

AM I THE ONLY ONE WORRIED?

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JAN. 7, 2010 – The country is going broke. Am I the only one worried? I've watched government for fifty-two years – presided in both Houses of the State Legislature, served as Governor, and thirty-eight years in the Senate in Washington – and Washington has turned Kennedy's phrase to: Ask not what you can do for the country, but ask what you can do for your campaign. The Senate Chamber has turned into campaign headquarters of the two political parties, and the media no longer covers the needs of the country, but only the campaign.

Every Mayor, every Governor, in the land is struggling to pay for this year's government. But Washington dissembles with ten-year budgets, hoping to bring down the deficit from 10% of the GDP to 3% of the GDP in five years and appoint a commission to study it and report back after the election.

We elected Congressmen and Senators the same as Mayors and Governors. We elected them to determine and provide for the needs, not study. The \$5 trillion in tax cuts by President George W. Bush was exactly the \$5 trillion added to the national debt during his time. But the media reveled in tax cuts and today acts like any public servant that wants to raise taxes and pay for the government is stupid. The country grows, the economy grows, there are more people to be taken care of, and spending cuts won't do it. A tax increase is necessary. Washington ought be debating taxes rather than appointing study commissions.

We've all agreed that Iraq was unnecessary and should agree that Afghanistan is not necessary. The problem in Afghanistan

and Pakistan is the United States. We are creating terrorism rather than eliminating it. If we would get out, a true democratic decision would be reached in both countries. But instead, we are determined to force feed democracy – and ask GIs to get killed for it.

Now we're arguing about whether the President uses the word "terror" or is serious about the "war on terror." There's no such thing as a war on bombing or a war on terror. Terror is a weapon or strategy and, instead of debating the reaction or results of terror, we ought to go to the cause. Osama bin Laden told us the cause on 9/11. Osama felt that the U. S. was engaged in a war on Islam; a crusade against the Islam religion. And we keep proving Osama bin Laden's case. Our support for Israel started Osama's case. The air base in Saudi Arabia was used by Osama to prove his case. Our going into Kuwait bolstered his case. Going into Iraq proved his case, and Al Qaeda, that was not previously in Iraq, entered. Going into Afghanistan proves his case. Droning civilians in Pakistan proves his case. And now we've found another country, Yemen, where terrorists train.

This going anywhere they train to "disrupt, dismantle and defeat" Al Qaeda is playing cowboy. The nineteen that trained to fly a plane into a building received training not in Afghanistan, but in Arizona, Florida, and Conway, South Carolina. On 9/11, the State Department listed Al Qaeda in forty-five countries – in the United States, but not Iraq. We can't go to war in forty-five countries.

Six years ago, the President of Pakistan told a Senate delegation to settle the Israel/Palestine conflict and 85% of the terrorism in the world would disappear. Regardless of how you feel about the beginning of Israel, she won it fair and square in four wars, culminating in the Six-Day War forty-three years ago. What's not fair and square is occupying the Palestinians for forty-three years, building walls, bulldozing houses, extending the occupation. As David Ben Gurion told me thirty-nine years ago, the peoples have to learn to live together rather than kill together. And the friends of Israel need to work more diligently on this beginning of terrorism, rather than again start training troops in Yemen.

Rather, we need to spread democracy at home and in our next-door neighbor, Mexico. Two thousand thirty-six were murdered last year in the border city of Juarez, requiring the Mayor of Juarez to live in El Paso. This is lunacy. Out of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and Yemen ought be the order of the day, and into Mexico with a Marshall Plan to help solve our immigration and drug problems.

At the end of the year, the enemy had invaded our drone activity in cyber-space and folks were talking about the next war being not on the ground but in space. The next war is now – the trade war that Japan started after World War II, putting General Motors out of business. Now China has taken over. We are hand-over-fist, pell-mell, exporting as fast as we can

our investment, research, development, production, jobs, and economy to China, while Washington government puts on an act about creating jobs, but doing absolutely nothing to save jobs and the economy.

The Congress should immediately eliminate the tax incentives to create jobs in China. The President long since should have put on a 10% surcharge on imports. Long since he should have cancelled the corporate tax to replace it with a 5% value added tax. A 3% VAT, with exemptions for food, housing and health, would replace the revenues of the corporate income tax, 2% would help pay for health costs and start paying down the debt. The President can create millions of jobs by enforcing the War Production Act of 1950 that provides for production and a ready supply of those items necessary to our national defense. Under Section 201 of the Trade Act, “endangered” automobile production like GM can be protected with import quotas or tariffs.

If we don't move now, China will control us. It won't be nuclear or missiles or space, but economically. China is slightly altering our technology, patenting it, and before long the Chinese article will be the article of production and trade. We won't be able to produce economically. Our environment, our middle class, our standard of living, our democracy will be gone. This is my outlook for 2010. Please tell me I'm wrong.

Senator Hollings of South Carolina served 38 years in the United States Senate, and for many years was Chairman of the Commerce, Space, Science & Transportation Committee. He is the author of the recently published book, [Making Government Work](#) (University of South Carolina Press, 2008).