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POLITICAL COMMENTARY FROM ANDREW MALCOLM

New national debt data: It's growing about \$3 million a minute, even during his vacation

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Swallow all liquids in your mouth before reading any further.

Updated numbers for the national debt are just out: It's now \$14,639,000,000,000.

When Barack Obama took the oath of office twice on Jan. 20, 2009, [CBS' amazing number cruncher Mark Kn](#) \$10,626,000,000,000.

That means the debt that our federal government owes a whole lot of somebodies including China has increased the fastest increase under any president ever.

Remember the day the Democrat promised to close the embarrassing Guantanamo Bay Detention Facility with increased \$4,247,000,000. And each day since that the facility hasn't been closed.

Same for the day in 2009 when Obama flew all the way out to Denver to sign the \$787 billion stimulus bill that beneath 8% instead of the 9.1% we got today anyway? Another \$4,247,000,000 that day. And every day since

Same sum for the day Obama flew Air Force One nearly four hours roundtrip to Columbus, Ohio for a 10-min working in the politically crucial Buckeye state. Ohio's unemployment rate just jumped to 9% from 8.8% any

Or last week's three-day Midwestern tour in the president's new \$1.1 million Death Star bus? National debt with \$16,988,000,000 while he rode around speaking and buying ice cream cones.

Numbers with that many digits are hard to grasp, even for a Harvard head. So, let's put it another way:

One billion seconds ago Bill Clinton was nearing the end of his two terms and George W. Bush's baseball collection still on the shelves in the Austin governor's office.

The nation's debt increased \$4.9 trillion under President Bush too, btw. But it took him 2,648 days to do it. Or surpass that sum during this term.

Now, how to portray a trillion, or 1,000 billions. One trillion seconds ago much of North America was still covered sheets hundreds of feet thick. And the land was dotted by only a few dozen Starbucks.

Obama is saying yes, we can get control of the national debt. But ominously every time he says that he adds trillions of dollars in infrastructure repairs are badly needed across the country. And with interest rates so low, according to thinking on Obama's planet, now is an excellent time to borrow even more money.

So, it looks like not too long before Americans learn what comes after 1,000 trillions.

It's quadrillion. But for Bernanke's sake, please don't tell anyone in Washington.

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-- Andrew Malcolm

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Photos: Associated Press (Obama and Democratic congressional leaders Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid plot to close Guantanamo); Associated Press (Obama gets off the bus for some ice cream in Iowa, Aug. 16).