

quest to keep the economy growing and to reduce the Federal deficit. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that at the end of the day, we will be able to see bipartisan support for this very appealing, very attractive, very important package.

#### FEDERAL SPENDING AND THE DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I came over here this morning because I am very concerned about our country. I am concerned about it because we are in a financial morass around here. I don't think that the powers that be in this town are leveling with the American people about just how bad the budget deficit and the debt of our country has become and how rapidly it has deteriorated from the 1990s when we had, arguably, a surplus, and we were digging ourselves out of previous debt.

I do not mean this to be political, because we are all Americans first and Democrats and Republicans second, and this is our country's balance sheet, it is not the Republican balance sheet, it is not the Democratic balance sheet, it is all of our balance sheet, particularly our children. In the last 4 years, our country has borrowed over \$1.3 trillion. If that is not bad enough, it might interest you to know that 85 percent of that has come from foreign governments, foreigners, who are investing in the bills, notes and bonds of our country.

China now owns almost \$300 billion of our paper, and the Japanese own almost \$700 billion. In Asia alone, we owe almost \$1 trillion.

What does this mean to us? Well, it means that we are mortgaging our country to people who may not see the world as we see it. We are giving those countries leverage over us in the financial markets, so that we are potentially in danger of losing our economic freedom to people who own our debt and who can therefore dictate the value of the dollar and all the things that go with that.

That said, this is an American problem. This is not the Republican's balance sheet, it is not the Democrat's balance sheet, it is all of our balance sheets.

In 2004, to put this in some kind of a context, our government borrowed \$13,300 a second. Staggering. In the last 4 years, this administration and this Congress have borrowed more money from foreign interests than all 42 presidents in our history up to 2001. Can you imagine that? We have borrowed more money from foreigners in the last 4 years than all 42 presidents of this country up to 2001. We cannot continue to do what we are doing here without jeopardizing our economic freedom.

In a few minutes, you are going to hear from another Blue Dog, DENNIS CARDOZA, about our plan to try to stop this.

This whole budget process is broken. You are going to hear a lot of stuff this week about the reconciliation of the budget, and what they are going to say is we are cutting spending. But if you look at it, the reconciliation process will actually increase the deficit, not decrease it.

Until the leadership of this country, both here in Congress and the administration, levels with all of us and comes to the American people and says we have got a problem, and we have got to fix it and you have got to help, until they do that, it is just one Congressman saying A and another Congressman saying B, and people lose sight of what is going on here and think it is just another political argument.

Well, I am here this morning to tell you it is not a political argument. It is a dire necessity that we face up to the fact that we have a structural, continuing deficit. The President of the United States himself said we hope to cut the deficit in half in 5 years. That is like saying a doctor telling you I have got good news for you, I thought you were going to bleed to death in 6 months. It will take you 1½ years to bleed to death.

That is no solution to our problem. We have a structural deficit problem. We go in the red every year around here. We have got to completely, in my judgment and in the Blue Dog's judgment, take another look at the whole budget process and almost start from scratch, because I can tell you, folks, we are not doing any good the way we are going right now.

#### WHY ARE WE FIGHTING THE WAR ON TERROR?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, President Bush addressed a Virginia audience, vowing no letup in the war on terror. He acknowledged we have rocky roads ahead but we will not falter. The President said, "Tyrants and would-be tyrants have always claimed that murder is justified to serve their grand vision and they end up alienating decent people across the globe." And he said, "And tyrants and would-be tyrants have always claimed that free men and women are weak and decadent, until the day that free men and women defeat them."

Mr. Speaker, why did he say this? For what exactly are we fighting is the question. On Saturday, October 29, 2005, in India, explosions rocked two New Delhi markets, killing almost 60 people. Although Indian officials appeared hesitant to immediately place blame, Pakistan-based Islamic militants have been suspected in these bombings. Pos-

sibly, as some Indian analysts and newspapers have suggested, these are Pakistani-based groups fighting to wrest Kashmir from India.

Meanwhile, in Jakarta, Indonesia, that same day, seven assailants attacked a group of high school girls walking through a cocoa plantation on their way to class in Indonesia's tense province of Central Sulawesi, beheading three and seriously wounding a fourth. The girls were from a private Christian high school. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation. But Central Sulawesi has a roughly equal number of Muslims and Christians, and sectarian violence. The province witnessed such a bloody war in 2001-2002 that killed around 1,000 people from both communities. At the time, beheadings, burnings and other atrocities were common.

Last week, a grateful Nation paid respects and laid to rest a woman who had the courage to practice her convictions, Rosa Parks. In great part, thanks to her understated fight for freedom, we can take for granted in this country our civil liberties. One of the most fundamental of these, of course, is the simple freedom to worship. However, the irony of our Nation being touched by such a peacefully resolute woman being an agent of change with nothing more than the word "no" the same weekend we witness these alternative, violent ways of objecting to our fellow man by these Islamic fundamentalist terrorist practices is not lost on me.

As did Rosa Parks, thousands of individuals today around the world want to practice their civil rights in the name of freedom of worship, perhaps in a faith not held by their nation's leaders. We want to practice Christianity, or Judaism, or Buddhism, or observe no religion at all, yet there are some people who just cannot stand this, who absolutely refuse to allow us this opportunity. The Web site [www.persecution.org](http://www.persecution.org), a Web site that tracks human rights and persecution of people for choosing to simply practice their Christian faith, reported on October 6 that 53-year-old Pamilton Tadoa, a member of the Tabernakel Pentecostal Church in Indonesia, was shot in the head and killed in the area of Poso while he road his motorbike to school where he served as a treasurer. His death raised fears of a new Islamic crackdown on evangelicals in Indonesia, where 10,000 Christians died between 1998 and 2003 at the hands of extreme Islamic jihad warriors, according to human rights group Open Doors. About 1,000 churches were burned down by Islamic mobs, Open Door said in that report.

Some ask why are we at war? Why are we fighting this war on terror? Because this is how some people in the world continue to settle their differences. Our Nation faces angrily squabbling, fighting mad, groups and individuals who are diametrically opposed to one another, but it seldom

rises to the level of bloodshed. We settle our differences at the ballot box, here in Congress, not with car bombs; through media exposure, not machete swipes. If one cannot see that continued civilization itself is in danger, I don't know what else can persuade you.

Twenty-six years ago last Friday, November 4, 1979, Islamic terrorists took hostages in Tehran. This is how some people in the world address disputes: They take hostages. They push old men in wheelchairs over ship rails into the sea, the Achille Lauro example. They behead little girls. They strap dynamite to their children and send these innocent children to detonate clusters of fellow innocent citizens. They bomb nightclubs, subways, pillars of commerce and symbols of freedom. As long as people reign who cannot live peacefully, the war on terror must press on for the safety of all of us.

#### FEDERAL SPENDING AND THE DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, along with all 36 members of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, I have a sign in front of my office that is updated daily to reflect America's national debt. Just 2 weeks ago, I was deeply dismayed to see that the national debt had reached \$8 trillion. That is \$27,000 for every man, woman and child in America. How did we dig ourselves into such a deep hole? The truth is the Republican leadership has created a credit card Congress that is recklessly selling out the future of America, our children and our grandchildren, and President Bush is the most fiscally irresponsible President in the history of America. On his watch, we have run up record deficits and added nearly \$2.5 trillion to our national debt. In just 5 years in office, President Bush has borrowed more money from foreign sources than all 42 previous Presidents combined. Put together, the first 42 American Presidents borrowed a total of \$1.01 trillion from other countries. President Bush has now borrowed \$1.05 trillion from overseas and he still has 3 years to go.

I know that my Republican colleagues are as ashamed as I am that the United States is forced to borrow over \$1 trillion from foreign nations to pay for our national priorities like reconstruction of the gulf coast and the war in Iraq. We owe it to the American people and future generations to roll up our sleeves and dig out of this mess now. So far, the Republican leadership has refused to reach across the aisle to fix this fiscal mess. The Republican reconciliation plan is a sham. It does nothing to fix the broken budget. In fact, it will make matters worse. By all

accounts, the current proposal would add billions to the deficit in order to finance more reckless tax cuts for the most privileged Americans.

Who in their right mind, I ask you, could look at an \$8 trillion debt and put forward a plan to make it bigger? It is time for a real strategy for fiscal responsibility. The budget process is broken. Anyone can see that. The Blue Dog Coalition has asked the President to convene an emergency bipartisan summit to address America's fiscal crisis. We have put forward a comprehensive 12-step plan to put America back on the path to fiscal responsibility. The Blue Dog 12-step plan is the only serious proposal on the table that would fix our Nation's budget woes and return America to fiscal solvency. Our plan is based on common sense, not party ideology. The Blue Dog 12-step plan includes both Democratic and Republican ideas. When it comes to fixing the budget, the American people deserve cooperation and not partisanship.

Our proposal includes commonsense reforms, such as reinstating the pay-as-you-go rules that we had here a few years ago and implementing discretionary spending caps. We have also urged for the establishment of a rainy day fund to cushion the financial blow of future national emergencies like we saw in the gulf coast recently. You just heard from my Blue Dog colleague, Mr. John Tanner from Tennessee, a leader in the fight for fiscal responsibility in Washington. He outlined for us all how bad the situation is. I strongly urge my colleagues in Congress to embrace real reform and to take immediate action to cure this national tragedy of the debt.

#### AVIAN INFLUENZA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the deadliest plague in human history was the influenza pandemic of 1918 which killed up to 100 million people around the world. While annual flu strains tend to spare young healthy adults, every few decades a strain arises that can kill people in the prime of life. In 1918, more than a quarter of all Americans fell ill. What started for millions around the globe as a runny nose and a sore throat developed into a gruesome, deadly virus. No war, no plague, no famine ever killed so many.

This year, brilliant medical detective work pieced together the genetic makeup of the 1918 virus. The origin was found to be avian influenza, the so-called bird flu.

The new mutant strain of bird flu spreading across Europe and Asia may turn out to be even deadlier than the 1918 virus. As we scramble to assemble plans and get vaccine, more birds infected and more human contact means more opportunity for the virus to mu-

tate, perhaps triggering this next human pandemic.

Both the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization consider another pandemic inevitable, whether triggered by this bird flu virus or the next.

The current proposed spending plan does finally address some measures to mediate the impact of future pandemics, but it overlooks the critical policy initiatives that could directly impact the threat at its source.

For example, avian influenza is not limited to Asia or Europe. There have been over a dozen outbreaks of low-grade avian influenza viruses in the United States just within the last 5 years. An outbreak of a high grade H5 virus in Pennsylvania in the eighties led to the death of more than 17 million birds. Nationwide surveys tracked the strains of that virus back to at least 48 live bird markets across five States. Each year more than 20 million birds of various species pass through at least 150 known storefront slaughter facilities in the northeast metropolitan areas alone, increasing the risk of human exposure and the persistence of these viruses. Most of these operations are not subjected to USDA food safety regulations. These live animal markets should be either eliminated or at a minimum brought within the USDA's existing food safety regulatory scheme.

The United Nations food and agriculture organization has implicated live animal transport as another prime culprit for the rapid spread of the virus across Southeast Asia. Yet transportation of birds reared for human consumption remains unregulated in much of the world and in the United States.

The cockfighting trade is another area under increasing scrutiny as a prime vehicle to spread the disease. We need a stronger Federal law against the transport of cockfighting birds across State and national borders. Gamecocks are not part of any testing program and there is a thriving trade in birds for use in this barbaric industry. The Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act of 2005 would increase penalties for violations of Federal animal fighting laws to help prevent illegal cockfighting. The Senate passed this bill unanimously in April, but the identical House bill has not yet been acted upon in the Judiciary Committee. The House and the Senate passed an identically worded felony cockfighting provision in the 2002 farm bill, but inexplicably this provision was gutted in conference. It is unconscionable that we would wait on enacting this felony provision. The House needs to act immediately to strengthen the law to diminish the risk of fighting birds as vectors for avian influenza.

The bird flu virus could also be imported to our shores via the trade in wild birds for pets. More than 400,000 live exotic birds are imported every year to the United States. The stress of confinement and long-distance transport critically weakens their immune