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The Week just past

"With much fanfare, the President held his first Cabinet meeting on Monday, and 'ordered' his Administration's leadership to cut government spending. That's certainly a concept I would endorse. However, the Administration's total budget cutting goal is a meager \$100 million!

"The Administration's new talk of trimming a miniscule .0025 percent from the \$4 trillion federal budget just doesn't square with its record on borrowing and spending. At the same time they're looking for millions in savings, the President's budget calls for adding trillions to our national debt.

"The Administration and Congress have spent the past three months doling out more taxpayer dollars faster than every previous President combined. If the Administration wants to get serious about cutting waste, it should start by taking a closer look at how millions in 'stimulus' dollars are being wasted.

"As Speaker Pelosi works to finalize their budget for the next fiscal year, I would remind her that the Minority has proposed a better budget solution that curbs spending, creates jobs by cutting taxes, and controls the debt."

Bad Idea of the Week

"The President this week suggested that the government may prosecute Bush Administration officials for their role in crafting strategies that led to 'enhanced interrogation' of detainees in the global war on terror.

This is a mistake that would set a dangerous precedent. Over the history of this great nation, our political system has avoided the spectacle of one Presidential Administration actually punishing its predecessor over policy differences.

Clearly, the President is completely entitled to work to change policies with which he disagrees. But to prosecute Americans who were attempting to develop policies to protect America in the dark days following September 11, 2001 is a grave error.

Just as certainly, if there is evidence of criminality, then let the chips fall where they may. But from what I know today, I cannot think of a worse idea than a prosecution based on policy."

Recommended Reading:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124044188941045415.html#printMode>

'Stop-loss' is stopped for deploying soldiers

As further evidence that the task of securing Afghanistan will be more difficult than originally projected, General

David Petraeus, commander of our forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, told an audience at Harvard University that "we do believe we can achieve progress, but it's going to get worse before it gets better. When you go into the enemy's sanctuaries, they will fight you for it. There will be tough months ahead, without question." He also advised that the progress that has been seen in Iraq is "fragile."

At the same time, at the suggestion of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, Defense Secretary Robert Gates approved a plan to "eliminate the use of stop-loss for deploying soldiers." 'Stop-loss' is the involuntary extension of a soldier's active duty service under the enlistment contract in order to retain them beyond their initial end of term of service. This policy has been applied to soldiers with certain in-demand skills.

"This is good news for the Army and for military families," said Frelinghuysen. "While we have not eliminated stop-loss altogether, this action is further evidence that conditions are improving in Iraq and that we are restoring the Army to its proper size and structure."

This Week in Washington

Numerous citizen groups visited Rep. Frelinghuysen's Washington office this week to brief him on a variety of important issues – the Military Officers Association, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, the New Jersey Bar Association, the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, to name a few. Frelinghuysen also had the opportunity to question General David Petraeus, responsible for operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, at a hearing of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. Petraeus is a West Point graduate (Class of 1974) who holds two advanced degrees from Princeton University.

Town Meetings Tomorrow!

Rep. Frelinghuysen will hold public town meetings in Somerville and Caldwell on Saturday, April 25. All residents and concerned citizens in the 11th Congressional District are invited to attend.

"I hold town meetings on regular basis because there is no better way for a Member of Congress to know what is on the minds of his or her constituents than by reaching out to residents to listen to their concerns and address their questions in a face to face town hall meeting," said Frelinghuysen.

The Somerville Town Meeting will be held from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Senior Citizen Housing Community Room, 1 Mountain Avenue, Somerville (08876).

The Caldwell Town Meeting will be held from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. at the Community Center Gymnasium, 1 Provost Square, Caldwell (07006).

Seating may be limited. Both facilities are handicapped accessible. Constituent service staff will be available to address individual concerns.

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