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The Week just past

"I am pleased that the President made an unannounced visit to Baghdad this week. It's important that he shows our troops that their service in this critical region of the world is not forgotten.

"I agree with his statement that the next 18 months are going to be 'critical.' And, as a senior member of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I will work to ensure that our soldiers, Marines, airmen and sailors have all the resources and the tools they need to accomplish their mission.

"In this regard, the announcement this week by the Secretary of Defense of deep cuts in defense programs bears our close scrutiny. While several ongoing weapons programs deserve to be cut, restructured or eliminated altogether, Congress has a responsibility to make sure that we do not focus exclusively on today's important conflicts while ignoring very serious challenges on the horizon. We can, and should, do both.

"It was interesting that at the same time President Obama was in Europe talking about nuclear disarmament, the North Koreans tested their ballistic missile capability (which they have been marketing around the world) by firing a Taepodong-2 missile over Japan. It was ironic that two days later, the Defense Department announced significant cuts to our missile defense program.

"And, I also don't think the President was right to be apologizing to the G-20 nations or suggesting we are all 'equals.'"

Around New Jersey

With Congress in the midst of its Easter-Passover Recess, Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen spent this week discussing the economy with a wide range of groups. He spoke this week to the Morris County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Warren Sussex Employer Legislative Committee of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association, and the Madison Rotary. He also held a 'town meeting' at Honeywell and visited other employers and hospitals across his Congressional District.

"Family budgets are tight, savings and investments have shrunk and job loss is at an all-time high" said Frelinghuysen. "As Americans look to their national leaders in Washington for solutions to help bring our nation out of this financial mess, the 'solutions' only seem to add insult to injury: 1) the largely misdirected, trillion-dollar "stimulus" spending plan; 2) the massive \$410 billion "Omnibus" spending bill; and 3) last week, Congress passed a budget that spends too much, taxes too much and borrows too much. The American people deserve better."

TARP Funds

With the recent passage of the \$787 billion Stimulus bill and the \$410 billion Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations bill, federal discretionary spending has increased over 80% from last year.

The Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) has expended \$645 billion of its \$700 billion that had been allocated to 523 banks thus far.

In addition, the Federal Reserve, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and Treasury Department have created several new spending and insurance programs. Through April 1, the government has spent a total of \$2.5 trillion and made commitments of about \$12.1 trillion. Repeat, 12.1 trillion dollars.

Frelinghuysen Welcomes NASA Astronaut Back Home

Rep. Monday welcomed NASA Astronaut Garrett Reisman to three schools in his Congressional District. Dr. Reisman, an astronaut who calls Parsippany "home" and Rep. Frelinghuysen visited William Annin Middle School in Basking Ridge, Memorial Junior High School in Whippany and Washington Elementary School in West Caldwell.

"I'm proud to welcome Dr. Reisman back to New Jersey and thank him for providing New Jersey students with this great opportunity," said Frelinghuysen. "So many children grown up dreaming of becoming astronauts, and Garrett Reisman gives them real inspiration that it is possible, but only if they excel in math and science."

Reisman spoke with over 400 8th grade students in Basking Ridge, 500 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students in Whippany and 400 elementary school students in West Caldwell about his experiences with NASA and the importance of science and mathematics.

Born in Morristown in 1969, Dr. Reisman considers Parsippany to be his hometown. Selected as a NASA Mission Specialist in 1998, he completed his first space flight in 2008, logging over three months in space. Reisman launched in March 2008 aboard Space Shuttle Endeavor, crewed the International Space Station and returned to Earth aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery in June of 2008. While in space, he completed a seven hour spacewalk.

This year marks the tenth Astronaut Day hosted by Rep. Frelinghuysen. The goal of the day is to highlight for New Jersey students the importance of math and science education.

Inducting Army Leaders

Last Saturday Rep. Frelinghuysen joined the Picatinny Arsenal community at a special ceremony honoring 70 area soldiers as they were inducted as "non-commissioned officers" or NCOs. In all, 74 Soldiers from New Jersey and New York were recognized.

"The Secretary of the Army has declared 2009 to be the 'Year of the NCO' for good reason," said Frelinghuysen. "Since the days of George Washington's Army marching across New Jersey, the NCO Corps has distinguished itself as the world's most accomplished group of military professionals. In short, they do whatever it takes to complete the Army's mission. All Americans owe them a deep debt of gratitude for their commitment to service and their willingness to make great sacrifices for their nation."

The noncommissioned ranks range from corporal to sergeant major of the Army. NCOs are called the "backbone of the Army" because an NCO can be found at the front of every Army mission. Additionally, NCOs train and lead junior soldiers in any given mission or military occupational skill. They often are looked upon as "big brothers" by enlisted Soldiers and provide advice and guidance on professional and personal matters.

During a ceremony at Picatinny Arsenal, attended by nearly 125 guests, the 74 Soldiers were sworn into the NCO corps and announced their allegiance to uphold the charges appointed to them by their superiors.

Frelinghuysen presented the NCOs with their certificates, thanking each soldier for his or her service.

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