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eNews - July 2, 2009

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The Week Just Past

"This week marked an important milestone for Americans and Iraqis. The U.S.-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement required all U.S. troops to withdraw from Iraqi cities by June 30. Under the leadership of Morris County's own General Ray Odierno, our forces met this 'deadline' with time to spare. Building on the success of the 'surge' and a successful counterinsurgency plan, we have been withdrawing slowly over the last eight months and the final units have moved out of the cities over the last several weeks.

"With U.S. troops out of Iraq's cities, the burden for securing them falls to the Iraqi security forces (ISF). Those forces currently appear to be up to the challenge. General Odierno reported that the ISF have seen significant increases in capability.

"The men and women of America's military have invested heavily in defeating terrorist networks in Iraq and sacrificed even more while achieving the current level of stability. They are to be commended—and thanked—for their courageous efforts and sacrifices.

"Withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq will continue slowly and deliberately throughout this year, though enough forces will remain to ensure the success of the January Iraqi elections.

"As we gather with family and friends this holiday weekend, we should make sure that we remember that there are nearly 200,000 dedicated troops - all volunteers - doing the hard work of protecting America in harsh, distant places like Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere."

Independence Day?

Across the country families are tightening their belts and trimming their family budgets, making tough choices to get through this difficult economic time. They expect Washington to do the same. To the contrary, the President and the Congress of House Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Reid passed a federal budget plan that spends too much, taxes too much and borrows too much.

Since Democrats took control of Congress in 2007, appropriations spending has increased by 41 percent - expanding a range of programs and making the government more dependant than

ever on new taxing and new borrowing.

After little more than two years of Congressional control, Speaker Pelosi and Senator Reid have increased federal non-defense spending by 85 percent – a near doubling of non-defense spending.

Here are the facts on spending in 2009:

- Deficit for 2009 - \$2 trillion
- Second tranche of TARP - \$350 billion
- Stimulus (H.R. 1) - \$787 billion (over \$1 trillion with debt costs)
- Omnibus Appropriations bill (H.R. 1105) - \$409 billion
- President Obama's budget increased total spending to \$4 trillion in 2009 – or 28 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – the highest federal spending as a percentage of GDP since World War II.

It is disappointing that the Majority Leadership in Congress have been willing to use any measure to pass more spending, including adding International Monetary Fund (IMF) funding to the emergency war funding bill that supplies that protect our troops. The brave men and women of our armed forces should not be held as political pawns to advance even more Washington spending.

Clearly, it is time to practice fiscal discipline, advocate for common sense solutions and offer amendments on the House floor to control runaway spending and cut government waste.

Regrettably, the Leadership has shut down debate in the House because they “have the votes” to do so.

Aftermath of Passage of a defective Cap and Trade bill

President Obama this week turned his attention to the U.S. Senate, after being handed a “victory” last Friday night with House passage of Speaker Pelosi's sweeping cap-and-trade bill. He urged the Senate “Don't believe the misinformation out there that suggests there is somehow a contradiction between investing in clean energy and economic growth.”

The President is correct. Partially.

Environmental protection and economic growth are not mutually exclusive. As an innovative society, we can and must find the means to do both!

Unfortunately, the Pelosi-Reid “cap-and-trade” bill - a “bastardized” version of a possible free market solution - ignores this fundamental imperative. This “cap-and-trade” program will destroy American jobs, raise prices for gasoline, electricity, and other sources of energy for all families and small businessmen and women.

In the midst of the deepest recession in memory, Americans are justifiably worried. Retention and creation of good jobs is a top concern. And, for good reason: we're hemorrhaging jobs at a staggering rate, with 1.6 million private sector jobs lost since the trillion-dollar “stimulus” spending bill passed. This bill will make a bad situation worse.

And, how did Speaker Pelosi succeed in passing this legislation? Published reports indicate that it took a lot of backroom, middle-of-the-night horse-trading to get it done.

For example, a story in the Washington Times on Wednesday <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/jul/01/sweetener-helped-sway-vote-on-house-climate-bill/> indicated that one Congresswoman from Ohio voted for the bill only after the Majority Leadership agreed to establish a new federal power authority, “similar to Washington state's Bonneville Power Administration, stocked with up to \$3.5 billion in taxpayer money

available for lending to renewable energy and economic development projects in Ohio and other Midwestern states."

House Energy and Commerce Chairman Henry A. Waxman included the project in a 310-page amendment to the legislation unveiled at 3 a.m. last Friday, just hours before the bill was to be debated on the House floor.

Bad Idea of the Week: Incomplete Cyber-Protection

Each and every day, the threat to our national security posed by cyber attacks grows. The public web, air-traffic control systems and telecommunications and financial services have all been attacked. On Capitol Hill, Congressional offices have been hacked by culprits in China. Both China and Russia were caught having infiltrated the U.S. electric-power grid, threatening massive power outages.

So it is against this background that the Obama Administration announced establishment of a new Department of Defense "Cyber Command" to protect information infrastructure.

However, at the same time, the Administration decided that the military will be allowed to protect only itself, not the civilian internet or other key networks. The President was very clear. In his announcement he declared that the new "cyber command" "will not -- I repeat -- will not -- include monitoring private-sector networks or Internet traffic." The Wall Street Journal put it this way: "It's like telling the military if there's another 9/11 to protect the Pentagon but not the World Trade Center."

Question: what if the only way the military can block a cyber attack is to monitor domestic use of the web, since foreigners use the Web to launch cyber attacks?


We must enhance our national capability to deter, detect and respond to cyber attacks. Can we do that if we tie the hands of the Department of Defense?

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