

ceiling legislation, and I'll comment later on why I oppose the Speaker's approach. But before we begin that debate, I think it's important to acknowledge, step back, and review how we got to where we are.

The success of the 1993 Deficit Reduction Act, which was vehemently opposed by our Republican friends, led to a decade of prosperity and surplus. President Clinton balanced the budget for the first time since 1969 and ran surpluses for 4 years. Between 1998 and 2000, the publicly held debt was reduced by \$363 billion, the largest 3-year pay down in American history. Under Presidents Reagan and Bush, the debt held by the public quadrupled. By the time Bill Clinton left office, the budget was on track to pay off the entire publicly held debt on a net basis by 2009. Remember, Alan Greenspan warned us that we were paying down the debt too quickly. The clock in Times Square, which chronicled the deficit, was actually turned off at the end of the Clinton years. But, unfortunately, there were those who thought that we should shift course.

Economic growth averaged 4 percent during those Clinton years, compared to an average of 2.8 percent during President Reagan's years. The economy grew for 116 consecutive months, the most in history, fueled by more than 22.5 million jobs that were created during those 8 years, the most jobs ever created during a single administration and more than were created in the previous 12 years.

On January 20, 2001, when George W. Bush took the oath of office, the CBO estimated that the total budget surplus for 2002 to 2011 would be \$5.6 trillion. And their campaign began to spend that surplus in earnest, despite warnings. President Bush began taking us down that fiscal path by enacting tax cuts, first in 2001 of \$1.3 trillion, and again in 2003, \$1 trillion, that cost the government going forward almost \$4 trillion. The other major expenditure in those years was our idea that you could simultaneously engage two wars and cut taxes by \$2.3 trillion. Remember the argument about weapons of mass destruction that took us to the unnecessary war in Iraq.

While some question tax cuts in wartime, including people like Mr. Lincoln, others thought it brilliant. The Republican leader at the time or the deputy leader at the time said it was patriotic to cut taxes in a time of war. Well, I wonder if the 2.2 million more veterans who have served us with honor and distinction in Iraq and Afghanistan are going to feel that way when proposals come down the road to draw back on the benefits that they've earned. During the Bush years, our country spent \$1.5 trillion in Iraq and on national defense.

The turnaround in our budget picture during the Bush years was remarkable. In October of 2008, CNN reported that the debt clock had run out of numbers. The debt clock actually had exceeded

13 digits that had been allotted, so the clock had to be revised.

□ 1040

According to one report at the end of the Bush term, the number of jobs in the Nation increased by 2 percent. That's the lowest or most tepid growth at any time since data began to be collected seven decades ago. Gross domestic product was at the lowest pace for a period of that length of time since the Truman administration. And the price that America has paid for the theology that suggested during all of those years that tax cuts paid for themselves, you can't find a mainstream economist in this town today who will acknowledge that argument. And yet we hear now more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

By the time that the Bush years ended, the debt had increased to \$10.6 trillion, setting a record for any administration. And incidentally, the TARP vote that we hear so often, that took place in October of 2008, that's a very important consideration. That was during President Bush's years.

But let me give you a quote that I think sums up much of what we did during those years. Dick Cheney told the Treasury Secretary at the time, Paul O'Neill: Reagan proved that deficits don't matter. We won the mid-term elections, this is our due.

We embraced the prescription D Medicare benefit that we're paying a price for today.

So here we are. My Republican colleagues try to place the blame for this situation on the current administration. There were many of us who saw what was happening with the reckless expenditure during those years and the price that America paid.

We need to vote to raise the debt ceiling. It's the responsible position for all of us to take.

#### CHANGING THE DIRECTION OF THIS COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, almost 7 months ago I stood in this Chamber and took the oath of office. It was one of the proudest days of my life.

Since my swearing-in, we've worked together to change the direction of this country, and we've changed it for the better. We've cut Federal spending by \$361 billion. We've repealed an unpopular and unwanted government health care plan. And we've started dialing back some of the overregulation that's been slowing our economic growth.

During my short time here in Washington, I've heard some very passionate arguments, and I've seen some very heated debates. But they are nothing, Mr. Speaker, like the angry, confusing, misleading rhetoric I've heard in the last 2 weeks regarding the raising of the debt ceiling.

Some media reports around the Capitol make it seem like we will never come to an agreement. Not only are Democrats and Republicans seemingly miles apart, but it appears as if both parties have splintered internally. The bickering is dividing our government. It's dividing the American people, and it's bringing us to the brink of financial disaster.

Based on the calls my office has received over the past several days, my neighbors back in northeastern Pennsylvania want it to stop. They want a solution, and I'm sure every one of you and your neighbors back home do too.

There is no such thing as the perfect deal. There is no such thing as complete and total victory. Many of us came here opposed to raising the debt ceiling. Many of us prefer the Cut, Cap and Balance approach. Many on the other side prefer a clean debt ceiling increase with no spending cuts.

While the Budget Control Act is far from perfect, it accommodates the priorities of the people sitting on both sides of the table, both sides of the aisle, and both sides of the Capitol. If we, in this Chamber, or if the President holds out for the perfect plan, well, the United States will likely default on its obligations. As the responsible stewards of the people's government, we cannot let that happen. And I am confident that we will not let it happen.

But we need to work together. We need to trust each other. We need to realize that the perfect deal is neither possible nor practical.

We are at a critical moment in our history. This country has lived far beyond its means for far too long. The out-of-control spending has been going on in Washington for generations. Governments spent as if there were no tomorrow; and now we and our children and our grandchildren are left to pay the price.

I know the debt ceiling has been raised before, to the benefit of both Republican and Democratic administrations. Well, I wasn't there then and I didn't create this mess, but I'm sure going to clean it up, and that's why I'm here. That's why the people of northeastern Pennsylvania sent me here.

And while the thought of re-election should never, never enter anyone's mind when we're doing the people's business, let me say that this issue is far bigger than the next election. This issue is far bigger than one man or one branch of government or one political party.

How we solve this looming crisis is the defining issue of this Congress. We can either continue on the path that we've been on, a path of reckless spending, of increasing taxes, of mounting debts and deficits; or we can change our direction. We can put the brakes on the out-of-control spending. We can forge a new direction, one of fiscal responsibility, one of capped spending, one of balanced budgets.

We can send a message to the American people and to the world that the

United States is getting its fiscal house in order. And if we do that, we can bring stability to the shaky global economy. We can reassure skeptical business owners and encourage them to create jobs. And we can create a better financial future for our children and our grandchildren.

I believe our choice is clear. I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, when you reach for your voting cards today, first take a glance at the pictures in your wallets, of your children and your grandchildren.

We are not Republicans; we are not Democrats. We are Americans. Today, let's put the American people first.

#### FAMINE IN EASTERN AFRICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the catastrophic famine that continues to unfold in the Horn of Africa. Eastern Africa is currently in the grips of the worst drought in 60 years, affecting 11 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya. According to the U.N., Somalia now faces the highest malnutrition rates in the world, and some 3 million Somalis are in desperate need of immediate emergency aid.

The U.N. estimates that tens of thousands of Somalis have died of drought-related causes in the past few months, and acute malnutrition rates in the country's southern region now exceed 30 percent.

Thousands more are fleeing areas controlled by the al Qaeda-affiliated militant group, Al-Shabaab which, even in the face of such large-scale human suffering, refuses to allow major humanitarian groups to deliver aid. Some 50,000 Somalis have returned to the capital, despite continued violence and instability, in search of food and medicine.

Others have sought refuge from hunger and warfare in neighboring countries. Nearly 400,000 Somalis have crowded into Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp, a complex designed to house only 90,000 people. Another 9,000 arrive in the camp each week, and thousands of other Somalis continue to flee Ethiopia in search of food. Many, particularly children and the elderly, do not survive the harsh trek.

The warning signs of impending disaster have been visible for months, but the international community has been slow to respond. Aid is slowly now beginning to trickle in, however. The U.N.'s World Food Program has begun an emergency airlift of food. The first flight arrived in Mogadishu yesterday, bringing 10 tons of nutritional supplements for children. The World Food Program says that is enough to treat 3,500 malnourished children for 1 month. Clearly, the need is far greater. The World Food Program plans to increase its efforts in hope of reaching

over 2 million people in Somalia's south.

Likewise, the United States has provided much assistance to 4.4 million drought-affected people in Eastern Africa. Since last October, our government has given \$383 million in life-saving aid, including 348,000 metric tons of food.

□ 1050

Further, this week the Obama administration announced a further \$28 million in emergency assistance for famine relief in Somalia. This aid is critical, and I commend the President for these steps. However, the scale of the current crisis requires a much greater response, as well as creative solutions tailored to the unique threats posed by Somalia's persistent instability and violence. For example, because al Shabaab is a terrorist organization, we continue to impose restrictions on aid organizations delivering assistance to the hard-hit regions under its control. We need to work with these humanitarian groups to ensure that, despite Somalia's continuing warfare and lack of governance, desperately needed aid can reach the most vulnerable men, women, and children.

Mr. Speaker, we need to act quickly to fight famine and save lives. We also need to address the long-term underlying causes that have left Somalia's people so vulnerable to drought and malnutrition. Even before the most recent crisis, Somalia was locked in a cycle of warfare, lawlessness, and bitter poverty. One expert recently called Somalia's current plight a catastrophic failure of all the systems that people rely on to survive. That's why part of our response must be an investment in resilience and food security; part of our response must be an effort to address the long-standing violent conflict that has torn Somalia apart; part of our response must go toward long-term economic development and capacity building.

We need to act immediately to ensure that humanitarian aid can reach the millions of eastern Africans who face imminent malnutrition and starvation that we're watching every day on television. I urge the United States and the international community to immediately scale up efforts to deliver urgent assistance to children and other vulnerable individuals.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### MAKING PROGRESS AND HISTORY WITH THE BUDGET CONTROL ACT AND BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. As America watches and the world watches from afar, Washington, D.C., debates a debt ceiling increase and debates various proposals for confronting it in a manner that is consistent with our commitment to this generation and the next.

For the past 10 years, I've been fighting runaway Federal spending, deficits, debt, and takeovers here in Washington, D.C., by both political parties. Now I recognize if you owe debts, pay debts. This Congress has an obligation to defend the full faith and credit of the United States of America and find a way to pay our bills. But this Congress also has an obligation to keep faith with this and future generations by restoring fiscal responsibility and discipline to our national Treasury.

I have come to the conclusion over the last decade that Washington, D.C., is not only broke; it's broken. As a colleague of mine said earlier this week, the American people don't just want a deal, they want a solution. And I rise to say that I believe a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States is that solution.

I told my colleagues earlier this week I did not want to vote for any increase in the debt ceiling unless this Congress did everything in its power to send a balanced budget amendment to the Senate and to the States. Earlier today, we learned that Speaker BOEHNER and Leader CANTOR had made a decision for this Friday to bring two separate balanced budget amendments to the floor, and I heartily support their decision.

The first balanced budget amendment will include spending limitations and require a supermajority on tax increases, and I support those measures. But the second balanced budget amendment hasn't seen action here on the House floor for 15 years. Fifteen years ago, what is commonly referred to as the "historic" or the "clean" balanced budget amendment received overwhelming and bipartisan support, some 300 votes on the floor of the House of Representatives and almost passed the Senate.

I believe that by bringing that historic balanced budget amendment to the floor of this Congress this week we are doing all we can to send the balanced budget amendment to the Senate and to the States. And with that, I inform my colleagues today that I will support the Boehner plan, I will support the Budget Control Act, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in doing the same.

Now, the Budget Control Act has much to recommend it. It has no tax increases, and we have confirmed from the CBO dollar-for-dollar spending cuts to match any increase in the debt ceiling. And there are mechanisms for additional cuts and additional reforms. But the Budget Control Act also includes a requirement that the Senate vote between October and November of this year on a balanced budget amendment. Again, let me say, a balanced