



What is Wrong with Washington?

Bruce L. Bialosky

I have the occasion to go to Washington, D.C., about four times a year. Since I have been doing this for a while and have been involved with Republican politics for more than a quarter century, I now have a small bit of sway. With this advantage, my most recent trip offered me the opportunity to understand what is wrong with Washington.

When I go to Washington, I now plan meetings one-on-one with elected officials or elected wannabes. My trips are filled with meetings in between my meetings. I rarely carry a message other than: I am here to help, so please let me know how you

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would like me to do so. This time I took a message back: that we had gone off message. Yes, we have the big picture on the War on Terror. The president continues to stay focused on that. Mr. Bush should know that Churchill would be proud of him.

Two issues

But Washington should confront two issues that are infuriating the base. They are immigration and the lack of spending controls. As Californians, we all have angst over these issues and I took my opportunity to discuss that with everyone I could. That included three congressmen, a candidate for the U.S. Senate, and a potential candidate for president in 2008.

The candidates expressed clarity on the issues, but the message was a little different from the congressmen. They are the ones who can and should act, but I am not sure they have the focus. On the issue of illegal immigration it is clear we must take some action or a smart Democrat (like Hillary) will try to steal this issue. As for the exorbitant spending, one congressman blamed the budget on the president, but the next one I saw said he was wrong and reminded us all who is generating the expenditures: Congress.

I brought up the budget issue with a friend on the domestic policy staff and he assured me their proposed budget would hold the line in the next year. So I made my feelings clear with the belief that if they continue to hear about our concerns they may actually act on them.

But then reality set in. I ran into a lady I know who was recently appointed head of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). I congratulated her and told her I hoped she was the last. She smiled and laughed.

That night I saw her again at the White House Hanukkah Party. While standing in a group near her, I mentioned what I felt about the CPB to a friend. My friend, who will remain nameless to protect the guilty, was surprised at my attitude. He even expressed the thought that I was showing a surprising level of naiveté. He reminded me that he had been in Washington for 15 years and knows better. He said the issue was a loser. "We have bigger issues to deal with," he said. "It is only \$100,000,000." And to

put the proverbial icing on the cake, he asked "Why do you want to kill Elmo?"

I guess I should not be shocked. We have all heard such thoughts, but to hear it from a staunch Republican really makes you want to retch.

It may just be me, but I cannot think of a more useless expenditure in the federal government than supporting both PBS and NPR. First, they both have news services. Doesn't anyone see a problem with government funding two of our major news services? Probably not at this time because neither service appears to agree with anything this administration does. But what about the last administration — they sounded like a service Fidel Castro would have been proud to possess.

We would be spared the national debate about the past chairman of CPB trying to influence the corporation's programming to include more conservative content if we cut these services loose. In addition, I know a reporter who is writing a book about the nefarious nature of broadcasts on NPR. I have heard them and I assure you, you don't want your tax dollars paying for that. And don't they have Air America now?

Lame argument

In what way have these organizations not outlived their usefulness? If they can survive in the marketplace then they should be allowed to do so. The only lame argument they ever had was that the programming they present would never have been shown anywhere else. With our current array of more than two hundred channels everything else gets on the air. Who would have thought a "Home and Garden" channel would make it? Well, it does and is highly profitable. I feel comfortable Elmo would find a home somewhere out of the U.S. government pig trough.

This is the point in the article where the wise author tells you the solution to the problem. Well, I don't have one. I guess we could yank them all out of D.C., but that would have to mean yanking all the staffers and lobbyists also. You know that is not going to happen.

I guess I wrote this article just to complain. After all, our own people who should know better have become as problematic as the opposition. After all, it is only \$100,000,000.

CPB

A most

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, so to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Tyranny, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future safety.

These are the reasons which have led to the Declaration of Independence.

uncivil war

H.L. Richardson & John Kurzweil

Critics of Judge Samuel Alito’s U.S. Supreme Court nomination argue that America is by its nature and at its very core “diverse,” that this principle of diversity is shown by our historical devotion to individual freedom and by our population of immigrants who arrived here from every nation on earth. These critics say Judge Alito represents an alien impulse to impose a dreary, dictatorial sameness on our country, completely contrary to our natural character as Americans.

There is a superficial validity to this contention. When asked about our common origin, Americans sometimes joke about it, commenting that our citizenry is “like Heinz’s soup, comprised of 57 different varieties.” It is true that the bulk of Americans can trace their ancestors to many different “tribes” or nationalities. But it is also true that most Americans who have been here a few generations never think much about their ancestral roots — or how bloody the fights were among those many tribes and nationalities. Most have scant knowledge of their past beyond two generations or are even aware of the animosities and hatreds that existed between their foreign ancestors. “That’s past history, what does that

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