

that I've been focused on a lot is the country of Belarus, the last dictatorship in Europe.

The political, economic, and human rights situation in Belarus has significantly deteriorated. A total of 33 opposition leaders and activists are still being held in prison for peacefully protesting against a dictatorial regime and a falsified 2010 presidential election. Silent protests have sprung up on an online campaign, called "Revolution through Social Networks," which encourages people to come to their localities' central squares every Wednesday to express discontent with the Lukashenko regime.

Opposition activists, journalists and ordinary people have been and continue to be arrested. The authorities have also launched "distributed denial of service" attacks on opposition Web sites.

The United States and the European Union continue to condemn these activities. We must think strategically about Belarus post-Lukashenko when the people of Belarus are finally able to establish a democratic society based upon the principles of a free-market economy. In anticipation of that day, each and every one of us should prepare now so as to be in a position to rapidly assist in the establishment of internationally recognized elections and rules-based, transparent government in Belarus.

SUDANESE WAR CRIMES AGAINST NUBA CIVILIANS

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, thanks to the courageous reporting of two journalists for Al Jazeera's English network, Callum Macrae and John D. McHugh, who risked their lives to find the truth, we have shocking evidence of war crimes committed by the Sudanese Armed Forces against Nuba civilians in Sudan's South Kordofan province.

Here in this photo is a 2-year-old victim of an air strike, and here is a bomb crater in the middle of this Nuba village—50-feet wide and 15-feet deep. Here, Mr. Speaker, is satellite imagery analyzed by Harvard University's Humanitarian Initiative that reveals evidence of mass graves outside South Kordofan's capital of Kadugli.

At this moment, Mr. Speaker, as the U.S. personnel hide behind their barracks walls, the SAF are hunting men, women and children on foot, in fighter jets, and with bombs rolled out of back doors of cargo aircraft onto Nuba villages. Where does the United Nations stand as the Nuba are wiped out? Where do we stand?

HONORING LINDA LOPEZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Cali-

fornia (Mr. CARDOZA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember a great American, Ms. Linda Lopez, a treasured member of my staff, who passed away over the Fourth of July weekend. It is somewhat appropriate that that was the weekend that she passed away since she was such an honorable and patriotic lady. Her services will be held today and in our hometown that we shared.

Linda was not only a dedicated constituent services representative; she was a tireless advocate and community leader in Merced, California. Born in New Mexico, Linda moved to California's Central Valley in 1955 where she attended public school in Madera and then later attended Stanford University. For the past 40 years, she was involved in civil rights and social justice work, and was considered one of the most influential Latina Americans in the Central Valley.

Linda's community leadership included serving on the City of Merced's Redevelopment Agency Gateway Projects Citizens' Advisory Committee, the City of Merced's Planning Commission, and several City of Merced ad hoc committees. She also served on the San Joaquin Valley Partnership Telecommunications Committee and the California State Advisory Board for Transportation Planning and Environmental Justice.

Linda Lopez was also an alumnae of the Great Valley Center's IDEAL inaugural class, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, and Leadership Merced. Not surprising, given her devotion to her community, Linda was named the 1998-99 Hispanic Woman of the Year by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

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Linda joined my Merced district staff in 2006 as a constituent services representative, acting as my eyes and ears in the community. She worked on thousands of cases and helped thousands of people. She never let go of a case she believed needed work, and was meritorious. Linda prided herself on giving 100 percent to everyone who walked in the office regardless of their political party, the color of their skin, what they believed or didn't believe. She believed everybody deserved to be treated well. It was not unusual for Linda to work late nights and weekends, to make home visits to elderly constituents needing assistance, or to follow up with a phone call long after she had done her best to resolve a case.

The hallmark of Linda's work was her unbelievable compassion; and she was appreciated not just by the people she helped, but by her community as a whole. Linda's passion for making a difference set her apart from many others. She offered a kind smile and a compassionate ear to everyone she came in contact with. Often Linda's re-

lationship with other community members evolved into a mentorship program, and as her legacy, she asked that there be established a leadership scholarship in her name. Linda guided many other aspiring community activists in her passion and her efforts to serve others.

In addition to her role as a public servant, Linda was a wife and mother, and her beautiful family will miss her dearly. Linda Lopez made Merced, California, a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud today to call her a member of Team Cardoza, and even more proud to call her a friend.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to honor this great American, Linda Lopez, for her work, for her tireless efforts on behalf of our community, and for her work on behalf of our country.

I would now like to yield to my good friend, the gentleman from Florida, for the remainder of my hour.

GOP WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) is recognized for the remainder of the hour.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was overcome with disbelief to hear my Republican colleagues, the same colleagues who are leading America head first into its first default of its obligations, call on President Obama to start picking and choosing who wins when we run out of money.

Now, pay our seniors first, Mr. President. When we force a default, pay our bondholders first, Mr. President. Pay our soldiers first, Mr. President.

The GOP is shockingly silent, however, remarkably quiet when it comes to naming who the Treasury should stop paying when they force us into a default.

Now, in case you weren't aware, let me clue you in on the definition of a "default." It means the inability, the failure, to meet our financial obligations. And we have many financial obligations we cannot afford thanks to the possibility of this default that our friends on the other side of the aisle are leading us toward. This is a crisis that they manufactured: two wars unpaid for; tax cuts for millionaires that were unpaid for; policies that ignited a fiscal crisis and sunk us into a sea of red ink.

Now their refusal to accept responsibility for this debt that they created means that someone who the Treasury owes money to will not get paid. Someone will not get paid, and the full faith and credit of the United States of America will be broken.

Now, they're playing a game with our economy to try to force through an extremist agenda. That's what we have been battling against. That's what you've been watching. That's what people around the country are so incredibly frustrated with. It is a game that

I have right beside me. It is, in fact, the GOP Wheel of Misfortune, except in this game there are no winners; there are only losers. But, why don't we give it a spin.

As we approach the defaults and we spin the wheel, the first one that comes up, I see, is 2 million Federal workers. Come August 2, the GOP default forces the Treasury to send every Federal employee home without a paycheck. From the personal care attendant who works for the Department of Veterans Affairs to the park rangers who lead families through our national parks, a GOP default will send 2 million workers home without pay. During this time of high unemployment, our economy will suffer even more with the ripple effects of suspending pay for 2 million American workers and their families. So pay the Federal workers, we might be told.

Let's figure out who else we might choose not to pay. What other obligations of the Federal Government will be broken? What will we choose to avoid if there is a default?

Well, if we go back to the wheel, we spin the wheel again, and we see foreign creditors. Come August 2, the GOP will force the Treasury to stop paying interest to our foreign creditors who currently buy U.S. credit with total confidence. When you default on a credit card—everyone knows this. When you default on a credit card, you don't save money. Your interest rates go up. The bank lowers your credit rating. And if the U.S. stops paying its creditors, then the U.S. credit will be downgraded, interest rates will skyrocket, and our economy will freeze. The damage amounting to a tax increase on every American family will be thanks to the Republican majority that will force this default.

But perhaps we should pay the credit holders. Maybe that's who we should pay. Clearly, there is someone else that we will not then, so let's go back to the wheel.

When we spin the wheel this time, we get to bondholders. Well, come August 2, again, someone won't get paid. The GOP default will force the Treasury to deny U.S. bondholders the money that they entrusted to our Nation. The college student cashing in a bond their parents bought on their first birthday; the retirees who steer their 401(k)s to the most secure, safest investments in the world, at least until the Republican majority forced a default.

But perhaps we will pay the bondholders. We've been told we can pick and choose who we're going to pay when there's a default. Then we should find out perhaps who we might see next.

If you spin the wheel again, it might turn out that we come up on Medicare. Now, on August 2, again, the GOP default will force the Treasury to stop paying for the trusted Medicare benefits that 54 million seniors rely upon. Perhaps my friends on the other side of the aisle may finally have their opportunity to dismantle the system that

keeps so many retirees from bankruptcy due to private insurance bills. The doctors who treat our Medicare patients, from the primary care physician who takes seniors' blood pressure during yearly checkups to the oncologist who treats our grandmothers and grandfathers when they struggle with cancer, won't get paid as a result of this default.

But again, we've been told that we can simply pick and choose, that perhaps it is important for us to make sure that Medicare benefits are paid. What to do?

We can go back to the wheel. We can spin the wheel again. It may turn up on veterans. Perhaps we have made a decision to make these others payments, but it comes up on veterans.

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So, again, on August 2, if we do not come to an agreement, which is completely doable, and if we do not avoid this GOP-caused default, then the Treasury may stop caring for our veterans. In representing Florida's 19th District, I am privileged to serve thousands of veterans, many of them veterans of World War II—members of our Greatest Generation, the very people who built this Nation into what it is today.

Now, Americans believe that we have to honor the sacrifices of those who serve, but by forcing America into default, the GOP will deny care to the men and women who embody patriotism and deserve every benefit that they earned while serving this country. This game, this unfortunate game that they wish to play, could go on and on and on. Maybe we choose to pay our veterans, but we stop paying our troops. Maybe we will, as the President pointed out, have no choice but to stop paying Social Security in the event of default. Come August 2, the potential of a GOP default would force the Treasury to deny seniors the Social Security benefits that they earned over a lifetime. In my district and around the country, going without Social Security for any period of time will mean destitution and extreme financial hardship. The Republicans have long fed the American people the lie that the bonds held by Social Security are junk. Well, they've never been junk, at least so long as America has never defaulted on its obligations. This is the wheel of misfortune that we have to avoid getting to. It's not a game anyone wants to play.

This hardship thrust upon the American people in the event of a default is completely avoidable. The GOP could make history—make history—by working with President Obama to reduce the deficit in a meaningful, in a responsible and in a fair way. Instead, Republicans seem hell-bent on making history by tarnishing the full faith and credit of the United States of America for the very first time. The reason they won't come to the table, the reason we may be forced to spin the wheel of mis-

fortune: preserving tax cuts for millionaires, preserving tax breaks for corporate jets, preserving tax loopholes and payments to oil companies.

They seem more intent on subjecting the American people to the wheel of misfortune than standing up to the special interests that Americans want us to stand up to in the name of fiscal responsibility and fairness. In this game of partisan politics, a game that people all around the country are tiring of, no one wins—and the American people, unfortunately, always lose out.

Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to yield to the gentlelady from Texas.

WILL THE DEBT CEILING BE RAISED?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for the remainder of the hour.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Let me thank the gentleman from Florida. He has certainly awakened a number of issues and Members on his important discussion, and I wanted to join in his commentary.

Mr. Speaker, we will be leaving shortly, and I'm glad that we will be returning on Monday for very serious business. Many of us have been in meetings today, engaging in solutions rather than distractions as relates to the business of the American people. None of us have experienced, I believe, the attention to the issue of the budget as much as we've had that attention now from our constituents on, will the debt ceiling be raised? There has not been a time in these past couple of weeks that I've gone home when businesspersons, students, seniors, working families have not asked the question: Will we get it done? I am an optimist, and I've said to them, Yes, I expect that.

In fact, I've already gotten it done.

I voted on the clean debt ceiling raise, or lift, some many weeks ago, and that was the right thing to do. The reason is that, over the last couple of decades, we have had 60-plus increases in the debt ceiling, starting with Ronald Reagan, including Bush I and Bush II, President Clinton, and President Carter. It's interesting that, for some reason, the tension in this discussion has really gone beyond understanding.

Let me be very clear. We have had such an intense couple of months that we have not had the opportunity, really, to engage as Members of Congress. Our committees have been fairly tense and rapid. Our schedules have been such that we've been here one week and gone the next. I know that there are new Members of the 87 members of the Republican Conference with whom I would have some things to agree on, and I would appreciate having that opportunity, but this is a time now, without the opportunity to get to know all of the members of the Republican Conference who are new, when we have to