

Virginia, has said defense programs could join others on the cutting board." But, of course, they haven't done that.

New York Times, January 27: "Representative Chris Gibson, a tea party-endorsed freshman Republican and retired Army colonel, made it clear that no part of the Pentagon's \$550 billion budget, some \$700 billion including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, was immune. 'This deficit that we have threatens our very way of life, and everything needs to be on the table.'" However, they have not done that.

Congressman MIKE PENCE, on January 7, said: "If we are going to put our fiscal house in order, we have to be able to look at defense." We need a strong defense. I am a supporter of a strong defense. But to take those dollars off the table is irresponsible and inconsistent with the representations that our Republican friends have made.

Those words are sounding very hollow, however, today. Why are Republicans breaking their word, Madam Speaker? Because, in my opinion, they know that the only way to get their conference to support this spending bill is to bribe it with a year of defense spending left untouched and a divisive social policy provision as well, which is what they said they would not do.

What we need to do is sit down and over the next 72 hours, now over the next 48 hours, frankly, come to compromise. That's our job. "My way or the highway" is never going to get it done.

Finally, Republicans showed their priorities in their budget for the upcoming fiscal year. We will have a lot to say about that in the days ahead.

Their budget ends Medicare as we know it. Seniors thought that they were going to protect Medicare. Well, their way of protecting it is ending it. It dismantles Medicaid and other vital programs for our seniors. We will talk a lot about that in the coming days.

And on top of that, it includes yet trillions more in tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

We can do better. Rather than using our debt as an excuse to pass a nakedly partisan agenda, we need to take a bipartisan approach that puts everything on the table:

Keeping our entitlement programs solvent; scrutinizing our spending, defense and non-defense, for waste and low priorities; and passing deficit-reducing tax reform.

Those are the hard choices and shared sacrifices that Americans have a right to expect.

NO JOBS AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, the Republicans ran on a jobs agenda; but so far this Congress, they have not done one thing to help Americans find jobs. For 14 weeks, they have been running the House with not one mention of jobs.

The Republicans have put their budget proposal out now, and now we have

their real agenda: a radically ideological plan to protect giveaways to corporations and to attack the elderly, the poor, women and children of the country. Reaganomics drove this country to the brink of bankruptcy in the 1980s. Reaganomics drove the world economy to the brink again in the Bush years, and now the Republicans are trying for a third time to impose their intolerance and everyone-for-themselves economics on the American people.

We need to be fiscally responsible. I think there are things moderate Republicans and Democrats can agree on, but the Republican plan is to dismantle the social safety net of this country.

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This is a debate we should have.

Republicans often chuckle that winning at politics is worth the cost to their conscience of being straight with the public. I think we need to let citizens come to their own conclusions by giving them some facts. And here are some indisputable facts about the Republican budget plan:

First, the Republican budget has mostly fictitious numbers. The media has picked up on the Republican number of "\$6 trillion in savings" like catnip, but the Republicans made up most of the numbers of the plan to get there. To create this big number, the Republicans ignored the Congressional Budget Office. That's quite a strategy. If the nonpartisan budget scorekeepers don't say what the Republicans want, the Republicans just ignore it and make up their own numbers.

Secondly, the Republicans' answer to the people in need is to dismantle Medicaid and leave health care for the poor to the States. The Republicans will drop millions of low-income people, children, seniors, disabled, and pregnant women off their rolls. Not only that, those patients that are left on the rolls will get a different kind of care from State to State, and some of that care is very bare bones. You shouldn't have to care about where you live if you are poor, elderly or a child in this country. There are some States that you don't want to live in.

Third, the Republican plan does nothing, not one thing, about the hundreds of billions of dollars of tax breaks American people give corporations every single year. The Republican plan even cuts more for the superrich in this country.

Republicans say they don't like to pick winners and losers. But they pick winners and losers all the time when they give money to oil companies and Wall Street and then push the disabled people living in poverty off the Medicaid health insurance.

And the Republican Party does nothing, not one thing, about the defense budget. Iraq is winding down, Afghanistan is winding down, and Libya will be over shortly, but they don't take one thin dime out of the defense budget. They can't find anything to save anywhere.

Now, the American people need to know the facts. The fact is that if we restored the fair Clinton-era tax rates, what we had in effect before 2000, and kept all other spending at the same point, our deficit drops by two-thirds. That's where we are today. In 10 years, it drops by two-thirds. That's a simple plan that is very doable without destroying the safety net in this country, without going after all the poor and the dispossessed in this country.

We still have to work to lower the deficit even more. We need the right priorities. And the right priorities should be figuring out more ways to save on health care spending. We spend too much for too little results. If we don't deal with health care costs, this deficit is going to be very tough to deal with.

But the Republican plan is to demonize poor people and union workers. Take a good look at Wisconsin. You'd think all the problem in Wisconsin was because of school teachers. Now, that blaming everyone else for the economic disaster is simply to avoid the admission of what they have done. The Republicans take zero responsibility for their disastrous policies and then say the situation they created is the reason why we need to implement every form of their radically failed philosophy. It's cynical. It's ugly politics. And it's the Republican strategy.

Consider what they're doing to seniors. They're saying to seniors: Now you have a set of guaranteed benefits. We're going to take it away and give you a voucher. Go look for some health insurance. And good luck.

CUT AFGHANISTAN, NOT SUPPORT FOR SENIORS, SCHOOLCHILDREN, AND WORKING FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, my friends on other side of the aisle released their budget blueprint for 2012 yesterday. Let's leave aside for the moment that they're prepared to shut down the government rather than fund it at acceptable levels for the rest of fiscal year 2011. If you thought H.R. 1 was bad, wait until you see what they have in store for 2012 and the decade to come.

It's an appalling, radical, and reckless proposal. They want to shred the social safety net and decimate the programs for the most vulnerable Americans, the programs that they depend on to get through day-to-day life. They demand sacrifice from working families and the middle class, but none, no sacrifice from special interests and the big oil companies.

I saw a lot of words in their budget proposal. But one that I don't believe was mentioned a single time is "Afghanistan." The war in Afghanistan, in addition to having cost us more than 1,500 American lives, is costing the taxpayers nearly \$7 billion a month and is

proving to be a crashing failure. This war is in its 10th year, and we still haven't vanquished the Taliban. We still haven't brought a stable democracy to Afghanistan. And we still haven't trained the Afghans to take responsibility for their own security.

The Republicans want to cut wasteful, ineffective government programs. Well, if that is true, I suggest the majority start with Afghanistan before going after American seniors, schoolchildren, and working people. My Republican colleagues believe in limited government as long as the things they're limiting are taxes paid by special interests and investments in people who need a helping hand. When it comes to foreign invasions and decade-long military occupations, Republicans are the biggest spenders of all.

With these priorities, not only have they lost their moral compass, they've lost the American people as well. Recent polling shows that overwhelming majorities want to see spending on Medicare, Medicaid, and education increased or stay the same. By contrast, nearly two-thirds of Americans are fed up with the war in Afghanistan and don't think it's worth fighting.

It's impossible, Madam Speaker, to take seriously any budget proposal that doesn't even mention Afghanistan or Iraq and doesn't cut billions and billions in wasteful war spending from the budget.

It's time to bring our troops home. It's the right thing to do. It's what the people want. It's a sensible, humane, and compassionate path to fiscal responsibility.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, earlier this year, an irresponsible bigot burned a Koran in Florida. That was a despicable act. But unfortunately, a number of far worse acts eventuated; that is, the murder, calculated and deliberate murder, of a number of innocent people in Afghanistan by people purporting to be defending their religion against the burning of a book in Florida by massacring innocent civilians in Afghanistan.

And I am pleased that people, including General Petraeus and others, condemned the irresponsibility of the Koran burning, but there needs to be even greater condemnation of the notion that that in any way justifies murder. That includes a kind of condemnation, in my judgment, of the President of Afghanistan, our increasingly unimpressive ally Mr. Karzai, who, I believe, added to the furor there by insisting that the man who burned the Koran should have been prosecuted. Well, under American law, he was not

prosecuted. He should not have been. The right to do obnoxious things is a very important part of the First Amendment.

But what is most appalling is that people purported, in the name of religion, then not even to do anything against that individual, and that would have been unjustified. I am not suggesting that there is any justification for any violence against him. But violence against people in Afghanistan, employees of the United Nations there for humanitarian reasons, other citizens of Western countries, for them to have been assaulted and murdered by people purporting to be acting in the name of religion, that is the true outrage.

And I hope people will resist any temptation even to equate the two. An act of stupid and offensive bigotry against a book should be criticized. Murder of innocent people in the name of a religion—and it's particularly ironic that people who committed these murders claim to be vindicating their religion. Indeed, no denigration of a religion could be greater than to murder innocent people in its name. If I were to be asked what did I think more detracted from the image of Islam, this irresponsible publicity seeker in Florida burning a Koran or people in the name of the religion murdering innocent people including those who went to Afghanistan only to help, it is clearly the latter.

So, Madam Speaker, let's be very clear that nothing in what happened with the burning of a Koran comes close to justifying the outrageous, murderous behavior of people in Afghanistan. And I am pleased that there is attention given to this, but the condemnation should be of this kind of attack on innocent citizens, and we ought to keep this in some perspective.

CONGRESSMAN PAUL RYAN'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CHU. Yesterday, Congressman PAUL RYAN introduced the Republican Party's fiscal year 2012 road-to-ruin budget.

We have been back to work in the House for 14 weeks. And for 14 straight weeks, the Republican majority has done nothing to create jobs. They haven't even put a single jobs bill on the House floor. In fact, their proposed spending bill for 2011 actually costs America 700,000 jobs.

Now, Congressman RYAN and the Republican leadership want to extend their job-killing policies and permanently eliminate the middle class. The Republicans' road to ruin is nothing short of an attack on working families, seniors, students, and children.

It attacks America's seniors by ending the Medicare guarantee and put-

ting your fate in the hands of private insurance companies. It attacks America's workers by not doing anything to create jobs and by gutting job training. It attacks America's students by cutting education and raising college costs for nearly 10 million students.

Now, no matter what side of the aisle we are on, we can all agree that deficit reduction is important. But the question is how do we do it. What we can't do is balance the budget on the backs of America's middle class, our seniors, our students, and our children.

But I do know some things we can't afford. At a time when middle class families can't pay their bills, we can't afford to keep spending billions in subsidies for Big Oil and giveaways for special interests. At a time when our senior population is growing, we can't afford to slash funding for nursing homes and put health insurance companies back in control of health care. At a time when our economy needs an infusion of the best and brightest workers, we can't afford to cut public education while protecting tax breaks for companies who ship jobs overseas and spending billions of dollars in tax breaks on people already making upward of half a million dollars.

A budget isn't just about dollars and cents; it's about priorities and values. And as representatives of the American people, our priorities and values should reflect their values: Jobs, a secure retirement, the promise of educational opportunity, and the certainty that if your child is sick then you will be able to afford to see the doctor.

If you vote for this bill, then who amongst us could go home and look senior citizens in the eye knowing we ended Medicare as we know it? Who could look an unemployed worker in the eye knowing we didn't do anything to create jobs? Who could look a student in the eye knowing we took away their opportunity to succeed with a quality education?

I want to reduce our deficit. I know it's vital for our fiscal future. But I also want to look my constituents in the eye and tell them I stood up for their priorities and not those of Big Oil, international corporations, and special interests.

The truth is we can do both. We can get our deficit under control. And we can do it without cuts that hurt hard-working families.

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CONGRESSMAN PAUL RYAN'S PRIVATIZED FISCAL FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Yesterday, PAUL RYAN of Wisconsin, Republican chair of the Budget Committee, revealed his projected future for seniors in America