

that painstaking analysis through the last 10 years that allowed actionable intelligence to be the instigator of the effort to take out Osama bin Laden.

Within our military, we have a small group of Tier 1 units that are specially selected and highly trained for this exact type of mission. They have gained fame in the last few decades through books and movies. But these heroes are real.

I wish to point out that the commander of these elite warriors, VADM William McRaven, is a proud Texan from San Antonio, who is also an alumni of the University of Texas. Admiral McRaven is a highly decorated Navy SEAL who lives by the SEAL code and "earns his trident every day." Vice Admiral McRaven has been nominated by the President to receive his fourth star and, if confirmed, will lead U.S. Special Operations Command. I can think of no one better qualified to lead our special operations than he is. I look forward to supporting his confirmation on the Senate floor.

While these highly skilled commandos deserve every accolade that is bestowed upon them, we cannot forget those who guided them to the target: the direct and indirect support personnel, the technicians, the analysts, the pilots and crews, and all those who have worked meticulously and attentively for years to finally put together all the pieces to get the SEALs to the right place at the right time.

We have seen many changes in the past 10 years. Departments and agencies have been consolidated or created, military commanders have retired, and administrations have changed hands. Most of the soldiers who conducted that first raid in Afghanistan in October of 2001 are no longer wearing uniforms, just as most of those in the military today were still in school in September of 2001. Many of those signed up to go into the military after 9/11 because they felt so much loyalty to our country.

I wish to acknowledge those who devoted so many years to pursuing Osama bin Laden. To those who have retired or moved on to other professions, I want you to know we appreciate you and your work was not in vain.

Our leaders said from the beginning, after September 11—that fateful day—that we would get Osama bin Laden. Through the efforts of thousands, we did. We have the most professional, the best trained, the best equipped military and intelligence agencies in the world.

While there are sighs of relief now from the public, our work is clearly not done. Al-Qaida is still plotting against our freedom. Other groups are just as zealously dedicated to the mission of destroying our way of life. So while taking down the head of al-Qaida was a victory, it is also a stark reminder that we must remain vigilant.

As we speak right now, our intelligence experts are employing, ana-

lyzing, and disseminating the information gleaned from the bin Laden raid, and our special operators are preparing for their next mission, whatever it may be. I believe our country is united in the commitment to protecting what makes America great: our freedom and our way of life.

I look forward to a day when we will not have to walk through a body scan or put our shoes on an x-ray machine to get on an airplane. I look forward to a day when we will not have to fight against an enemy who is living among us, an enemy who is plotting against us in our own country, an enemy who is willing to kill itself in order to kill innocent people and destroy our way of life. I look forward to a day when we never see a casket at Dover, DE—one of our military elite coming home having made the ultimate sacrifice.

That day will only come if we as a nation remain willing to fight to protect the ideals of America—the foundation that was laid by our Founding Fathers and has been protected by every generation since that time. Today is a day we reflect on those principles. It is a day we renew our commitment to uphold them at all costs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, the country faces two large economic challenges. The first is growing our economy, creating jobs, getting the economy back on track. The second major challenge is cutting the deficit. I wish to briefly talk about both of those.

I have four charts—one that relates to jobs and growing the economy and three that deal more specifically with the deficit.

Unfortunately, in Washington, the debate has shifted almost entirely to a discussion of the deficit. Too many people in Washington are pretending our efforts to generate growth in the economy have been accomplished, that it is a done deal, that we have recovered from the recession, and we can now focus full time on how to cut the deficit.

The fact is, this is simply not true. Professor Alan Blinder, an economist at Princeton and former Deputy Chair of the Federal Reserve, testified before the Senate Finance Committee a couple weeks ago. He made the following statement:

The economic recovery is mediocre at best and unemployment remains high. To me, those conditions describe a bad time to put the economy on a diet of either spending cuts or tax increases.

Let me point to the first chart to underscore the point professor Blinder made. The recession we have just gone through created a very deep hole. If

you look at the number of private sector jobs that were lost between November of 2007 and the end of March of 2010, you can see—it is February of 2010—8.8 million jobs were lost as a result of the recession. While things are getting better, it is clear they have not gotten better enough. We have now created 1.8 million new jobs since we began adding private sector jobs. So we still have a shortfall of about 7 million jobs that need to be created in order to get back to where we were in November of 2007. Of course, there have been a lot of new people who came into the job market since then, so we need to create more jobs than that.

We are encountering some strong headwinds in our effort to dig out of the recession. The strongest headwind is the high price of oil and gas, which is a tax on consumers, a tax on our businesses, and it comes at a very bad time. We are all looking for ways to try to deal with that. Frankly, it is difficult to legislate a solution.

Another headwind is one of our own creation; that is, the constant drumbeat we hear to cut spending at all levels of government—cut it in Washington, cut it at the State level, cut it at the local level. My own strong view is we should heed Professor Blinder's advice. We need to continue to work to keep investing in those things that will help us create good-paying jobs. Timing is important. We clearly need to reduce the deficit, but we should adopt policies this year that will put us on a long-term path to reduce the deficit. I hope these policies will delay major cuts in spending and major increases in taxes, until we can come out of this recession some additional distance.

Let me talk about the deficits, the second challenge I talked about before. We have a chart called "Federal Revenues and Outlays as a Percentage of Gross Domestic Product." This is for a 40-year period, from 1970 to 2010. It is a chart the Congressional Budget Office prepared and presented to us.

Clearly, there are some important points you can take away from this chart. No. 1, on average, over the last 40 years, the Federal Government has accounted for 20.7 percent of gross domestic product—spending by the Federal Government—on average. Over that same period, on average, we have raised 18.1 percent of GDP in the form of revenues. So, on average, we have been running a deficit of about 3 percent of GDP each year during this 40-year period. Today, that 3 percent of GDP is about \$450 billion.

The one time during this 40 years when we achieved a balanced budget—and even ran a surplus for a 4-year period—was at the end of the 1990s and in the year 2000. How did we manage to do that? Well, beginning in 1990, the Congress passed, and President George H.W. Bush signed, a bill that both restrained spending and raised taxes. Again, in 1993 and again in 1997, Congress passed and, in that case, President Clinton signed, budget plans that

did even more to do what had been done in 1990; that is, both of those plans restrained spending and raised revenues.

We enjoyed a strong economy during those years in question and that, of course, helped to bring more revenue into the government and get us to a balanced budget and a surplus.

What went wrong that caused us to, once again, fall into deficit? I will cite three factors:

First, the tax cuts Congress enacted in the last decade. Beginning in 2001 and then again in 2003, Congress passed what have come to be known as the Bush tax cuts. These fairly drastically reduced the revenue coming to the Federal Government. At the same time we were cutting taxes, we ramped up Federal spending, primarily for defense, and that is a result of the Afghanistan war and the Iraq war. The estimate there is that something like \$1.3 trillion has gone into those efforts. In addition to defense, we ramped up spending on health care primarily by including a prescription drug benefit in Medicare. All of that increased spending occurred without any increase in revenues to pay for it. I repeat that none of this spending was offset with increased revenues.

The third factor, of course, that has brought us into the very serious deficit we now face is the slowdown of economic activity. This contributed substantially to increased expenses for the government and some of the entitlement programs—Medicaid, food stamps, and a variety of them—but also the decreased revenues. When people are earning less money, they pay less in taxes and less revenue comes to the government to pay for those services that the government is providing.

The deficit, of course, has worsened substantially in the last 2 years because of, first, reduced Federal taxes being collected, largely a result of the recession; second, increased Federal spending—both because there is more demand for government services as a result of the recession and also because we passed the Recovery Act to stimulate the economy. I think most economists would conclude it has helped stimulate the economy.

The Pew fiscal analysis initiative analyzed the policies and legislation that have caused the surpluses of the late 1990s to become the deficits we see today. They produced a list showing their conclusions. That list is on this chart. We can see these are in the order of importance, the order in which they contributed to the current deficit situation.

The top two drivers on this list are the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts—they account for about 13 percent of what we face today in deficits—and the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, which account for about 10 percent of what we face.

All told, tax cuts caused 21 percent of deficits since 2001; increased defense spending caused 15 percent of deficits. Two-thirds of that was due to Iraq and

Afghanistan. Increased nondefense spending caused 10 percent of the deficits we currently face; the Recovery Act caused 6 percent; Medicare prescription drug caused 2 percent.

The final chart I have shows how these policies have affected the deficit over time. This is a chart which is labeled “Why CBO’s debt projections changed between 2001 and 2011,” the specific policies and drivers. I know this is very difficult for anyone to see on a television. Let me make the main points.

The main points are that the changes caused by the legislation make up the large segments at the top of the chart, including interest charges. They caused 65 percent of the deficits when we look at these policy changes. The remaining 35 percent of deficits are due mainly to the economic and technical adjustments to CBO’s projections primarily to reflect the lower revenue we have enjoyed because of the recessions.

How do we dig out of the hole we are in? I say simple obvious things. No. 1, we need to keep the focus on growing the economy. As Professor Blinder said, do not put the economy on a diet. This is not the right time to do that.

Second, we need to agree, as we did in 1990 and 1993 and 1997, to a balanced package of spending cuts and tax increases that will, once again, put us on a path to a balanced budget. We have some serious proposals to work from in achieving this deficit reduction plan. Of course, the President’s deficit reduction commission, the Simpson-Bowles commission, and Senator Domenici and Alice Rivlin, the former head of the Congressional Budget Office, put out a bipartisan commission report which is very constructive. The President himself has given the framework for a plan. There is a bipartisan group of Senators, the Gang of 6, who are working to come up with a proposal. And, of course, Senator CONRAD, who chairs the Budget Committee, is putting together a proposed budget plan for that committee’s consideration.

All of these plans I have mentioned follow the model used in the 1990s of combining both spending cuts and revenue increases. The only proposal that does not follow this model of a balanced package of spending cuts and tax increases is the budget that was passed by the House Republicans 2 weeks ago. Rather than raising revenue while cutting spending, it would cut revenue while cutting spending. In my view, this cannot lead us to a lower deficit.

There is a lot of political polarization in Washington. I remain hopeful that we can get a critical mass of right-thinking people to do what is responsible, to come together on a balanced package of spending cuts and revenue increases that we can commit to going forward. We should be able to agree on policies that grow the economy and shrink the long-term deficit.

I pledge my best efforts to achieve these objectives. I urge my colleagues to work to do so as well.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MERKLEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRANKEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. FRANKEN. Madam President, I rise today to talk about the effort of the House last month to repeal the Federal Communications Commission’s net neutrality rules. Net neutrality is the very simple idea that all content and applications on the Internet should be treated the same regardless of who owns the content or the Web site. This is not a radical concept, in large part because it is what we see and experience every time we use the Internet. But the House wants to change all of that and effectively turn control of the Internet over to a handful of very powerful corporations.

I want to take a few moments today to tell you why I think the House’s vote was a mistake, and why I am going to do everything in my power to make sure we don’t make the same mistake in the Senate. But before I get into those details, I think it is important to take a step back and talk about the Internet we have today.

Let’s be clear. The Internet we have exists because it is free and open, because we have always had net neutrality throughout the entire existence of the Internet. I have to give credit to my opponents on this issue who have done a masterful job of manipulating the American public into believing that net neutrality is something that it is not.

Net neutrality is not about a government takeover of the Internet. It is simply the idea that all content, whether it is a Web page, an e-mail, or a movie we are downloading can load onto our computers at home at the same speed, regardless of who owns or controls that content.

This is not a radical idea. It is what we experience today when we use the Internet. Right now, if we buy Rihanna’s latest song from iTunes, it downloads as quickly as a song from a friend who started a band in his or her garage.

If you send an e-mail to your mother, it arrives in her inbox just as quickly as the e-mail she gets from President Obama. If you start a Web site for your small business, your customers are able to access your Web site and place orders for your products just as quickly as if they were buying from a multinational corporation.

I like to talk about YouTube’s early days as a startup because it is such a