

**Transcript of Remarks by Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND)
at Senate Finance Committee Markup of Debt Limit Increase
September 12, 2007**

I would like to point out this is the fifth increase of the debt limit under President Bush. We have now raised the debt limit of the United States nearly \$4 trillion on his watch. The fact is that under his fiscal policy the debt limit of the United States has been raised \$3.865 trillion dollars. This most recent increase of \$850 billion is one of the biggest increases we have ever had.

I recall the President told us that he would have maximum pay down of the debt if his fiscal plan was adopted. Well that hasn't worked out. Not only has there been no pay down of the debt, in fact the debt has exploded. We have been talking about the debt limit. But if we look at what has happened to the gross debt of the United States under the President's plan, it has gone from \$5.8 trillion at the end of his first year – we don't hold him responsible for his first year – to \$8.9 trillion at the end of this year. That's how much the debt of the United States has soared under this fatally flawed fiscal policy. And all of this at the worst possible time, right before the baby boomers retire.

Now with that said, we have no choice but to pass the debt limit. What the Chairman and Ranking Member have said is true. These are debts that have already been accrued. And we are responsible for them. And if we fail to act in a timely way on raising the debt limit the credit worthiness of all United States instruments would be called into question. That could have a very severe effect on already shaky financial markets.

So I would say to my colleagues, I think it is very important that we make note of where the fiscal policy of this President has led us, how seriously flawed it has been. But at the end of the day we need to approve the extension of the debt limit and do it in a timely way so there is absolutely no question in the financial markets of the United States that we are going to be responsible for the bills that have been run up.