

They just say we're going to do it all in cuts. It's an impossible task.

But I worry even though they say they've exempted Social Security that that's not really their game plan. Because for the first time this year, we will borrow money to put into Social Security. Never been done since the program was created. It's always been funded by its own tax.

But this year, the Republicans cooked up an idea—which President Obama bought into lock, stock, and barrel—to reduce the Social Security tax under the guise of giving people back their money and putting people to work. Every Member of Congress will get over \$2,000 in tax breaks this year because of that one provision. Every millionaire and billionaire will get over \$2,000 in tax breaks. Working people will get a tax break, too—and they can use a tax break—but there are better ways to do it, less costly ways to do it, and ways to do it without jeopardizing the future of Social Security.

So part of the borrowing this year, a couple of hundred billion dollars of that borrowing this year is going to be from China, the government will borrow, to reinject into the Social Security trust fund.

So I fear the Republicans are going to say, "Well, wait a minute. We can't subsidize that Social Security thing. And oh, by the way, you can't restore the taxes and run Social Security on its own income." So they're creating some impossible scenarios here.

I'm hopeful the President will chart a better path, one that doesn't go after Social Security. Social Security didn't create, until this year, one penny of the debt of the United States but this year it will create \$200 billion of debt for the United States. A very bad precedent set by a bipartisan problem—the Republicans and President Obama and some few Democrats.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Let's get real about the deficit.

#### GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, as one who is firmly in the camp of not just supporting the benefits but the necessity of government regulation, I nonetheless welcomed the President's recent op-ed in the Wall Street Journal and his executive order to review the regulations we have in place.

This is a unique opportunity to reframe at least part of the regulatory debate to satisfy both sides and better serve the public. The area of opportunity lies in creating a new generation of environmental protections that are performance based. Pioneering efforts to protect the environment, like the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, were regulatory based that

worked well for their time. Public health requirements, citizen expectations have evolved. Subsequent efforts have become more difficult, expensive, and time consuming.

Having these agencies dictate specifics is not necessarily providing the most innovative, timely, nor cost-effective solutions.

There is an alternative to rules-based procedures, command-and-control rules process. Such a model would give latitude to parties on how they comply with the standards for protection as long as they met or exceeded the requirement.

In Oregon, we were able, some years ago, in partnership with the EPA and the State Department of Environmental Quality, to work with a major industrial presence in our community, Intel, on a plant expansion where latitude was granted for air quality compliance. The company made an enforceable commitment to the requisite clean air and environmental regulations, but the environmental agent regulators did not micromanage how the company complied. The result? Clean air with less cost and time.

There are countless opportunities for this principle to save time, money, and create innovation, and importantly, the potential to reduce opposition to the regulatory process itself: building trust and confidence, partnerships between the regulator and the regulated with more control, more flexibility, producing a cleaner, safer environment.

This requires first and foremost an administration that can be trusted to act in good faith because too often, regulatory reform is a tactic of those who are simply opposed to the regulation in its first instance.

□ 1210

This approach will only invite fierce opposition to watered-down protection. The Obama administration has established its environmental credentials and should be able to avoid, or at least lay to rest, that sort of concern.

There are two other necessary elements. The standards must be clear, and the parties must be both responsible and have the capacity to be held accountable. Nothing must allow the protection in question to be undercut. Indeed, it may be reasonable for performance-based approaches to require higher standards and environmental protection. And we certainly don't have to suspend current rules or regulations. Just give an alternative path for compliance that we can always fall back upon if people fall short.

Once it's clear that we can produce the environmental or other desired protections on a performance basis, perhaps we can tackle redundant regulatory processes. For instance, California has arguably more stringent environmental regulations than the United States Government itself. Can we figure out a way to apply that single, more stringent standard rather

than forcing individuals, government agencies to comply with both?

In sum, it's always helpful for an administration to make sure our efforts at government regulation are effective and relevant. By all means, eliminate the unnecessary or the ineffective. What is more important, however, is to usher in a new era of performance-based protections to improve regulations, save money, and protect the public welfare.

#### THE BUDGET AND SUSTAINABLE DEFENSE

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

Mr. KUCINICH. As we begin this great debate over what our priorities are, it's worth reflecting on an article that was written nearly 3 years ago in the Sunday Times of London by Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and his associate Linda Bilmes. Here is what they write:

"The Bush administration was wrong about the benefits of the war"—talking about the Iraq war—"and was wrong about the costs of the war. The President and his advisers expected a quick, inexpensive conflict. Instead, we have a war that is costing more than anyone could have imagined.

"The cost of direct U.S. military operations—not even including long-term costs such as taking care of wounded veterans—already exceeds the cost of the 12-year war in Vietnam and is more than double the cost of the Korean War.

"And, even in the best case scenario, these costs are projected to be almost 10 times the cost of the first gulf war, almost a third more than the cost of the Vietnam war, and twice that of the First World War. The only war in our history that cost more was the Second World War, when 16.3 million U.S. troops fought in a campaign lasting 4 years, at a total cost, in 2007 dollars, after adjusting for inflation, of about \$5 trillion."

They go on to write that, "With virtually the entire Armed Forces committed to fighting the Germans and Japanese, the cost per troop, in today's dollars, was less than \$100,000." That's in 2007 dollars. "By contrast, the Iraq war is costing upward of \$400,000 per troop.

"Most Americans have yet to feel these costs." This was written almost 3 years ago. "The price in blood has been paid by our voluntary military and by hired contractors. The price in treasure has, in a sense, been financed entirely by borrowing. Taxes have not been raised to pay for it—in fact, taxes on the rich have actually fallen. Deficit spending gives the illusion that the laws of economics can be repealed, that we can have both guns and butter. But, of course, the laws are not repealed. The costs of the war are real even if they have been deferred, possibly to another generation."

That from Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes almost 3 years ago.

One of the biggest causes of our soaring debt and economic insecurity ends up being Pentagon spending. The budget for the Pentagon consumes more than half our discretionary spending. We have seen countless stories of U.S. taxpayer dollars going unaccounted for in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have had countless high-profile hearings on contractor fraud and the lack of oversight at the Department of Defense.

According to the Friends Committee on National Legislation, 39 percent of our income tax dollars last year went to Pentagon spending on past and current wars. And Stiglitz, again, has said that the Iraq war “didn’t just contribute to the severity of the financial crisis . . . it kept us from responding to it effectively. Increased indebtedness meant that the government had far less room to maneuver than it otherwise would have.” So what we have is the U.S. financing war on borrowed money.

We must examine our connection between soaring debt and these two wars, the war in Iraq and war in Afghanistan. Between 2003 and 2008, the U.S. debt increased by almost \$4 trillion. A quarter of that debt is directly attributed to the war in Iraq. The cost of the war in Afghanistan has been over \$455 billion to date, and the deadline for that keeps sliding past 2014.

Now, in the nationalpriorities.org, they talk about a sustainable defense. And one report says that there are options for reducing military spending, saving nearly \$1 trillion over the next decade without adversely impacting U.S. national security interests. So we can have a strong defense, but we’re spending so much money, we’re undermining our ability to be able to provide for the American people here at home. And we have to start taking care of things here at home.

What will we sacrifice? Will we sacrifice the education of our children for these wars? Will we sacrifice Social Security for these wars? Will we sacrifice Medicare or Medicaid for these wars? Will we sacrifice our infrastructure for these wars? Or will we say the war in Iraq was based on lies; let’s bring these troops home? Will we say that Afghanistan is a hopeless, corrupt mess and it’s time to bring our troops home, and then begin to use the resources of our country, those resources that are hard-earned taxpayer dollars, use that money for things here at home? Let’s have that debate as we talk about cutting the budget.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o’clock and 18 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Infinite God, You are without beginning or end. We begin each formal session of this law-making Chamber with reflection on Your Holy Word and prayerful petition.

This representative government, Lord, is laden with great expectations and innumerable problems; so in the early hours we seek Your light and inspiration to set priorities and shape proper means to achieve common goals of legislation.

In this information age surrounded by media opinions, kindly lead us to the essential truth on all the issues.

In the evening, before we take our rest, Lord, help each Member find the time for grateful prayer to renew love and loyalty, lest we be consumed by work or become tepid due to debate and criticism. Renew us in our commitments to be faithful both in love and service.

In the beginning and in the end of each passing day, may we draw closer to You now and forever. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day’s proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### NLRB THREATENS VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this week I was startled to read in Free Times a brief by Corey Hutchins that the National Labor Relations Board announced plans to sue South Carolina and three other States because voters approved ballot amendments in November.

In South Carolina, more than 85 percent of voters chose “yes” on an

amendment to give employees the constitutional vote by secret ballot on union representation. This threat is an insult to the voters of the Palmetto State, and it is an insult to the sacred right of secret ballot. Sadly, this is an underhanded admission by the administration that union bosses want to evade voters and deny Congress its right to stop Card Check, which has forced unionization of workers.

It’s an admission workers know that today union leaders are more focused on their own personal enrichment with union dues than the rights of workers.

Fortunately, South Carolina is a right-to-work State where workers are protected, new jobs are created, and we respect the votes of all citizens. I commend the efforts of South Carolina Representative Eric Bedingfield and Senate Majority Leader Harvey Peeler for sponsoring the amendment.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

#### HONORING PRIVATE FIRST CLASS ZACHARY SALMON

(Mr. YOUNG of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Private First Class Zachary Salmon, an Army Cavalry Scout with the 1st Battalion, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division. On January 12 of this year, he was killed in action in Kunar province in Afghanistan after insurgents attacked his unit. This past Friday, he was laid to rest in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. Just 21 years old, PFC Salmon enlisted in the Army 3 years ago as a way to provide for his then-newborn son, Noah, whom he adored.

While I never had the honor of meeting him in person, I learned at his wake this past Friday that he exhibited all the best qualities of our men and women in uniform: a patriotic sense of duty, a strong desire to help others, and a keen awareness of his weighty responsibilities as a man in uniform. Known to his friends as “Fish,” he also had a bright sense of humor and a huge heart. In addition to his son, Noah, PFC Salmon leaves behind his mother and father, his stepfather, his brother, and two sisters. We all owe a debt today to PFC Salmon for making the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our country.

Thank you, PFC Salmon. May God watch over you, little Noah, and the rest of your family.

#### THE NATIONAL DEBT—NO DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE EXEMPT FROM BELT-TIGHTENING

(Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)