

the Republican majority is sitting here saying do not worry about it America, trust us. The UK, \$223.2 billion owned of the United States of America debt. Taiwan, \$71.3 billion. Korea, that should ring a bell with some people and especially some of our veterans, \$66.5 billion. Germany, Germany should ring a bell with some of our veterans, \$65.7 billion of our debt, and Canada, just north of, us \$53.8 billion. OPEC Nations, oh, wow, who are they? It happens to be Saudi Arabia, happens to be Iran, happens to be Iraq.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. UAE.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. \$67.8 billion. So, Mr. Speaker, when we start talking about raising the debt ceiling and responsibility, we balanced the budget. We did not have these issues. When I say "we," I am saying the Democratic Congress balanced the budget without a single Republican vote.

The reason why I speak boldly on this issue is the fact that it is fact and it is not fiction and that we are sharing it with them. The real issue, when you talk about the ports, some Members may say the bill that you have and a number of Members signed on to in the Senate, a number of Members who have signed on to it, Mr. Speaker, they are saying, well, you know, I do not represent a port city or a coastal city so I do not have anything to worry about. Well, guess what, these containers that we see here are all throughout America because these containers are loaded on to trucks and trains, and they go through America. If a terrorist wants to put a nuclear device in one of these containers to be put into activation in a certain U.S. city, they have the power to do so because they know that we only check 5 percent. That is not because we cannot check more. It is because we cannot get amendments passed here as Democrats in the minority to check more and protect America. So I think it is important we do it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think it is important for us to say, Mr. Speaker, to the Members of this chamber that this is brinkmanship now with the debt ceiling. We are on the line here, and Secretary Snow, and I do not know if you went over this before.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I did but go over it again.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. March 6 sent a letter to John Spratt who is our ranking Democrat on the Budget Committee. Today, it was reported in the Associated Press the Secretary told Congress yesterday in this letter, the administration is taking, quote, all prudent and legal actions, end quote, including tapping certain government retirement funds. Now they are tapping retirement funds to keep from reaching the \$8.2 trillion national debt limit, and in the letter to Congress he said that we need to raise the debt ceiling immediately to avoid the first government default on its obligations in U.S. history.

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If this outfit hasn't gotten us into a real predicament, I don't know what a

predicament is. If we don't raise the debt ceiling, we are going to default on our obligations. The United States of America, Mr. Speaker, for the first time in our history.

I would be happy to yield.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. There is a very simple solution: we return to PAYGO rules. We return to the days when we spent what we had, like people in American households try to do every single day and struggle to do. But we have the ability to establish a rule. We have the ability to follow a rule that says we will only spend what we have. We have advocated, as Democrats, restoring the PAYGO rule, and we have been repeatedly rejected by the Republican leadership because they just want to continue to borrow and spend, borrow and spend.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. So let us look at this. We talked about two things basically tonight. We talked about the ports and the debt ceiling. On the port deal, to try to increase spending, the Democrats offered, I don't know, a dozen different amendments to try to increase funding from U.S. ports, and each time the Republican majority shot our idea down.

We had ideas. We offered solutions. The Republican majority, Mr. Speaker, shot us down. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ just talked about the pay-as-you-go system, where if you pay more for a program, you have to find money somewhere. You have to raise revenue or cut spending, but you have to pay for it so we don't have to borrow from all these foreign countries.

Former Member Mr. Stenholm offered an amendment to try to implement PAYGO rules into the budget process. Mr. THOMPSON from California tried to do it, Mr. MOORE from Kansas tried to do it, and Mr. SPRATT tried to do it on numerous occasions, to implement pay-as-you-go rules to try to constrain the reckless spending from our Republican colleagues, Mr. Speaker. And in each instance, Mr. MEEK, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, it was the Republican majority who said we will not accept fiscal discipline, we will not accept increased funding for our ports; and the Democrats were the party offering the ideas and offering the amendments time and time and time and time again to prevent this from happening, where we owe Japan \$682 billion, we owe China \$250 billion, and we owe OPEC countries, Mr. MEEK, \$67.8 billion.

Now, that is a shame. And I don't like that. And I don't think the American people like that.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, you are 110 percent right. As we close, Mr. Speaker, since we have only 3 minutes or so left, once again we have seen this chart, and as I have said before, it will be in the National Archives. We are not trying to make history, but just to report what is going on here so the American people will know this.

In 224 years of great history in this great country of ours, 1776 to 2000, 42

Presidents, \$1.01 trillion was borrowed from foreign nations. That is 224 years. And in 4 years, from 2001 to 2005, President Bush, and we don't want to leave out the Republican Congress, borrowed \$1.05 trillion from foreign nations, in 4 years, jeopardizing the financial security of this country.

Mr. RYAN, you are 110 percent right to be alarmed.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You are 110 percent right to be alarmed.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge the Republican majority to give us a good way to talk about this. They can't. They can't, Mr. Speaker. We hope we can have what we call a paradigm shift, a change in the way we do business here in Washington, D.C., not on behalf of the Democratic Party but on behalf of the American people.

So we are looking for a comprehensive game plan, Mr. Speaker, because we have one. We have one on this side. History is on our side. The precedent is on our side of trying to do something about it. We ask for the majority to join us in this.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. MEEK, the point I want to add is this body has openings for people of courage, and we encourage them to apply for those jobs over the next several months.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Job openings.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. There are job openings for people of courage. We need a few more people of courage. There are a couple on that side, but we need a whole lot more.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, www.HouseDemocrats.gov/30something. That is www.HouseDemocrats.gov/30something. Members of Congress can go to this Web site and access all of the charts, see our third-party validators, and see why we are so alarmed at what is going on here in our Nation's capital.

I yield to my good friend, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, with that we would like to thank not only the Democratic leadership but also many of us here in the House who are trying to work hard on behalf of the American people. I know we all are, but I think it is important that we bring these issues to the forefront.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). The Chair would remind Members to address their remarks to the Chair and not to persons outside the Chamber.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. COSTA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week.