

Immigration and Iraq Remain Key Issues in Washington

Congressman John T. Doolittle, speaking at the quarterly meeting of the Republican Congress of Placer County on May 30, 2007, at Lou La Bonte's Restaurant in Auburn, explained the limited prospects for resolution of the two key issues of illegal immigration and Iraq. Doolittle has been a fixture as our Congressman since 1990.

Congressional dithering during the last two decades has permitted the illegal immigration problem to get completely out of hand. Any solution, Doolittle pointed out, must begin with gaining control of the nation's own borders.

But the real solution is for the Mexican government to finally become sufficiently business friendly – sufficiently concerned with facilitating the commerce of its own people – so that Mexico can prosper and provide jobs for its own people within its own borders. Current Mexican economic policies are responsible for the poverty of the Mexican people and their need to flee to the United States to find work. He expressed the hope that the current Mexican government will be able to improve the business climate in Mexico sufficiently to make progress with its own economy.

Doolittle introduced legislation prohibiting the provision of mortgages for people who do not provide a valid social security number. This was successfully passed in the House with considerable Democratic support. The problem is no longer confined to the border states, but has become of increasing concern in a number of interior states. However, the prospects in the Senate for his legislation remain doubtful.

U.S. objectives in Iraq must be limited in recognition of the inherent instability of the region. At best, Doolittle pointed out, the most that can be realistically expected is that the Iraqi government will reach a point that, with continuing U.S. support, it can sustain itself in an open ended struggle with insurgents and terrorists within its borders. The original higher objectives of the Bush (II) administration have been revealed as unrealistic.

Doolittle reported on his recent activities within his vast district, and covered issues of local interest.

- Work to ease the I-80 bottleneck should be completed within the next 18 months.
- Work on the Highway 55 bypass is about to begin.
- The Auburn park preserve project is being finalized.
- Storm water projects are currently in the appropriations process.

The bulk of his time was left open for a question and answer period that covered a wide range of issues of interest to the membership.

- The Democratic controlled Senate is reconsidering the Law of the Sea Treaty. This would provide the United Nations with some power to tax and some scope for acting as an actual world government with respect to resources at sea. Doolittle has no confidence in the UN as a government

body and hopes the Republicans in the Senate can block the treaty. The treaty was originally rejected during the Reagan Administration.

- Doolittle also has no confidence in the current Immigration and Naturalization Service bureaucracy. It is entangled in a morass of laws and regulations that make it easier to get work in the U.S. as an illegal immigrant than as a legal visa holder.
- Some progress has been made in efforts to deal with the nation's energy problems – but not nearly enough. Legislation has been passed that will increase supplies of natural gas from Canada, and the laws governing nuclear power plants have been changed. The pipeline is now slowly filling so that ultimately a stream of new modern nuclear power plants should be coming on line, but it will be a long process. The Senate continues to block efforts to facilitate the opening of new refineries even though the ability to expand refineries at existing sites has pretty much been exhausted. Supplies are currently so tight that any major storm or fire at a major facility will result in shortages and price spikes. Substantial expansion of alternative energy sources still remains in the technological future.

Doolittle also covered the twisted status of “Death Taxes” legislation. The Republicans could do no more than to temporarily reduce them and even for one year eliminate them, but they are scheduled to return in full force in a few years. This – and the Alternative Minimum Tax – are something the Democratic controlled Congress will have to do something about or answer for to an irate public in the coming years. As for the economic legacy of the years of Republican control, Doolittle pointed to reduced taxes and a thriving economy – the two of which are definitely related.