

proved the metal of this country, up through the Spanish American War and World War I and World War II. From the halls of Montezuma, to the shores of Tripoli, our soldiers have been there for us. The Korean War and on down through the Vietnam War, maybe not popular, but the soldiers went where they were called and performed admirably; through Desert Storm and now in the sandy storms of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I was just in Iraq in January, and one of the most memorable experiences I had during that trip was I was able to meet with our soldiers. And there was one soldier that, as I was in Camp Victory in Baghdad, who grabbed me and was hugging me so hard. Tears were coming down his eyes, tears coming down mine. And he said some words to me I will never forget. He said, Congressman SCOTT, when I am hugging you, it is like I am hugging a piece of home.

I never will forget that. And 3 weeks ago, that soldier was killed. And so, oftentimes, we go about our business, and oftentimes, we take our freedoms for granted. But that is why we have Memorial Day, to say to those who have given their lives for this country, for our freedom domestic, thank you. Because there is no greater love than the one that would give his life for another. To all the men and women in uniform, to all who have served this country, we say thank you on this, the beginning of the celebration of Memorial Day.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for half the time until midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House once again. I would like to thank the Democratic Leader for allowing the 30-Something Group to come to the floor, Ms. PELOSI and also our Democratic Whip, Mr. HOYER, and Mr. CLYBURN, who is our chair of the Democratic Caucus, and Mr. LARSON, who is the vice chair.

Mr. Speaker, we were here the night before, and as you know, we come to the floor talking about issues that we would like to see brought to the floor and also talk about how we on the Democratic side would like to work in a bipartisan way to make America stronger.

Last night we talked quite a bit about energy. We talked about the difference between what we would do if we were in the majority versus what the Republican majority has not done and the cost it has brought about to all Americans. And it is very, very unfortunate that this continues to happen, and there is very little leeway that has been given to the American people as it relates to gas prices. We talked about the fiscal irresponsibility of the Repub-

lican majority that we are willing to work to pay as we go as it relates to our budget. We talked about the fact that students that are now graduating, that will be walking across the stage, a very proud moment for many Americans across the country, watching their young people pick up their diplomas, knowing that as they go to college they will pay more for college because the Federal Government or the Republican majority has decided to cut student benefits and also make it harder, make more of a reality of debt for students who are going to college because we have cut back, and we have Democratic initiatives to roll back the Republicans tuition tax on students.

When we talk about tuition tax on students, it is a tax on the parents and on the grandparents and the family that is trying to help that individual get through college, that is making sure that we have a stronger and brighter America in the future.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we always talk about solutions, and we back it up with fact and not fiction. So we are here tonight, half of the time split before midnight, to talk about these issues quickly.

Tonight, as always, we have Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ from Florida. We have Mr. DELAHUNT, who is going to join us tonight. We look forward to a fruitful dialogue with an abbreviated time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, do you care to share anything because I am going to talk about the fiscal irresponsibility and how the Republican majority has allowed foreign countries to have a piece of the American apple pie? We talked about that last night as it relates to the irresponsible spending that has taken place, unaffordable and in many, many areas and is putting America more in debt, not only in domestic debt but foreign debt, unprecedented to any other time in the history.

Ms. Wasserman Schultz.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I am glad you touched on that theme. It is a pleasure to be here once again for our 30-Something Working Group, where we try to talk about the issues from the perspective of our generation and also talk about the issues important to our generation. And for people in our generation and the point that we are at in our lives, what blows my mind and continues to baffle me since I arrived in the Congress last year was the crushing debt that we are buried under right now, and that is not reversing itself; that there are no efforts on the part of the Republican leadership to reverse course, to turn around and go in the other direction and return to the days when President Clinton was in office. We had a surplus, a budget surplus, when we had no deficit, when we had a much smaller debt in terms of our debt to foreign countries. Of course, we had debt to foreign nations but not nearly what we have today.

We have more debt combined under this President than the 42 other Presi-

dents that we have had previously. And normally we have charts that we can highlight.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We have had 224 years, Mr. Speaker, of leadership that has only has been able to borrow \$1.01 trillion from foreign nations. The Republican majority along with the President has in 4 years, from 2001 to 2005, has been able to borrow \$1.05 trillion in just 4 years. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, since we do not have our chart, I just wanted to give those facts.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Absolutely. The three things I just want to hit on that are on all in that same theme: Last week, we passed a budget led by the Republican leadership here that just continues down that same path of irresponsible priorities; \$6 billion cut to Homeland Security over 5 years; \$488 million in 2007 alone. Cut the Army National Guard by 17,000 troops. The National Guard, which, if we all recall, the President just talked about deploying to the border, to our Mexican-American border to assist States in border security. On top of that, we are also deploying them to Iraq and Afghanistan. How thin can we spread them? And then on top of that, we are cutting the number of troops we give them.

It cut funding for equipment for firefighters and police; \$6 billion cut to veterans' services over 5 years. It tripled health care fees for veterans for TRICARE.

Let's fast forward to the tax reconciliation bill, which is the tax cuts that we made permanent under the Republican leadership's insistence. Let's talk about what that tax cut meant for real people. The tax bill that was signed this week by the President had Americans who made \$20,000 a year, they get \$2, \$2 in their tax break. And when I stand at a town hall meeting and ask folks to raise their hands, Mr. MEEK, to let me know, who is it among you who have actually received money in your pocket from the tax breaks that President Bush and the Republican leadership have handed out over the last number of years, in a room full of several hundred people, maybe I get two or three hands. Maybe.

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Now, if these tax cuts are targeted like Democrats would design to working families and to people who really needed that money and would actually put it back into the economy so that could revitalize the economy, like buying big ticket items like refrigerators and televisions and other things that would inject cash into the economy instead of investing it, which is what the wealthiest among us would do, then I could understand letting us make those tax cuts permanent all day long, but unfortunately, we do not have any of those tax cuts.

We have tax cuts that puts \$2 back in the pockets of people who make \$20,000, and Americans who make \$40,000, they get a whopping \$16, but Americans who

make more than \$1 million get a thousand times that. They get \$42,000. They get to go out and buy a Hummer. They can buy a Hummer. That is how much money someone who makes \$1 million gets back, a Hummer, a Mercedes, a Suburban, a gas guzzler, and you cannot buy one of those with \$2.

Then let us add insult to injury, and last week there were comments made in this Chamber on this floor that people who make \$40,000 a year do not pay taxes. I mean, come on. Do you know anyone that does not pay taxes that makes \$40,000?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Of course not. I think we all know that is an inaccurate statement, but I think what is interesting or even more interesting—

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is just out of touch. That is my point.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Is how are we affording these tax cuts? Who is paying? Where is the money coming from? You remember that movie about follow the money?

I think what is particularly disturbing is the reality that we are borrowing money to subsidize tax cuts that are skewed in favor, disproportionately, for 1 percent of the American people, and when you examine the record, and I understand we do not have any charts this evening, but when you examine the record, you discover that we are borrowing money from foreign countries to provide the funding for the tax cut, and that includes the People's Republic of China, mainland China.

Now, I know that there are many in this institution that are very concerned about the emergence of China as an aggressive competitor in terms of the global economy. Some would even suggest that China is a potential adversary, and yet, here we are, borrowing money from the People's Republic of China so that we can confer a disproportionate benefit on the top 1 percent of the American people.

If you give me just another moment, I think I have a chart here and I know that it is difficult to see, but let me hold it up and let me refer to it.

Public debt held by China quadruples under Bush. In the year 2000, American Treasury notes and bills in the possession of the Central Bank of China amounted to \$62 billion. That figure today is in excess of \$270 billion, four times more in the course of 5 years, four times.

Now, I think you would have to conclude that our relationship with China, both commercially, politically and in every aspect of that relationship, we are losing leverage.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I think you make a great point and we have all these issues and China's rising and China's making investments and China's building their infrastructure and China's doing a lot of things that they have to do. Okay. That is their world and they can do what they have to do to be competitive, and you know what, God bless them.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Just a minute. They are holding Treasury notes, and the American taxpayer is sending money to China for the interest payments on those American negotiable instruments, on those Treasury bills. We are supporting education in China.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I understand that, and my point is—

Mr. DELAHUNT. Not here in the United States but in China.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I understand that and I think that that is true. China has their world. We are feeding them, we are feeding them, and we are not taking care of what we need to take care of here in the United States of America. We have only certain controls over what they do in China, and if they want to focus on manufacturing and this, that and the other, hey, that is their business, God bless them.

But when we are aiding them by paying interest on money that they loaned us, then we are contributing to the downfall of the middle class of the United States of America and, at the same time, not making the investments in what we need to invest in the United States of America.

For example, the Democratic proposal, the Innovation Agenda for the Democrats is to make sure that we have research and development tax credits, making sure that we have broadband access for every single house in the United States of America in the next 5 years. We have a plan on becoming energy independent. There it is, becoming energy independent, getting off of the addiction to foreign oil. We need to stop and move in another direction.

We cannot control everything that China does, but we have all kinds of control of what we can do here in the United States of America, and if we do not start focusing on making America stronger, whether it is with innovation, energy independence, healthier citizens, more productive citizens, investment in education, these are the things that we need to do in the near future to help us compete in the long term against China, against India and against a lot of other countries like Ireland that want to compete against the United States of America.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, very quickly, I believe we have until 34 after the hour. So let me just quickly, since you are talking about the debt and what this Republican Congress has done, we actually have a new chart here tonight.

As you know, Japan has bought \$682.8 billion of our debt. China, we are just talking about China, Red China, \$249.8 billion of our debt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That China debt has to be updated because China is escalating.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Okay, great. UK, \$223.2 billion; the Caribbean, \$115.3 billion; Taiwan, \$71.3 billion; and you have OPEC Nations that are oil Nations, \$67.8 billion; Germany, \$65.7 billion of our debt; Korea, \$66.5 billion of our debt; Canada, \$53.8 billion of our debt.

But let me just give you this silhouette here. This is the United States of America. It does not belong to those countries, and guess what, the American people have not delivered it to the countries. The policy of the Republican majority has delivered that debt and that ownership of the American economic pie in a record-breaking way, Mr. Speaker, in the last 4 years, \$1.05 trillion of foreign debt borrowed by this country and by this administration and by this Congress.

So it is very, very important, if we are going to have a paradigm shift, that we talk about those pay-as-we-go amendments. Time after time, if we say we are going to buy it, we are going to pay for it; we are going to find a way to pay for it. We just will not put it on the credit card.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We are acknowledging, we are calling on the carpet the Republican leadership for plunging us into the most debt we have ever been in and piling it up in record time to boot.

We are borrowing and spiraling downward into tremendous debt to other nations, and then, on top of that, we are giving away our oil drilling rights that we are normally paid royalties for by the oil and gas industry. Last year, we passed two bills that basically give away those rights for free. We give them to the oil industry, and subsequently, several months later, they make more profits than any corporation in American history.

What would we do in the alternative? Finally, finally, there is leadership that is willing to step forward and adopt and propose an Innovation Agenda that would pledge to make us energy independent within 10 years. Our energizing American plan that was put together by the Democratic House working group that gets more specific than our Innovation Agenda. It talks about how we would increase production of American-made biofuels, using our cellulosic sources such as switch grass, producing ethanol through corn and possibly even through sugar cane, investing in research and development to improve the use of renewable energy. These are the commitments that Democrats would make.

So, Mr. Speaker, when people on the other side of the aisle throw out that Democrats do not have an agenda, well, here is a piece of it, Mr. RYAN just had a piece of it. There are three stacks of notebook, none of which are full of empty paper, Mr. Speaker, that outline our homeland security proposal, our domestic security proposals, our energy plan.

These are the things that we would address from day one when we are in charge of this Chamber. We would eliminate the corruption. We would make sure that this Chamber is run in a bipartisan way, as Leader PELOSI indicated just last week. We would adopt democracy once again in the United States House of Representatives which, quite honestly, is something I have not

seen since the first day I got here, and it is really depressing.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The Republican agenda today is to say the Democrats do not have an agenda. That is their agenda. That is all they have got. They have got no plan on energy, no plan on health care, no plan on education, no plan on reducing college tuition costs. They have got no plan on immigration. They have got no plans.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is like I could just close my eyes, and listening to the Republicans, point fingers and call names at us, I could just close my eyes and it is like I am listening to my twin 7-year-olds fight with each other: Yes, they are; no, they don't; yes, they are; no, they don't. That is all they are—

Mr. DELAHUNT. I hate to interrupt. I thank my friend from Florida. They have a plan which is to increase the debt that the American people owe to foreigners.

You know, those numbers that we were talking about in terms of China, that \$270 billion, let us just pick a number and try to help me calculate what the interest payments are to the Chinese Government every year, 4, 5 percent? Can we agree on 5 percent, because that is easy?

Well, what we are doing is we have a plan that is a consequence of their fiscal policy and their tax policy that sends in interest payments every year to China, \$25 billion a year. Now, when you stop and think about the \$25 billion that goes to China from the United States taxpayers every year, what could we do with that \$25 billion?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ indicated there was a plan by Democrats regarding energy, ethanol, the use of farm products, biomass. I bet we could fund that program. I bet we could do more with that \$25 billion rather than send it to the Chinese, not to reduce principal but simply to pay the interest.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We could do something crazy like collect the royalties from the oil industry and invest it on alternative energy sources like those. We could fund this plan backwards and forwards with the money we did not make them pay us.

□ 2330

That is what is so outrageous

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is a poorly run business right now. Our government right now is a poorly run business that wastes money. And in Iraq, they lost \$9 billion that nobody knows where it is. Royalties on the oil companies that we are just not getting because they get a lot of campaign contributions. Subsidies to the health care industry. And \$16 billion, as Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ said, to the energy companies and the oil companies.

I mean, we are hemorrhaging here, and we are giving the millionaires \$42,000, and we are giving the oil companies \$16 billion. We don't have it to give you. I'd love to give it to you. It would be great if we could give everybody everything.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. But then we are cutting 17,000 troops out of the National Guard.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Bingo.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And in addition to China, Mr. Speaker, the OPEC countries, they hold debt, American debt, in excess of \$75 billion. Now, 5 percent of \$75 billion, you know, is probably \$4 billion, something like that. Those are just interest payments, Mr. Speaker, that we are sending to the OPEC countries. I mean, this makes no sense at all. It erodes the strength, the economic strength and the position of the United States of America in the international community.

The President often talked several years ago about creating an ownership society. What he failed to tell us was that America was being sold piecemeal to the Chinese, to OPEC and to the Japanese. I mean, we no longer own our wealth. It is foreign governments, foreign nations that are our competitors and our potential adversaries, according to some, that are buying America's wealth.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, do you want to close real quick?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I want to close with an observation that what has been frustrating to me is that there is no outrage on that side. Everything we are laying out is factual. We are not making it up. So why does the Republican head only appear to go one way, up and down? Yes, sir, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to do whatever you say. Sure, Mr. President. No problem. It would be nice if they had some joints that made their heads go in this direction and their voices could be lifted up against what is going on here. But, sadly, that doesn't happen.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And giving subsidies is like giving a drug addict more drugs. Giving subsidies to the oil companies. We are getting old school here, with the legal pad.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Going back to my era, aren't you?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for the remaining time until midnight as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the honor to address you tonight, and the subject matter I wish to take up, along with my colleague from California, will be the subject of illegal immigration. We are continually discussing this issue because it is a big issue. It is complicated. It is very, very detailed, and it has many, many ramifications for the short term, mid term and long term.

As we speak, at least today and likely tomorrow, there will be more debate over in the United States Senate about

this very subject matter. And as we watch them make decisions over there, many of us in this Chamber and across the country get quite apprehensive as we review the decisions that are made there, which are recommendations to us here, because many times those decisions are made, I think, without considering and maybe even without access to the facts at hand.

As nearly as I can bring it up to date with the amendments that have been passed and the way the bill sets today, the cap that they have put on for a guest worker plan is 200,000 a year. That would be a flat number that would presumably increase, and it would go 200,000 each year.

There are a number of other categories there. As we know, we have visa categories all the way from A to V. And so with all these categories that we have, there are many different ways to legally come into the United States. So I would like to send a message out there to the people who have come into this country illegally and the people outside of America that are interested in coming to the United States to live and work and play. And that is that you can go to the Web page of the U.S. Consul, and on there, you can click your way through to find out how to come the United States legally.

That is the right way to do it. That is the way we welcome people here. That is the policy we have here in the United States of America, the country that has the most liberal immigration policy on the face of the earth. Any way you measure it, we have welcomed more people into this country legally. We have welcomed them here, and they have had the opportunity to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and contribute to this country. That is the right way to do things.

We have this debate going on in this country, and the debate, Mr. Speaker, is about illegal immigration and what to do with 10 or 12 or 20 or more million illegals in this country. There seems to be a lack of will in the United States Senate to enforce the law. In fact, it seems as though, if all the illegals in America lined up and said, I think I want to go home, a bunch of the folks in the United States Senate would say, please, don't comply with the law; we don't want that to happen.

Well, I will say that I want everyone to comply with the law in the United States. The law says, if you come into the United States illegally, the penalty you are facing is 6 months in jail and deportation. Those two penalties go along with that violation. If you make that violation and you are walking the streets of America today, that means you are here illegally. If you came into this country illegally and you are not lawfully present here and you don't have proof of how you might have come here in a lawful fashion, then you are guilty of a criminal misdemeanor punishable by 6 months in jail and deportation. So many of the people that were marching in the streets claiming they