

place for fiscal 2007, I commend my distinguished Democratic colleagues on the Budget Committee for taking this time to call America's attention to the fiscal challenges resulting from the Republicans' misguided policies and the wrong choices they have made for our economy. Misplaced spending priorities and bad decisions have consequences. They are leading us further down the path to fiscal ruin and expanding the wedge between middle-class families and the superwealthy.

I am proud to join my colleagues to highlight the hypocrisy of the over-riding Republican economic philosophy that extending dividends, capital gains and other tax cuts for millionaires and corporations create a rising tide that lifts all boats.

Five years after the President's \$1.5 trillion tax cut, our national debt now approaches \$10 trillion. If our tax cuts performed as promised by those across the aisle, an exploding economy would have wiped out this debt.

We have already proven that more needs to be done than just hope that sooner or later tax cuts will reach Americans who need help the most. But those who do need help must get in line and hope that the benefits of tax cuts for millionaires and corporations will ultimately trickle down to them.

Perhaps the expanding gulf between the haves and the almost-haves is best illustrated by the fact that wages and salaries now make up the lowest share of gross domestic product since the government began keeping records on that in 1947, while corporate profits continue to break all-time records. Meanwhile, the buying power of the minimum wage has sunk to its lowest level in 50 years.

What is missing are policies that ensure that the benefits of higher corporate earnings, productivity and globalization are widely shared, such as real government support for higher education, a progressive Tax Code and affordable health care.

When choices are made at the expense of our safety net, choices that benefit the top 1 percent who will never struggle to pay a mortgage, never struggle to keep up with gas prices, never struggle to put their children through school, it is clear that a new direction for our economy is long overdue.

How can the Republicans argue that this economy is bound in the right direction when our Nation is saddled with record-breaking deficits over 4 consecutive years, combined with deep and painful cuts to hospitals, to schools, and to security? At least the Republicans' budget outlook since 2001 has been consistent. Americans could bank on the American budgets to slash funding for proven homeland security programs, veterans benefits, education and health care priorities, all the while cutting taxes for millionaires who need the break the least.

As real-life indicators of poor Federal spending choices, such as stagnant

wages, soaring crime rates and rising health care premiums and drug prices begin to take their toll on Americans, it is our responsibility to react. Instead, inaction reigns under the direction of the current leadership.

In some cases, this inaction has yielded to half-hearted solutions, such as an energy bill that does more for oil and gas companies than lower gas prices, a Medicare bill that does more for drug companies and HMOs than make life-saving drugs affordable, a pension bill that takes it easy on corporate boards while ignoring the decline of traditional defined benefit plans.

Eleven days away from the start of the fiscal year, the record of this Republican Congress on the economy shows that we have not completed a budget or a single appropriations bill.

Fiscal irresponsibility has reached unprecedented new lows, depending on how you look at it. The debt limit has been raised for the fifth time in as many years to almost \$10 trillion.

Perhaps we shouldn't be worried. After all, the President's budget director said last month that \$200 billion annual deficits are sustainable indefinitely. Apparently normal budget rules don't apply to this administration.

But they do apply to a middle-class family of four living on Long Island whose monthly cost-of-living expenses, due mostly to rising gas prices and health care costs, are rapidly exceeding wage increases. Perhaps their creditors and collection agents will understand that outstanding debts owed by families sinking deeper into red ink are sustainable indefinitely.

We can fix this mess. We have the blueprint; a new direction for America. And we only need to look to past and proven methods, like the pay-as-you-go budget rules that were enforced in the previous administration and produced surpluses that helped us start buying down our national debt.

Indeed, we Democrats resolve to restore what should be the goals of our Federal budget, to reflect the priority of our Nation, to build a strong economy, and to set policies that reflect the values and priorities of the mainstream of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with all of my colleagues who recognize that it is long past time to reverse course on this economy and support a new direction for America.

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BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. REICHERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to join my Democratic colleagues to call for a new direction in our Federal budget priorities. I want to thank my friend ARTUR DAVIS from the

Budget Committee and the Democratic committee staff for arranging this series of speeches on this very important subject.

The Federal budget is much more than a boring government document or irrelevant policy paper. The Federal budget is our Nation's mission statement. The budget is our collective expression of our national priorities, and it reflects the values of our national leadership. Unfortunately, the values of the current national leadership, as reflected in the Federal budget, are a sorry state of affairs.

I am very proud that during my first term in this United States House, Congress and the President joined together to move toward balancing the Federal budget for the first time in decades. Democrats and Republicans reached across the partisan aisle and worked together to balance the books for the first time in over a generation.

The surpluses generated from the balanced budget were used to pay down the national debt, strengthen the Social Security Trust Fund and to make key investments in essential services like education and health. And we had enough left over to fund cutting-edge research and development that is the gateway to America's economic future and quality of life.

Unfortunately, all of that progress was reversed when the current administration took office. The current administration and the Republican Party bosses here in Congress have passed incredibly irresponsible budgets with disastrous results for our economy and for future generations. These record deficits and rising national debt present a crushing burden as our legacy and produce profound neglect of our basic infrastructure.

Just this morning, the Raleigh, North Carolina, News and Observer reported my State is running billions of dollars short in funding necessary to rejuvenate aging roads, schools and water systems. The 2006 North Carolina Infrastructure Report Card by the American Society of Engineers gave my State a C-minus grade on nine key categories of infrastructure readiness.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Federal Government needs to work in partnership with our States and local communities to meet the needs of our people.

I have worked for several years with my good friend Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL of the Ways and Means Committee to pass Federal legislation to leverage school bonds on the local level. This legislation will make a real difference throughout America to build new schools, relieve overcrowding, enhance safety and improve education for our children. Unfortunately, under the current Republican regime, we cannot even get a hearing on the Rangel-Etheridge bill.

But worse than not passing new bills, the Republican budget fails to pay for the laws they have put on the books. For example, the No Child Left Behind, which the President bragged about as

his signature legislation reform achievement, has never been fully funded. To date, Republicans in the White House and Congress have short-changed our schools roughly \$50 billion that they promised under No Child Left Behind. Talk to any educator. They can tell you. Promises unmet are programs unfulfilled.

This disgraceful record is a direct result of those misguided budgets. I believe in my bones that public education is one of the best investments that we can make in building a bright future, but under the current Federal budget, the taxpayers will pay nearly three times as much to service the interest on the national debt as we will invest in education at the Federal level, and nearly 45 percent of that national debt is held by foreign investors like China, Japan, Europe and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, America needs a new direction. The first place we can start is reversing the current budget priorities that we have that are out of touch with our American values.

I congratulate my colleagues for leading this series of speeches on this important issue.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCOTT of Virginia addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KIND addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. COOPER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BAIRD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IMMINENT CRISIS IN DARFUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DOYLE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my colleagues in the House to act quickly on an issue where literally thousands of lives hang in the balance. I speak, of course, of the situation in Darfur, where the Sudanese Government is pursuing a policy of genocide.

This is different than your run-of-the-mill civil war. This is a case in which a government has pursued policies of widespread destruction, rape and murder in order to destroy entire tribes that it considers enemies.

The Sudanese Government and its allies consciously target civilians.

I do not care which term you prefer, a systematic violation of human rights, violations of international law, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide, the undisputable bottom line is that the Sudanese Government is carrying out and supporting acts so reprehensible and so horrible that no one with the ability to try to stop it can, in good conscience, fail to do so.

For the last 3 years, the Sudanese Government and its proxies, the Janjaweed militias, have been attacking villages in Darfur; destroying homes, crops and properties; and killing, raping and torturing innocent civilians in a concerted effort to destroy, or at least displace, the tribes most closely associated with the Darfur rebel groups. As a result of this violence and the resulting starvation, exposure and disease, 300,000 people have died, and 2 million more are refugees.

A cease-fire agreement was reached in 2004, and the Sudanese Government agreed to monitoring by an African Union force of 7,000 troops.

The deployment of this African mission in Sudan, inadequate though it was to oversee an area the size of Texas, forced the Sudanese Government and the Janjaweed militias to be a bit more surreptitious about their genocidal activities, which continued, but at a significantly slower pace.

The Sudanese Government and one rebel faction signed a peace agreement this past May. Nevertheless, the killing by government forces and the Janjaweed militias has continued. In fact, the Sudanese Government has launched a major military offensive to finish the job in Darfur before it is compelled by international pressure to allow the U.N. peacekeepers into the region. This is a major violation of the Darfur peace agreement.

The mandate of the African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur is set to expire at the end of September, just

over a week from now. At that point there will be no military force protecting the people of Darfur from the central government and the Janjaweed militias, and no official observers to deter the Sudanese military and militias by bearing witness to their acts. The only constraint on the Sudanese Government's genocidal policies will be gone, and many of us are worried that what will follow will rival the level of death and destruction inflicted in Rwanda 12 years ago. Moreover, without the AU peacekeepers in place, humanitarian aid deliveries will grind to a halt, endangering the 3 million people who rely on that aid for survival.

Millions of lives are at stake, and the only practical solution at hand is an extension of the AMIS peacekeeping force's mandate. The AU Peace and Security Council is expected to approve the AMIS mandate tomorrow. We need to do our part as well.

Recently the other body adopted an amendment to the 2007 defense appropriations bill that would increase funding for the African Mission in Sudan by \$20 million. The other body, to its great credit, recognized the fact that only the African Mission in Sudan can prevent the likely deaths of thousands of people.

I rise today to urge my colleagues to adopt this provision in the conference report, in this appropriations bill. We have no morally acceptable choice but to act and act quickly. Let us do our part to prevent more deaths in Darfur.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR AMBITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, the President of Iran has just addressed the United Nations General Assembly. He well could have declared victory. Hezbollah, a creature of Iran, created and funded by Iran, attacked Israel. The resulting conflict diverted attention from Iran's nuclear program and bolstered Iran's position in the Middle East. Our invasion of Iraq has removed from the chess board what was once a bloody rival of Iran for power in its own region, and now Iraq saps America's strength.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came to New York with a stamp of approval for his country's nuclear program from the 100-plus members of the nonaligned movement, where he led a festival of America-bashing.

Most importantly, Ahmadinejad has brazenly ignored the August 31 deadline from the United Nations Security Council to cease enrichment of nuclear fuel.

A nuclear Iran would be a catastrophe. That regime has already been listed as number one on the list of state sponsors of terrorism year after year by our own State Department.