

very moment those planes hit the towers. The President once again blurred the distinction between Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, even though it has been well established that one had nothing to do with the other.

Actually, the President must believe that the American people don't know the difference between the two men and the two countries. What an insult to the American people.

The fact is, we never finished the job in Afghanistan. Bin Laden remains on the run, even though we had him surrounded in Tora Bora nearly 5 years ago. Far from some paragon of freedom, much of Afghanistan is still dominated by Taliban rebels and warlords, with the opium trade remaining the country's dominant economic force.

From 9/11 on, the President has used his status as a wartime Commander in Chief to justify just about anything he wanted to do, without any oversight or accountability from the Republican-controlled Congress, running roughshod over the Constitution, wiretapping American citizens without a warrant and setting up secret gulags around the world.

9/11 cried out for genuine leadership, for a unifying figure who could comfort the Nation while acting intelligently, rather than impulsively, in the face of a new security threat.

To this day, however, the President uses 9/11 as a talking point to make a dishonest argument. Time and time again, he has made the decision to choose partisanship over statesmanship, taking every single opportunity to fracture national unity for a short-term political gain.

Worst of all, the President put Afghanistan aside and became sidetracked by his white whale in Iraq, using deception, spin and misinformation to push the Nation into an ill-fated war.

Fast forward a few years and look at the mess we are in: nearly 2,700 American soldiers are dead, and over 20,000 wounded; the occupation is costing our Nation dearly and our children and grandchildren will get stuck with the bill, a bill which is projected to top \$1 trillion.

And what have we gotten for our sacrifice? Well, we are now a global pariah, viewed with suspicion by even our closest allies, and despised as never before by our enemies. And we have more enemies. This policy has inspired more jihadists and more anti-American sentiment in the Muslim world. Instead of bringing hope to Iraq, we have ripped it apart at the seams. We lit the match that has engulfed Iraq in a bloody civil war, where thugs and vigilantes control the streets. At least 40,000 Iraqi civilians, and possibly many, many

more, have been killed for the cause of their so-called liberation.

Our soldiers are not to blame. They do their jobs, and they do their jobs with honor and with valor. They do their jobs, despite being sent on an impossible mission under false pretenses without the proper training or equipment.

Madam Speaker, it is time to return these young people to their families where they belong. It is time, long past time, that we bring our troops home.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members not to make improper personal references toward the President.

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#### COMMENTS ON COMMEMORATING THE EVENTS OF 9/11/2001 AND ON THE WAR ON TERROR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I didn't want this week to pass without the appropriate recognition and the pointed recognition and offering of sympathy to the American people and to the victims who experienced a horrific tragedy on September 11, 2001.

In the next 48 hours, we will be debating on the floor of the House a resolution regarding 9/11. It would be good, Madam Speaker, if that resolution could focus on solutions. But because we are just a few days away from the November 2006 elections, I would venture to say that the majority in this House will attempt to cover up the major failures of making America more secure.

I pause for a moment again to reflect on the tears and pain that were expressed over the last couple of days by families of victims, those who worked at the World Trade Center, but also the firefighters and Port Authority police and police persons of New York and others who were the heroes of the day and lost their lives.

I join with my colleagues to say that an appropriate tribute certainly to the first responders would be the right kind of compensation and long-term care for those survivors in tribute to those who lost their lives. I hope that tomorrow's debate could be stopped for a moment so that we could pass immediate legislation, legislation proposed by Congresswoman MALONEY, that would allow a response to the first responders who now still live. But, no, we will engage again in the one-upmanship of what this Republican majority believes they have done.

I would simply say to you, Madam Speaker, that it is little that they have done.

The Washington Post today says it right: "America Marks a Grim Anniversary." But I add the words, is there much reason for joy or commemoration that things are better? I would say not.

The New York Times today says: "Grim Outlook Seen in West Iraq," calling for more troops and aid. The assessment was prepared last month by Colonel Peter Devlin at the Marine headquarters in Anbar Province, one of the first times that a document like this has been made public.

We are literally failing in Iraq. The Secretary of Defense has already said they don't need any more troops. Frankly, they have dissipated the troops in the other parts of Iraq to send into Baghdad to get that under control. It is difficult to get a civil war under control.

Iraq does not pay tribute to the tragedy of 9/11 by giving to the families a sense that we are in charge of the war on terror. Iraq simply shows our failure and failed policies.

Madam Speaker, I would say to this body that rather than debate a resolution that is distorted and one-sided, I would ask that we roll up our sleeves and respond to the American people. And I think it is important for us to be balanced. There are allies around the world that really want to help us.

I have heard discussions from those in Egypt and Jordan and Qatar and Mideast alliances that we have had who desire to have an opportunity to work with Iraq, work in the Mideast, to bring resolution, to allow the existence of democratic states. But we have not offered to collaborate with these states.

Madam Speaker, I think it is important to note that Pakistan, which continuously is maligned and is not perfect, there is no doubt, but we should remind our colleagues that we should work with states like Pakistan that are Muslim-based, if you will, recognizing the difficulty of balancing the leadership in a Muslim state and fighting the war on terror.

There are those who draw together, who want to work with the United States to fight the war on terror, Muslims around the world, Muslims in the United States; but we must give them an opportunity. And it is important to note with the difficulties of the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan that Pakistan's soldiers have lost their lives, and it was the Pakistan Government that gave to England the tip on the individual that broke the British terrorist act with the fluids.

So it is important, Madam Speaker, as I close, that we work with those who want to work with us. Let's stop the false promises. Let's fight the war on terror. Let's bring our troops home.

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## RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY AND FISCAL DISCIPLINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, this evening I rise on behalf of the 37 member strong, fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. There are 37 of us that have come to Washington to try to give this Congress a good dose of common sense, especially as it relates to restoring accountability and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

As you can see here, today the United States' national debt is \$8,518,180,439,082 and some change. If you divide that number by every man, woman, and child in America, our share, each of us, of the national debt is \$28,504. And, Mr. Speaker, where I come from, not many of us would be able to find that kind of money to pay back our share of the national debt. And I contend, Mr. Speaker, that the American people, it is wrong to ask them to pay for this out-of-control reckless spending that we have seen from this President and this Republican Congress.

As a small child growing up, I always heard it was the Democrats that spent the money and that it was the Republicans that were fiscally responsible. Then I came to Congress and I learned the truth. It was from 1998 to 2001, under a President named Bill Clinton, that this country saw its first balanced budget and had surpluses. It was the first time in 40 years that a Democrat or a Republican had done that. And this President, this Republican Congress, I might add that this is the first time in over 50 years the Republicans have controlled the White House, House, and Senate, and what have they done? They have given us the largest debt ever, ever, in our Nation's history, \$8,518,180,439,082 and some change. Again, for every man, woman, and child in America, for each of us, our share of the national debt is \$28,504.

Why do I raise this issue? Because it is time the American people know the truth. I raise it out of concern for the future of my country, our country. I raise it out of concern for my children, your children, your grandchildren because it is they who will be left to foot the bill for this out-of-control spending and lack of fiscal discipline that we are seeing from this Republican-led Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I am sick and tired of all the partisan bickering we hear and see in our Nation's capital. I don't care if it is a Democrat idea or a Republican idea. All I care about is, is it a common-sense idea? Does it make sense for the people who sent us here to be their

voice, to be their representative at our Nation's capital, in these halls of Congress, on the floor of the United States House of Representatives?

So tonight I am here tonight to only hold the Republican leadership accountable for the largest debt ever in our Nation's history but to also offer up common-sense solutions that I am asking Republicans to join me in supporting for the sake of our country, for the future of our country. Common-sense solutions that can put us back on a path toward a balanced budget and can restore this country to the shape and to the economy that we enjoyed in the late 1990s.

The debt is important. Why? Because the total national debt, numbers do not lie, facts do not lie, the total national debt from 1789 to 2000 was \$5.67 trillion, and you see where it is today, \$8,518,180,439,082. But by 2010 the total national debt will have increased to at least \$10.88 trillion. That is a doubling. That is a doubling of the 211-year debt in just 10 years.

Let me put it another way. This President and this Republican Congress have borrowed more money from foreign central banks and foreign lenders in the past 5½ years than the previous 42 Presidents combined. Interest payments on this debt are one of the fastest growing parts of the Federal budget. And what the Blue Dog Coalition has coined as the debt tax, d-e-b-t, cannot be repealed. That is one tax that will not go away until this Congress gets its fiscal House in order and restores some bipartisan common sense here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. The current national debt as you see, \$8.5 trillion. Each individual's share, \$28,504.

Why do deficits matter? They matter because deficits reduce economic growth, and we have seen that. A lot of people have lost their jobs in the past 5 years, and some will say that we are now seeing people being put back to work. But ask yourself, for those of you who lost a job in the past 5 years and have been fortunate enough to find new work, most of you, at least the people I talk to in south Arkansas tell me that the job that they have taken pays 5, 10, 15, \$20,000 less per year than the job they lost, and the job they lost oftentimes included health insurance and their new job does not.

Why do deficits matter? They burden our children and grandchildren with these liabilities. It is our kids and grandkids that are going to be stuck paying this debt tax, d-e-b-t.

Why do deficits matter? Because they increase our reliance on foreign lenders. Foreign lenders now own 40 percent of our debt. The United States is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign lenders. You want to talk about national security. Mr. Speaker, this is a national security issue. The United States of America is becoming increas-

ingly dependent on foreign lenders. Foreign lenders currently hold a total of about \$2 trillion of our public debt. That is right. Over \$2 trillion of that number right there has been borrowed from foreign lenders. Billions more have been borrowed from the Social Security trust fund.

When I came to Congress in 2001, the first bill I filed as a Member of Congress was a bill to tell the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security trust fund. This Republican Congress refused to give me a hearing or a vote on that bill, and now we know why. They have raided the Social Security trust fund to pay for tax cuts for folks earning over \$400,000 a year. Shameful. Shameful. Shameful.

Compare this: Foreign holdings in 1993 were \$623 billion. Today, over \$2 trillion of our Nation's debt, money we have borrowed, from foreign central banks and foreign investors and foreign lenders. And who are they? Here is the top ten list. These are the countries that the United States of America have gone to and borrowed money from in order to fund tax cuts in this country for people earning over \$400,000 a year. It may make for good politics, but, Mr. Speaker, I contend it makes for horrible, irresponsible fiscal policy.

Japan, the United States of America has borrowed \$640.1 billion from Japan. China, Communist China, we have borrowed \$321.4 billion from Communist China. The United Kingdom, \$179.5 billion. OPEC, imagine that, and we wonder why gasoline is so expensive. Our Nation, the United States of America, has borrowed from OPEC countries \$98 billion. Korea, \$72.4 billion. Taiwan, \$68.9 billion. The Caribbean banking centers, \$61.7 billion. Hong Kong, \$46.6 billion. Germany, \$46.5 billion.

And are you ready for this? Rounding out the top ten countries that the United States of America has borrowed money from to fund tax cuts in this country for folks earning over \$400,000 a year: Mexico. The United States of America has borrowed \$40.1 billion from Mexico.

Our Nation today is borrowing about a billion dollars a day. That is a far cry from the time period 1998 through 2001 when our Nation experienced a surplus. Today, policies and the budgets passed by this Republican Congress and this Republican President have given us the largest debt ever in our Nation's history and one of the largest deficits ever in our Nation's history. Again, this President and this Congress have borrowed more money from foreign lenders in the last 5½ years than the previous 42 Presidents combined. It is our children who will be left to repay these enormous loans to these foreign countries.

On July 19, 2006, the administration released its mid-session review of the budget. After further examination, let