Coalition's 12-point plan for curing our Nation's addiction to deficit spending.

This is the first time in 50 years the Republicans have controlled the White House, the House and the Senate, and they have given us the largest budget deficit ever in our Nation's history for the sixth year in a row. The debt is $8,365,525,832,151 and some change.

We will be updating that board here in just a few moments to show you, Mr. Speaker, exactly how much the debt has gone up since we started this hour-long discussion about trying to restore some common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

Each week it seems as we wind down this hour others come to the floor to refute what we have to say. And one of the favorite sayings each week that we hear from the other side is how we voted against the Deficit Reduction Act. And I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that everyone understand exactly what the Deficit Reduction Act was really all about.

It was about cutting Medicaid. Eight out of ten seniors in Arkansas in a nursing home are on Medicaid. Half the children in Arkansas are on Medicaid. One out of five people in my home State will be on Medicaid some time this year. It is the health insurance program for the poor, the disabled, the elderly. Student loans, programs for orphans, those are the types of programs that were cut $40 billion to help pay for another $90 billion in tax cuts for those earning over $400,000 a year. Ninety billion minus 40 billion is $50 billion in new debt, and yet they had the nerve to call it the Deficit Reduction Act.

We are running out of time. And I will yield as we begin to update this board, showing exactly how much the debt, let's just do it real quick. In fact, the debt has gone up $41,666,000 in this past hour. So that means it is now $8,365,567,498,151 and some change.

Mr. Speaker, the minute we have left I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. I just want to say, because we are going to get ready for our Republican friends, some of them, to come and try to refute what we are saying, but as the good book, the Bible, says, ''Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.''

We have done that tonight. And even Mr. Armey, the Republican's former leader of this House, complained bitterly about the Republican leadership and the direction they were going when he said, ''They are in control. They control this town,'' he said.

There is no reason for us to have these deficits. They cannot refute the fact that under this Republican administration, under this Republican-led Congress they have borrowed more money, they have run up this debt, they have borrowed more money from foreign governments than all of the last 42 Presidents and administrations combined. They cannot argue that point.

They put forward a budget that slams right into the face of homeland and national security by cutting our veterans, by refusing to deal with the concurrent receipts measure, by cutting aid to veterans by a million dollars, and education up and down the line.

So the truth is speaking tonight, Mr. ROSS, and it has been indeed a pleasure for us to be here to tell the truth and set America free.

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Conference for allowing me to join some of my friends and colleagues this evening and talk about some issues that we have heard a little bit about so far this evening and talk about some other matters as they relate to national security.

I want to introduce the Official Truth Squad. We are back again this evening. People are getting great response all across my district at home about the Official Truth Squad, because people say, isn't it wonderful that finally somebody is talking about the truth. And the gentleman before, just before, talked about the truth and we will show some truth tonight. I urge my colleagues on the other side on the aisle to stick around and look at the real numbers, look at the real numbers.

The Official Truth Squad began with a group of freshman Congressmen. We would meet and have met almost every week since the beginning of last year. And as we began to appreciate and understand how the Congress worked and what kind of issues were being addressed and how they were being addressed on the floor of the House, it became apparent to us that there were a lot of accusations that were flying across and there was a lot of misinformation and disinformation.

And our friends on the other side of the aisle oftentimes utilize what I call ''the politics of division,'' and that is, they split America. They split people into groups and they try to get people to fight, to be angry with each other. And we do not believe that that is the best way to solve problems.

We believe that, together, the challenges that we have, they are not Republican challenges, they are not Democrat challenges; they are American challenges. We believe that together we are able to best solve the challenges that face us. So we formed the Official Truth Squad to try to bring truly some facts, some truth, about the issues that you hear talked about on the floor of the House and elsewhere. We are also frustrated by somewhat of a lack of civility in Washington, so our desire is to try to raise the level of the rhetoric a little bit and stay away from the partisan and personal sniping that seems to go on.

In fact, when we talk about the truth I am fond of the utilizing a quote that many folks know and that is from Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a fine United States Senator, a former Senator from the great State of New York. He said that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion and not their own facts.

I think that is important to talk about because you have just heard a lot of discussion about a balanced budget amendment and about PAYGO, paying as you go for the Federal Government. And you get the sense that the folks who just present that material hadn't ever had an opportunity to vote on any of those things; that those things had never come up before the Congress, right, Mr. Speaker. That is the kind of sense I got as I was sitting there listening to him. I said they must have not ever had an opportunity to vote on those things.

But in fact, they have, each of the items that they discussed, four separate times in the 1990s. There was a great opportunity to vote on a balanced budget amendment. The majority of the individuals on the other side of the aisle, the majority, in fact, the majority of the folks who were Blue Dogs here voted against a balanced budget amendment, most recently in 2004. And I know it is the truth because you can look it up; it is Roll Call Vote number 311, 311 in 2004. It was about a budget resolution that would make the amount of money that is appropriated binding so that you cannot go above that amount in the Federal Government's spending.

What was the vote then? One hundred eighty-one Democrats voted no. Now, that is the truth. So when you talk about trying to paint the picture of budget responsibility and fiscal responsibility, it is important to look at how people are voting.

They talk about PAYGO, pay as you go, and that is an important thing, and we have been working on that for years. But the most recent time when they had an opportunity to vote on it in 2004, Roll Call Vote number 318, look it up, Mr. Speaker, Roll Call Vote number 318, 2004, not a single Democrat voted for the PAYGO rule. Not one. Not a single Blue Dog that voted, not a single Democrat voted in favor of the PAYGO rule.

So, Mr. Speaker, everyone's entitled to their own opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts. So I think it is important that we point out facts.

I just want to briefly, before we get into the issue of national security, which we are going to talk about tonight, I think it is important to show the American people what the facts are about some of the other issues that were discussed.

Medicaid, you heard about Medicaid cuts, right, Mr. Speaker? Well, in fact,

here is a chart from 1995 to 2005, the amount of money that the Federal Government has spent on Medicaid. And you would think if there was a cut, as it has been described by folks on the other side, that this red line, which is the amount of money that the Federal Government spends, that it will go down, right, that it would go down. In fact, every single year since 1995 through 2005, there has been an increase in the Federal money spent on Medicaid, an average increase of 7.4 percent per year.

Mr. Speaker, that is not a cut. That is an increase and it is an appropriate increase to care for those who are neediest in our society. In fact, it is an increase from $89 billion in 1995 to $181 billion in 2005.

What about the education money that is talked about, these ''cuts''? Here is the education annual growth over the past 5 years, 2000 to 2005. The average growth is at 9.1 percent, 9.1 percent.

When you talk about Pell grants, which is the amount of money that the Federal Government provides for those most needy to go to school, to go to college or university and you talk about ''cuts,'' that is what you hear, isn't it, Mr. Speaker? In fact, what we have seen over the past 5 years is an increase every single year. Those aren't cuts, Mr. Speaker. It has grown about 10.3 percent every year since 2000.

So we call ourselves the Official Truth Squad because we are interested in bringing truth to the table. Truth is the only way that we can solve the challenges that we have in our Nation right now, and truth and working together is truly the only way to solve the great challenges that we have.

Tonight, we want to address a little bit of a different issue and it is an issue that when I talk to folks at home is really one of the top issues, if not the top issue, that they talk about when they talk about what they want their Federal Government to do in terms of addressing needs that they have; and the issue is that of national security. And there are a lot of different ways that we can talk about it, and we will discuss a couple of them this evening.

I have been joined by a number of my colleagues this evening and I want to thank them for coming. First, I want to introduce Representative BLACKBURN, who is a wonderful colleague, not a freshman, but we have given her honorary freshman status in the Official Truth Squad. We will come here this evening to talk about national security as it relates to border security because, as most of us believe, if the border is not secure, the Nation is not secure.

I welcome you this evening and thank you for coming.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his leadership on this issue and for his leadership in continuing to bring the Truth Squad to the floor every evening, so we can talk about the issues that affect our constituents and the American people.

Mr. Speaker, we have as a party and as a conference been talking about the security agenda for many months now, looking at energy security, moral security, retirement security, economic security for this great Nation. A big part of this security agenda is our national security and we continue to address this issue. We talk about the war on terror. We talk about protecting our Nation, and that is where the border security component comes in.

In December, we passed a border security bill to address so many of these issues that are before us. And, of course, as typically happens and many times happens here, those of us in the House roll up our sleeves and get to work and we pass a bill. It crosses the Rotunda to the other side, to the other body, and maybe it languishes or does not move quite as quickly. But the Members of the House have taken action on this issue.

□ 2130

It is indeed one that deserves our attention, and as we talk about border security, there is one component that I would like to highlight this evening, just one component as we talk about border security and the importance of keeping this border secure.

When we talk about illegal immigration and illegal immigrants, I think it is imperative that we turn the focus to illegal entry. That is the action that an individual outside this country is choosing to commit—the act of illegally entering our country, and we need to keep our focus on that: Why would they choose to enter illegally? Why would they choose to circumvent our laws? Why would an individual choose to circumvent the rules? Why would they choose illegal entry?

Mr. Speaker, I think that you and I would probably agree that we are going to work diligently to protect our homes from illegal entry, and I am going to work just as hard to protect this country from illegal entry as I am going to work to protect my home from illegal entry.

I think it is important that we realize that individuals who decide they are going to illegally enter somewhere maybe come with a different agenda, but we have to recognize that they do not come as an invited guest.

We have rules in place that individuals are supposed to follow, and those individuals that follow those rules are then invited and brought into the process of being able to seek citizenship, of working to attain that citizenship, to being able to be a part of the bounty and the richness that this country offers.

We are a Nation of immigrants, but we are a Nation of laws, and it is important that we continue to recognize that, as we look at the debate, that we realize that entering this country illegally, that action is something that circumvents our laws.

I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his leadership on the issue. I thank you for including me and allowing me to come to the floor and be a part of the Official Truth Squad and continue to put the focus on the issues that are important to my district in Tennessee and important to so many of our constituents.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, thank you so very much. I appreciate you coming and joining us this evening, and I think that you pointed out some very important perspectives that the constituents that I have at home would agree with, I know, and that is that illegal immigration may be a misnomer because it really is illegal entry and it is important to appreciate that perspective and to understand that what we are talking about here is, as you described, protecting our home, protecting our homeland, and that illegal entry into one's home we do not allow as a Nation, and that illegal entry into our homeland ought not be allowed either.

So as you mentioned, America is indeed a Nation of immigrants, but it is a Nation of laws as well, and so a comprehensive immigration reform must begin with securing the border. I thank you very much for coming and joining us this evening.

Also coming this evening is Judge POE, the honorable Congressman TED POE from Texas, member of the freshman class and an active member of the Official Truth Squad. His experience back in the State of Texas is just wonderful information and a resource that he has to give to the United States Congress and to America, and so I appreciate you coming this evening and sharing your perspective on national security.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Georgia for yielding some time to continue the thought about the specific issue of border security as it pertains to national security.

Security has been the talk of this House for the last few weeks, especially about port security, how the concern of Americans for securing the safety of our ports, with foreign governments infiltrating and running our port operations, how the American public has made that statement and Congress has responded with at least, on a temporary basis, doing something immediately about securing our ports, because it is the number one duty of government to protect or secure the people.

We do a lot of debating in this House about what is the purpose of government, and it seems to do a lot of things, maybe some things that our Founding Fathers never expected or even wanted for government to do. But one of the things government must do and has a constitutional duty to do is to protect the security of the Nation from within and from without.

One of those specific issues, of course, is protect our borders. Living in Texas, we constantly are concerned about the infiltration into our Nation

of people from other places illegally coming here, and it serves three concerns. One, of course, the war on drugs continues to escalate, and drug cartels know there is a lot of money in selling those drugs in the United States, and so violence has occurred on the Texas border because those drug cartels are fighting over turf to bring in that cancer and prey on the weaknesses of Americans. So that is the first concern.

Second concern, of course, is the universal concern in this country about terrorists, international outlaws, criminals who want to do us harm and come here for that specific purpose. Having a porous, open border encourages that conduct, and we know that those people expect to come in the United States and even try to come in the United States because of our lack of security on our borders.

Then there is that third group of people who illegally enter the United States for a multitude of other reasons; and the United States, our Nation, this government, this House, the people's House, must have the moral will to protect the dignity of the border. It seems to me that Third World countries protect their borders better than we do here in the United States, and we are a Nation that can do anything. The reason we do not protect the borders and secure the border is because we do not have the will to do it as a Nation.

It is interesting, we have heard a lot of rhetoric this week, especially about the bill that passed back in December that got almost no notice until the Senate starts talking about our bill and their option, or variation on that bill; but let me try to give you an example of how things are occurring in the United States by comparing it to maybe an analogy in another country.

Let us say that, for some reason, I want to go to France, and based on some of the things I have said about France, the Government of France, they probably would not let me in legally. I would have to sneak in. So if I sneaked in, took my four kids, three grandkids and showed up in France, over to Paris and say, teach my kids in English and give them an education, oh, I am not going to pay for it, the French people are going to pay for this education and provide social services for my kids and my grandkids and my two grandkids that are on the way, and continued that line of thought, the people in France would get me out of the country, and rightfully so. That would be true whether I went to France or to China or even to Mexico; but, yet, that seems to be what is occurring here in the United States because of our lack of securing our borders.

Our good friend from Tennessee, Mrs. BLACKBURN, has already alluded to this. If we have an intruder in our home, we call those people burglars. They are not welcome guests. They are not a guest burglar. They are a burglar. But if we have an intruder to our homeland because of, I guess, political correctness, we call them an undocumented guest worker. Both are committing illegal acts because of the entry into either our home or to our homeland. They are both not invited, and the one goes to jail and the other seems to be rewarded for that illegal entry, and we continue to reward that illegal conduct.

It seems to me that Mexico does have an immigration policy and to some extent that immigration policy is colonize the United States with illegal entry into the United States. We know that that is true because the Government of Mexico even publishes pamphlets and gives to individuals in Mexico how to sneak into the United States, what route to take, and so their policy is: colonize America.

It is not only to colonize America, but it is to make Americans feel guilty about trying to protect the sovereignty of our own Nation. I do not know if you can see this or not, Mr. Speaker, but this is the front page today of The Washington Post. You would think that this was the Mexico City Times, but it is not. Right here in the middle are thousands of folks, many of whom are illegally in the United States, assembling in Los Angeles; and you see that the 15 to 20 flags in this photograph, they are not American flags. They are flags from Mexico, Mexican nationals, proclaiming that the United States should not basically enforce the rule of do not come here illegally; another way of trying to tell the United States that our policy should benefit Mexico rather than put America and Americans first.

Illegal entry is wrong. There has been some misunderstanding about a guest worker program. We have a guest worker program. The United States grants every year 1.2 million visas to people who want to come here legally to work. Some of those take a long time to process. That is a whole other issue. The immigration department needs to move faster and quicker on that, but we grant 1.2 million legal visas for people who want to work here legally every year, but yet that has not done one thing to stop illegal entry into this country.

So we must protect the dignity of the United States, secure the border. We must understand that everybody wants to live in America. I do not blame them. It is obvious this is the country, because of our history and our worth of the individual, all people want to come here. The people need to respect the dignity and the rule of law and the sovereignty of this country and come here the right way.

That is the responsibility of our government, our Federal Government: secure the borders first, protect the sovereignty of our Nation, and then let us talk about what to do with people that have already illegally come into the United States.

It is a complex issue, but we need to start. The time is now to move forward on border security for the three reasons that I mentioned.

I appreciate my friend from Georgia allowing me to speak to this issue; and, hopefully, we can continue the dialogue and come up with some basic results that protect our homeland, like we want to protect and do protect our homes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman so much for participating tonight and for really sharing his firsthand knowledge and information from his background as a judge in Texas and really putting the whole issue into perspective, again, about protecting one's home, protecting one's homeland, the importance of the war on drugs, the war on terror and something that I talk about often with my constituents, and that is that our immigration policy really has been one of benign neglect for the past couple of decades, and that is why we find ourselves in the situation where we are right now, and that it just takes the will, it takes the will of leadership and the will of the Members of Congress to move us forward as it relates to illegal immigration.

I am hopeful that we will be able to do that. I am hopeful we will be able to do that in a positive way, in a way that recognizes the wonderful diversity of America and recognizes that America is a land of immigrants, without a doubt, but that also, and as importantly, it is a land of laws. We are a Nation of laws, and that is I think the important perspective that I would like to share with folks tonight as it relates to the issue of border security and illegal immigration.

I want to take a little different tack on the issue of national security. We have, as a Nation, remarkable challenges that confront us, and one does not have to let one's imagination run very wide to appreciate the challenges and the threats that we have as a Nation.

We stand truly on the shoulders of our parents and our grandparents. My parents' generation was the World War II generation. My father was a soldier in World War II, fought in the Philippines, and he and his generation have been called the Greatest Generation. Each generation has its own responsibility, there is no doubt.

When I am asked at home about the war in Iraq and how we are doing right now as a Nation, I always try to raise up and say let us talk about this in a larger picture.

□ 2145

Because I believe sincerely, and I know that most folks who look at this objectively believe that the war in Iraq is not really a war in Iraq, it is the battle in Iraq in the war on terror. It is a bigger issue. It truly is a bigger issue.

It is something that Frank Gaffney calls in his book ''War Footing,'' he calls it ''the war for the free world.'' That is a very sobering comment, but I think it is pertinent to talk about exactly what are the challenges and how big are the challenges that are before us as a nation.

I had recently the opportunity to meet with and to speak to a group of constituents who are members of Employers United for a Stronger America. This is a group of employers who actively support the Guard and the Reserve in our Nation. They do so in incredible ways: by assisting families, in helping when they have employees who are members of the National Guard or Reserve and they are called up to active duty. They help families, they help communities, they help the children, they assist in college education and in all sorts of wonderful ways, keeping the employee's salary going. Really remarkable.

And I was very interested to find out greater information about the Guard and Reserve. I know that some of my colleagues know this, but I wasn't fully aware of the incredible commitment that the Guard and Reserve are currently making. Since the inception of the National Guard and Reserves, there were only two call-ups in World War II and Korea until 9/11. And since 9/11 there have been five call-ups to active duty of members of the Guard and Reserve.

More than 200,000 Guard and Reserve troops have been called up for both the battle in Iraq and in Afghanistan. The number on active duty now is about 120,000, and over 450 companies have joined and participated in this Employers United for a Stronger America, and I think that they demonstrate that this is a larger issue. Our Nation's security is a larger issue than just that responsibility that is held by the troops and by the military.

One of my main concerns about national security, and I suspect others have a similar perspective, but it is what I call the ''Vietnam syndrome.'' It is the sense that with the conflict and the war in Vietnam that we became tired and frustrated as a nation with that battle and with that war, and that that has somehow shaded how we have reacted to the acts in the war on terror since then.

And I say that because I want to remind folks of the Official Truth Squad quote that we cite so often, and that is that everyone is entitled to their own opinion but you're not entitled to your own facts. And I want to cite some fairly sobering facts tonight and I think it puts the whole issue into perspective about national security.

What I would like to do is just list items that have been truly acts in the war on terror, because it didn't begin with September 11. You know that, Mr. Speaker. Everybody can appreciate that. Really, September 11 was but one in a series of acts against our Nation and freedom.

Many folks will cite that the war on terror began in November of 1979, when there was the seizure of our embassy in Tehran and the incredibly long and arduous ordeal of the 444-day-long hostage crisis that so many of us remember vividly.

Then, in April 1983, the bombing of our embassy in Beirut with 63 Americans killed. In October 1983, the bombing of our U.S. Marine Corps headquarters in Beirut, with 241 killed.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, these are facts. These aren't opinion.

December 1983, a truck loaded with explosives was driven into our embassy in Kuwait. September 1984, there was another violation of our embassy in Beirut.

April 1986, the Madrid bombing of a restaurant that was frequented by United States soldiers. August 1985, the bombing of the United States Air Force Base in Rhein-Main killing 22. October 1985, the Achille Laurel hijacking, where an American invalid in a wheelchair was executed.

April 1988, TWA Flight 840 was bombed, killing four. In 1988 again, Pan Am Flight 103 was bombed over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 259. January 1993, two CIA agents were shot and killed as they entered CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

Again, Mr. Speaker, facts. Facts, not opinions.

In February 1993, the first World Trade Center bombing with six killed and over 1,000 injured. November 1995, a car bomb explodes at a U.S. military complex in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, killing seven servicemen and women. June 1996, truck bomb in Dhahran destroys the Khobar Towers, a United States Air Force barracks, killing 19 and injuring over 500.

Facts, Mr. Speaker, not opinion.

Two coordinated attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya in Tanzania, killing 224. October 2000, the U.S.S. *Cole* attack in Yemen. And then September 11, 2001, the attack, second attack, on the World Trade Center, with over 3,000 Americans killed.

And we wonder whether they are done.

Well, you don't have to go far to get, again, Mr. Speaker, more facts about the remarkable threat to our Nation's security. This is a quote just a little over a year ago from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in January 2005, very recent, in which he said, ''We have declared a fierce war on this evil principle of democracy and those who follow this wrong ideology.''

So I think it is very telling, Mr. Speaker, to appreciate that the challenges that we have as a nation are not minor challenges. They are remarkably significant and they have been going on not just since 2001, they have been going on for years and years and years. And it is imperative that we as a society and that we as a Congress recognize the challenges and the threats that are posed before us.

I am pleased now to yield to one of my good friends and fellow freshmen, Congresswoman VIRGINIA FOXX from the great State of North Carolina. She has been a wonderful participant and active member of the Official Truth Squad. She always has a great perspective. She has a history as an educator and comes with wonderful experience and great perspective, especially in this area, the area of national security and national responsibility as it relates to national security, and I yield to her such time as she may consume.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Congressman PRICE. We are fortunate indeed to have you doing yeoman's work on the Truth Squad and making sure that we are organized every night and here to bring the truth to the American people, because they are certainly not hearing the truth from our colleagues across the aisle.

Those of us who are freshmen, as the audience can see, very often are in the Chair at night, and we heard these untruths being said over and over and over again last fall and we spoke to the leadership and said, we need to do something about this. And the leadership threw that back to us and said, Well, what are you going to do? So the freshmen decided that we would take on this task and be here to present the facts, the facts as they are, indisputable facts.

Earlier this evening, I came to this podium and spoke about Sergeant Anton Hiett from the little town of Mount Airy, in the Fifth District in Surry County, North Carolina, and about the fact that he had been killed in Afghanistan. I expressed my sorrow and concern for his family and my gratitude for his service. Sergeant Hiett represents the best of this country and the folks willing to serve our country in the military.

We are really, really fortunate to have the best and the brightest in our military. We have an all-volunteer military now, and these folks are stepping forward to do what needs to be done to keep this country free. Our enlistments are up and our reenlistments are up. And no matter what the national media would like you to believe, things are going much better in Iraq and Afghanistan than you hear about in the news on a daily basis. So we are fortunate to have those folks.

I have often come to this podium and spoken about the role of the Federal Government vis-a-vis national security. Anyone with just a moderate amount of history education will know that the Federal Government was formed to provide for the defense of this Nation. It was formed to break away from England, first of all, and then for the defense of the Nation. And that is our number one goal and our number one role.

The Federal Government, unfortunately, over the last many years, has taken on many other roles, but we should never lose sight of the fact that the Federal Government is the only level of government that can deal with national security and the defense of this Nation. So it is entirely appropriate that our focus here in Congress is on national security and on the defense of this country.

Night after night and day after day we hear the Democrats decry the amount of money being spent on national security and national defense.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, if we don't have our freedom, nothing else matters. And maintaining that freedom is the number one role of the Federal Government and of our wonderful military out there willing to sacrifice every day so that we can remain free.

I want to talk a little bit about something that is going to happen tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, on this issue of national security. Tomorrow, the Democrats are scheduled to host a media stunt to unveil their so-called ''strategy'' on national security issues. While I am sure that the Democrats will talk the talk, their actions speak far louder than words.

The American people need to look beyond the Democrats' spin and study their record. Again, let's go to the facts, not what they try to tell us, and their record on this issue. When the American people do that, they will see that the Democrats have no credibility because they have voted against many measures to keep our country safe.

I am going to give you some points on this. Republicans voted to pass a major border security bill in December, but Democrats, led by the minority leader, opposed the bill. Republicans believe that border security is national security.

Republicans voted to pass the PATRIOT Act to keep Americans safe, but Democrats, led by their minority leader, opposed the bill. In fact, the minority leader over in the Senate boasted that he had killed the PATRIOT Act.

Republicans voted to pass the REAL ID Act to make sure people who received drivers' licenses are here legally. But Democrats, led again by their minority leader, opposed the bill. And we all know that the terrorists that attacked us on 9/11/2001 had several drivers' licenses they were not entitled to, which led them to be able to do the horrific acts they were able to do.

If this wasn't bad enough in terms of these things I have outlined that the Democrats have done just in this session alone, they are now trying to cut $60 billion from military weapons systems that keep our brave men and women in uniform safe.

If Democrats want to talk the talk like they are for a strong national security, then they need to start walking the walk. They need to stop coming in here every day and criticizing our President for doing all that he can to keep this country free. They need to stop patronizing us for supporting our men and women in uniform, and they need to understand what the role of the Federal Government is, because it is obvious that they do not.

National security is our number one issue, and as long as Republicans are in charge, we are going to see that it is our number one issue. We are going to see that this country remains free so that we can continue to do the great things that we have done.

We are the greatest nation on earth. We are not perfect. Nobody ever said that we were. But we know how to get things done and we know how to allow for freedom, not just for this country but for others.

□ 2200

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate the gentlewoman's participation as part of the Official Truth Squad in trying to bring some reality and facts to the debate about whatever issue it is we are discussing, and this evening obviously it is about national security. You really put things in an appropriate perspective I think when you stated that oftentimes we tend to get clouded about what the Federal Government's real responsibility is. What is their fundamental responsibility? What is our fundamental responsibility? It is clearly laid out and that is the security and defense of our Nation. If we do not do that, nothing else matters that we do here.

I want to thank the gentlewoman for her participation in the Official Truth Squad tonight and appreciate your very cogent discussion about national security and about the importance of having folks work together in a positive and really uplifting way for America, not in a negative and spiteful and divisive way. We believe strongly that, again, these challenges are not Republican challenges, they are not Democrat challenges, they are America's challenges, and that is where we need to focus.

Right before Ms. FOXX discussed national security, I went through a list of events that had occurred since November of 1979, since the taking of hostages in Tehran at our embassy and that 444-day-long hostage crisis. There have been easily 15 to 20 specific factual events that have occurred, that when taken in their entirety clearly show that this war on terror, or what Frank Gaffney calls the war for the free world, has been ongoing for a longer period of time than most of us would admit to ourselves or to our colleagues. But it is true. It is true and it has not gone away.

Folks who say you do not need to worry about that, you just need to temporize things, that really the issue is not one that is that serious, that we do not need to address it in a head-on manner, I would draw your attention to this quote again from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in January of 2005, and if this is not a chilling quote, I do not know what is. If this does not get your attention as a Member of Congress and as an American, I do not know what will: ''We have declared a fierce war on this evil principle of democracy and those who follow this wrong ideology.''

Madam Speaker, I think that means us. I think that means America; and any response that does not recognize the gravity of that situation is, I think, irresponsible.

So when we gather as Members of Congress and we talk about the issues that are before us as they relate to national security, you cannot overestimate them. You cannot overestimate them. It is as fundamental as democracy itself, as clearly stated by our avowed enemy. He has defined himself as such.

There has been a lot of discussion this past week or so about Zacarias Moussaoui who is having his sentencing phase of his trial. This is the gentleman arrested in August of 2001 on immigration charges. He aroused suspicion. He was at a Minnesota flight school, and he presented himself to that flight school and said he wanted to learn to fly a Boeing 747. And thank goodness that somebody recognized this request as something that was a little out of the ordinary and he was arrested.

It turns out that he ultimately pled guilty to all six charges. He pled guilty in April 2005 to charges of conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism beyond national boundaries, to commit aircraft piracy, to destroying aircraft. That is what he pled guilty to. Again, facts not opinions. Conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction, conspiracy to murder United States employees, and conspiracy to destroy property of the United States, and some people would minimize his involvement and say that is not really all that important, he probably didn't have that much to do with it.

Just this week, Mr. Zacarias Moussaoui claimed, proudly claimed, that he and shoe bomber Richard Reid were going to be the hijackers on a fifth plane on September 11 and planned to fly it into the White House. Thank goodness they were not successful in that endeavor.

Madam Speaker, I cannot tell you how proud I am of the men and women who defend our Nation. I cannot tell you how proud I am of the men and women who stand up in this body and in this Congress and provide those individuals the resources that they need to be able to defend our homeland, to make certain that we are indeed secure as a Nation.

I know that most of us get asked to visit school groups and scout groups, Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups, to talk about government and Congress. I enjoy those visits for many reasons, not the least of which is the vitality and enthusiasm of the young people is infectious. And their enthusiasm for America is infectious as well. Oftentimes I review basic American history and then talk about the type of government we have and whether our Nation will exist forever.

It is interesting the response that I get as I talk with young people because it is a question that many have not thought about or comprehended. When you ask them, they say, sure, America will exist, it will always exist because there is a sense that in spite of the problems and the challenges that we have, that we as a Nation, and in spite of our disagreements about policies that we have, we as a Nation will indeed survive forever. There is this general sense that it is the destiny of the

United States and its continuation as a representative democracy is just a given, that we are guaranteed to exist forever, kind of just because.

Madam Speaker, you and I both know all too well that simply is not an absolute. It takes constant vigilance. It takes the action of those individuals in Congress as well as men and women across this Nation to be constantly on alert and make certain that we constantly are giving back to our Nation.

It is certainly my hope and prayer that we continue to flourish so we in future generations will have the opportunity to live freely and to meet the challenges that allow all of us to reach our greatest dreams.

Madam Speaker, I know I believe in the wonderful goodness of our Nation. I believe in its wonder and its beauty and its awesome promise. But as you also know, Madam Speaker, I know that liberty and freedom and our Nation require constant vigilance and support. We truly are a wonderful and a glorious Nation, and we remain a beacon of light and a vessel of hope and freedom to men and women around the world. I think it is incredibly important that we appreciate that September 11 was simply the culmination of over 20 years of specific events, and that there are savages on the Earth who have admitted that they will go to incredible lengths, including their own death, in order to destroy our way of life. It is that kind of enemy, it is that kind of world that requires a different vigilance than we have known.

Each generation has its duty. Each individual has his or her role to play. We all know that freedom is not free and each of us has to sacrifice and each of us has a price to pay for the liberty and the freedom that we so enjoy.

Madam Speaker, it has been my privilege to come and present the Official Truth Squad perspective on national security this evening and to try to raise the level of the rhetoric here in the House Chamber, to try not to be divisive, to ask my colleagues to recognize, both Republican and Democrat, that we are all in this together, that the challenges that we have are not partisan challenges, the challenges we have are American challenges. And when we work better together, we are able to solve those challenges that much more easily.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the members of the conference once again for allowing me the opportunity to present this hour this evening. I want to thank each of my colleagues for joining me this evening.

God bless America and may God continue to richly bless our great Nation and the men and women who protect us.

THIRTY-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BEAN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. BEAN. Madam Speaker, I yield to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to be here once again with the 30-Something Working Group, and I want to thank the Democratic leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), for giving us the opportunity to spend some time talking tonight about the priorities of the American people.

I am thrilled this evening to be joined, as we come to the end of Women's History Month, to be joined by my fellow freshman colleague and also my roommate while here in Washington, D.C., the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BEAN).

Ms. BEAN. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to join the gentlewoman.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, we spend a great deal of time at the end of the day talking about some of the frustrations about this job. The gentlewoman from Illinois and I, two of the few women Members, particularly in the freshman class that we were elected to, as were you, Madam Speaker, in 2004, who are moms with young kids that are trying to balance work and family. We find ourselves at home talking about that a lot.

Ms. BEAN, when you and I are sharing frustrations and stories about concerns that we have and that our constituents have, I find that we often end up talking about it in the context of our kids and the children of our constituents. I know you have a story that you talk to your constituents about, and you were telling me about the seventh graders in your district that you were talking to. I think that is a really neat story you should share.

Ms. BEAN. I mentioned it on the floor briefly that I had been with some kids several weeks back. More recently I mentioned to my colleague we were talking about Internet safety. I am the parent of teenagers, my daughters are 13 and 15, so the issue of Internet safety has been an important issue. I have been visiting middle schools to talk about some of the challenges that they face.

So we went to talk about Internet safety with the middle schoolers; and whenever I talk with middle schoolers, we also have a little bit of a civics lesson.

Many seventh graders I know in Illinois, as well as around the Nation, are studying the Constitution. I was pretty impressed with the quality of education our children are receiving because they had not expected me to ask them about it. They thought we were just going to talk about Internet safety, and I asked them about the Constitution and the Preamble, and if any of them had the Preamble to the Constitution memorized, and they did.

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And they did. And I asked them to come on up. All the hands went up to be part of our little civics class. And they came up, and we took that preamble apart.

We talked about in order to form a more perfect union, you know, what does that really mean and they understood that that meant trying to make our Nation better. We talked about providing for the common defense, and how that meant that we not only needed strong national security, but we also needed to protect our citizens when natural disasters could come as well. And we talked about the general welfare and the economy and how their parents and their neighbors and their community needed a strong economic environment so that they could provide for themselves.

We also talked about domestic tranquility. Some of them admittedly did think that that meant, don't hit your sister, so we went through that.

But we also talked about fiscal responsibility. And one of the things that was alarming to them, and it was intended to be and to create a discussion with them, was to talk about the national debt, which is now over $8 trillion. And I shared with these seventh graders that their share of our national debt is now over $27,000 each. And they were very displeased to hear that that was their share of national debt and said, Well, why aren't you guys spending less?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I think you need to stress that again. How much is every American's share of the deficit?

Ms. BEAN. Every American's share of the deficit is over $27,000 of our over-$8 trillion of national debt; and as you now know, we are raising the debt ceiling so we can bring that up to $9 trillion. And it was really frightening to these kids.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We talk about the deficit quite a bit in our 30-something hour, and one of the ways that I sort of try to boil it down, because, you know, when you think about the number 8 trillion, especially, I mean, I imagine you were talking to seventh graders, and 8 trillion is a really big number. Even $27,000 is a big number.

Ms. BEAN. It is a big number when you are talking to 12-year-olds.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. So when we are on the floor here, I often try to boil down what those numbers mean in more simplistic terms. I can tell you that we, what we do is we talk about how it relates to someone's household budget. And you know, of course, families, millions and millions of families across this country struggle every day to balance their budgets to make sure that they are not spending more than they take in. And they are hoping that they are not racking up credit card debt and trying to balance all the needs that their family has, plus, you know, hopefully buying a few things that maybe aren't necessarily a need, but are just a want. I mean, that is something that in America we all strive to be able to accomplish.