of fact, George W. Bush, when he took the keys to the Oval Of-

fice, had a surplus. What happened with the Republican rule? Deficits as far as the eye can see. These are the facts. This isn't rhetoric—debt of \$10 trillion, \$11 trillion.

Let's look at what the Republicans said about the Clinton budget that we know, because time has passed, history has shown, created 23 million jobs, stopped the deficits, turned them into surpluses, and got the debt going on the way down. What did our Republican friends say then?

Wayne Allard said then as a Representative:

In summary, the plan has a fatal flaw—it does not reduce the deficit.

Wrong. Wrong. Wayne Allard continued:

So we are still going to pile up some more debt, but most of all, we are going to cost jobs in this country.

That is what Republican Wayne Allard said about the Clinton budget—“. . . we are still going to pile up some more debt, but most of all, we are going to cost jobs. . . .” Wrong—23 million jobs created.

Senator Pete Domenici said of the Clinton budget that created 23 million jobs and turned the deficit into a surplus:

It's just a mockery.

Our friend, Senator ORRIN HATCH, a leader of the Republicans, still here and going strong, I am happy to say, he is my friend—he said:

Make no mistake, these higher rates will cost jobs.

Talking about the Clinton budget and the taxes in it.

Make no mistake, these higher rates will cost jobs.

Wrong—23 million jobs created.

How about Senator Phil Gramm, one of the leaders of the Republicans in the Senate at the time of the Clinton budget that created 23 million jobs, took the deficit, turned it into surplus, what did he say?

I want to predict here tonight that if we adopt this bill, the American economy is going to get weaker and not stronger, the deficit 4 years from today will be higher than it is today and not lower. . . . When all is said and done, people will pay more taxes, the economy will create fewer jobs, Government will spend more money, and the American people will be worse off.

Wrong. Phil Gramm was wrong. Oh, Phil Gramm, he is the one who said this recession was in our minds.

Here is another quote of Phil Gramm—remember, he was a leader of the Republicans then—talking about the Clinton budget that created 23 million jobs and cut our deficit and turned it into a surplus:

. . . [T]his program is going to make the economy weaker. . . . Hundreds of thousands of people are going to lose their jobs as a result of this program.

Guess what he also said:

I believe that hundreds of thousands of people are going to lose their jobs as a result of this program. I believe that Bill Clinton will be one of those people.

Bill Clinton got reelected and the economy created 23 million jobs, the

deficits went down, we had a surplus, and the debt was almost eviscerated.

What did our good friend CHUCK GRASSLEY say? CHUCK GRASSLEY is our good friend. He has taken a lead against this budget document. He is one of the leaders against the Obama budget. Let's see what he said about the Clinton budget that created 23 million new jobs and cut the deficits, turned them into surpluses, and had the debt going down, one of the most prosperous times in our history as a result of the Clinton budget. What did CHUCK GRASSLEY say?

I really do not think it takes a rocket scientist to know this bill will cost jobs.

Wrong.

Connie Mack, another leader, a friend of mine, now retired, a Republican leader—this is what he said about the Clinton budget:

This bill will cost America jobs, no doubt about it.

Bill Roth said:

It will flatten the economy. . . . I am concerned what it will do to jobs. I am concerned what it will do to our families, our communities, to our children's future.

Senator Roth was wrong—23 million jobs created, one of the most prosperous times in our Nation's history, deficits went down, debt on the way out.

So our Republicans have a visceral reaction when there is a Democratic President. They come and they excoriate our Democratic President, and they are wrong. They are wrong. Look at the record. This is the beauty of what I am saying. I do not have to defend it. I know what they said, and I know what happened to the economy.

Newt Gingrich—still a major leader in the Republican Party, some people say the leader—about the Democratic President's budget, Bill Clinton: "It will kill jobs." Wrong. It will "lead to a recession, and the recession will force people off of work and onto unemployment and will . . . increase the deficit." Wrong.

John Kasich—we have seen him on television a lot. He was a leader then in the Republican Party. This is what he said about Bill Clinton's budget, not dissimilar to the Barak Obama budget in the sense that it is a plan to cut the deficit and make investments—make good investments. This is what he said:

This plan will not work. If it was to work, I'd have to become a Democrat. . . .

John, if you are watching me, it is your time because the plan worked—23 million jobs. You didn't become a Democrat. You said you would.

Peter King—what did Peter King say about the Clinton budget that created 23 million jobs and cured the deficit problem?

[I]t is because of budgets such as this that the economy is going to be damaged.

Wrong. Wrong.

Flash forward. We know what happened under Bill Clinton. We know about the 23 million jobs. We know what happened to the debt. It went

down. We know what happened to the deficits. They turned into surpluses. George W. Bush takes the White House, the Republicans take over, and what happened? The worst recession since the Great Depression, terrible loss of jobs, deficits record high, which they never complained about, debt record high. We get a new President who comes in and says: I have a plan to turn it all around. What do they do? They come down to the floor with the same old politics.

If I gave you the quotes I am hearing of my colleagues—Senator SHELBY is all over, they are all over the place—disaster, Armageddon, the world is ending, we are going to lose jobs, we are going to have deficits as far as the eye can see; what a nightmare. It is the same old politics and, by the way, the same old policies, which is tax breaks for the wealthiest among us, shorting the investments that the people of this country need, not tackling health care, not tackling energy, not tackling education—all the things this President wants—not tackling the deficits, and we have to know they got us into this crisis.

I do not enjoy reiterating all of this because it brings back some fights I was in. But I am going to do it every day as long as I hear the same rhetoric, the same politics, the same policies that got us into this mess in the first place.

The American people had a choice in November. They had a choice in Senate races, they had a choice in House races, they had a choice in the Presidential race. Did they want the same old politics, did they want the same old policies that got us into the crisis? Guess what they said. They wanted change, and they are getting change. We have the same rhetoric flowing from my friends on the other side of the aisle. I thought they were going to change the image of their party. I thought they were going to change the message of their party. It is the same old stuff. You could substitute a name for a name. It is the same thing they are saying about the Barak Obama budget that they said about the Clinton budget, and it doesn't fly because our new President understands we have to make some changes. He understands we need to invest in America's future, in jobs, in health care, in energy independence, and in education.

We know the deficit predictions are different coming out of the Congressional Budget Office than they are coming out of the White House office. Everybody knows we are going to adjust this budget here and there to make sure the numbers reflect reality. This President understands that. I watched him at his press conference. He said: What I care about is jobs, health care, energy independence, education, and deficit reduction, he added.

That is a major focus of his agenda. He says: As long as I get jobs, health care, energy independence, education, and deficit reduction, I am a happy person.

The President is coming today to the Hill to meet with us. I am very much anticipating his presentation.

We know what this President inherited. We know the fiscal mismanagement. We know the misplaced priorities. We know, we know, we know. The American people understand that is why this President, despite getting pounded day after day on this floor, on the airwaves, and on conservative talk shows, is still maintaining a strong majority of Americans who say: Give this man a chance.

Who else in history inherited two wars and the biggest economic nightmare since the Great Depression? Nobody. The wars were not of his making, and the economic mess is not of his making. He is addressing them. He addressed it in the stimulus package that is going to start to pay off for us.

It is tough times, but he is doing what has to be done. He went forward and he said: You know what, I have a plan to get these banks on their feet. He was honest. He said: I have bad choices and worst choices.

If there is a tragedy in our families and we find out one of our loved ones has cancer and the doctor comes to us and says: There are two treatments. There is a tough chemotherapy treatment and there is a tough radiation treatment. You have to pick between those two treatments to cure this cancer. It is a hard choice. Our President faces very hard choices when it comes to straightening out this mess. But the American people want him to try and try he is.

If we can get these bad assets off the hands of these banks and get them lending again, we basically save the financial system. If we don't save the financial system, we are going to have to take it over. This President does not want to do that and I do not want to do that and I do not think most Americans want that. So he is doing what it takes.

The housing crisis—I am so happy to hear people are refinancing. It is very important. That is going to put more money in the pockets of people. It is going to make it more affordable for them to stay in their homes.

Our President has a budget blueprint to get us out of this mess. We all know he is not going to get every line in there he wants. He knows that. Senator CONRAD is working with him. We will have a reserve fund in there for the things we want to do for health care and energy, and I am going to work very hard so we can, in fact, have a cap-and-trade system that brings funding in and puts people to work, it gets us off dirty energy. We will have the ability to do that. The point is, this President deserves to have his priorities in place.

I wish to say in closing to my Republican friends: Go back a few years in time. See how wrong you were. Admit that you were wrong. Then go back and see what you said about the Bush budget. I didn't get a chance to go through

those quotes. I will do that the next time I take the floor. When the Bush budget came down and we saw what happened with the Bush budgets, they were adopted by Republicans, and they received lots of votes from their side, unanimous. All we had out of that was unemployment and deficits. They said: Oh, this is going to be a great budget. They are wrong. They have been wrong—wrong on the Clinton budget, wrong on the Bush budget, and now they are wrong on the Obama budget.

As one Senator, I wish to say this: I never forget. I forgive all the time, but I never forget. I have these quotes. They are real. They are in the RECORD. I am going to bring them out constantly.

Remember, when you hear these Republicans come out and trash Barak Obama's budget, it is the same thing they did to the Clinton budget and they were wrong—wrong then and they are wrong now.

We have to give this President the support he needs. Not that we are going to give every line—I don't agree with every line in it—but basically the thrust of what he wants, the investments and the deficit reduction.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the appropriations process we conduct here in the Senate, and have come here, as you have, in the not too distant past and been absolutely amazed by the lack of fiscal discipline that exists here in Washington. I know the Presiding Officer probably shares some of my views about the way we go through the appropriations process and the fact that at the end of the year, on many occasions, we end up with a large omnibus bill that does not give the American public, certainly not Senators and House Members, the ability to actually go through this process in a thoughtful way that respects the fact that these are our citizens' resources which we tend to bulk together in a way that it is not transparent.

Our President, on March 11—and I agree with him very much on this—said that future spending bills should be debated and voted on in an orderly way and sent to his desk without delay or obstruction so we don't face another massive last-minute omnibus bill like this one—and he was talking about the bill that we passed. I could not agree more with the President in that regard. I think what we have seen is that we have not had the ability to examine

the thousands of earmarks that are placed in these bills. We have not had a process that is transparent. In an effort to aid this process in such a manner that we do have some degree of fiscal discipline in this body, 41 Republican Senators have signed a letter which states that we believe that by the August recess at least eight appropriations bills should be voted on in singular fashion—eight single bills by the August recess.

This body has on many occasions taken up each appropriations bill by itself, fully debated it, discussed the earmarks, discussed the things that cause these bills not to be appropriate, had amendments, and passed these bills out of the Senate. So these 41 Republicans stand together urging the leader of the Senate, urging the Appropriations Committee to follow this best way of doing business, and that is to vote on these bills individually. Obviously, we hope this occurs. And certainly as part of the Senate process, in the event that we are not able to meet those objectives, we will avail ourselves of all appropriate procedural methods to ensure that is the case.

Mr. President, I thank you for the time this morning, and I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter signed by all 41 Republican Senators.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, March 24, 2009.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER REID: As you develop the legislative calendar for the rest of this fiscal year we believe it is critical to allocate an appropriate amount of time for the Senate to consider, vote and initiate the conference process on each of the twelve appropriations bills independently through a deliberative and transparent process on the Senate floor.

For a variety of reasons, over the past several years, the Senate has failed to debate, amend and pass each of the bills separately prior to the end of the fiscal year. Far too often this has resulted in the creation of omnibus appropriations bills that have been brought to the floor so late in the fiscal year that Senators have been forced to either pass a continuing resolution, shut down government or consider an omnibus bill. These omnibus bills have not allowed for adequate public review and have clouded what should otherwise be a transparent process. As our President said on March 11, 2009, he expects future spending bills to be, "...debated and voted on in an orderly way and sent to (his) desk without delay or obstruction so that we don't face another massive, last minute omnibus bill like this one."

The Senate should begin floor consideration of the appropriations bills during the early summer months to ensure that an appropriate amount of time is available to examine, debate and vote on amendments to the bills. We believe the Senate should pass at least eight of the appropriations bills by the August recess. In order to press for a more transparent process, we will consider using all available procedural tools to guarantee regular order for appropriations bills.

Noting our intentions, we hope you will plan accordingly as you work with the lead-

ership of the House to develop the legislative calendar for the rest of this fiscal year. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bob Corker; Thad Cochran; John McCain; Judd Gregg; Roger F. Wicker; Jeff Sessions; David Vitter; Jim DeMint; John Thune; Lindsey Graham; Lamar Alexander; John Ensign; Saxby Chambliss; James M. Inhofe; Tom Coburn; Robert F. Bennett; Jon Kyl; Richard Burr; Mel Martinez; James E. Risch; John Barrasso; Michael B. Enzi; Christopher S. Bond; Pat Roberts; George V. Voinovich; Chuck Grassley; Mike Johanns; Arlen Specter; Richard C. Shelby; Mike Crapo; John Cornyn; Orrin G. Hatch; Olympia J. Snowe; Susan M. Collins; Richard G. Lugar; Johnny Isakson; Kay Bailey Hutchison; Lisa Murkowski; Jim Bunning; Sam Brownback; Mitch McConnell.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Would the Chair please advise me when I have used 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair will do so.

THE BUDGET

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, one of the encouraging things that happened in Washington this year is that the President sent us a budget that was more transparent and more open than previous budgets. It was a 10-year budget instead of 5 years. It gave us a blueprint for the future in that way, the way we ought to be thinking about things. It included some things that had not been included before: the cost of the war; the so-called AMT fix—to address the millionaire's tax the Congress passed in the 1960s designed to catch 155 people who were not paying any taxes, but today will catch 28 million people, mostly middle-class Americans, unless we fix it; and what around here is irreverently called the "doc fix," to deal with the mandated 20-percent cut in what Medicare pays its physicians. That cut in physician payments is not going to happen, we know that, so the President included that in the budget. There was money for helping to fix the banks, to get the toxic assets out of the banks and get credit flowing again, get the economy moving again, and that was in the budget.

On big issues like health care, the President said: Let's work in a bipartisan way. I invite the Congress to come up with a bill. Many Members of Congress said the same thing. The President held a health care summit earlier this month. I agree with the President we should try to reform