

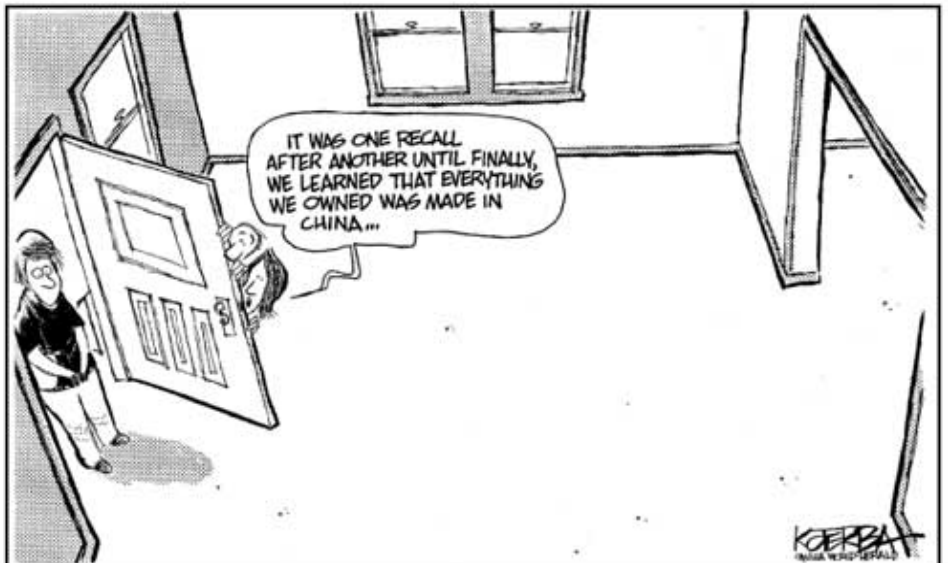
OPINIONS

Bullhead City Bee
 1905 Lakeside Drive
 Bullhead City, AZ 86442
 (928)763-9339 Fax 763-1510
 Website: www.bullheadcity-bee.com
 Co-Founder - Hilda Gay Zimmer
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Thom McGraham.....Publisher
 Emailbuzzybee3@bullheadcity-bee.com
Shirri McGraham.....Editor
 Emailbuzzybee2@bullheadcity-bee.com
Donna Rondeau.....Production Manager
 Emailbuzzybee@bullheadcity-bee.com
Billie Perkins.....Office Manager
 Emailbuzzybee7@bullheadcity-bee.com

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The Kyl Report
(Editor's note: Jon Kyl serves on the Senate Finance and Judiciary committees and chairs the Senate Republican Policy Committee.) Visit his website at www.kyl.senate.gov.

Senator Jon Kyl



Report from General Petraeus

The U.S. commander of Multi-national Forces Iraq, General David Petraeus, recently testified before Congress that there is progress in the war in Iraq as a result of the troop surge. And that progress will enable us to begin drawing down our forces.

Though General Petraeus acknowledged that the mission was far from over and much work remains to be done, it was encouraging to hear that key areas of Iraq are being secured. Places like Anbar province, which earlier this year saw some of the worst levels of violence in Iraq, are experiencing a dramatic decrease in attacks. Not only has the increased troop presence helped bring the violence levels down, but as General Petraeus stated, "this dramatic decrease reflects the significance of the local rejection of al Qaeda and the newfound willingness of local Anbaris to volunteer to serve in the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police Service."

The effective work and dedication of our military is creating the climate for success in Iraq. And the more we succeed, the more can redeploy our forces out of the battlefields in Iraq.

President Bush has accepted General Petraeus's recommendation that 2,200 Marines scheduled to leave Anbar province later this month not be replaced. Petraeus also believes an Army combat brigade could return home before the end of the year, for a total force reduction of 5,700 troops by Christmas.

I believe anyone who supports bringing our troops home ought to support the surge policy because its yielding successes and enabling our military leaders to draw down some of our troops.

General Petraeus's appearance, however, was marred by a black spot. On the day his much anticipated report was to be delivered to Congress, Moveon.org, a liberal advocacy group, ran a despicable advertisement in the New York Times impugning the reputation, integrity, and honor of General Petraeus.

The ad, which read, "General Petraeus or General Betray Us? Cooking the Books for the White House?," slandered the very general the Senate unanimously confirmed just earlier this year to carry out the mission of leading our brave men and women in Iraq.

We're beginning to see real, measurable progress in Iraq since the increased troop levels earlier this year, yet Moveon.org chose to engage in slanderous, partisan, personal attacks on the commander of our troops on the ground. It seems Moveon.org was unable to contest the facts, so it instead chose to attack the messenger because it didn't like the message. Even more disturbing was that Democrats, who receive support from Moveon.org, declined to repudiate the ad.

I commend General Petraeus for leading our troops in this difficult mission, and appreciate his forthright assessment of the situation in Iraq. He made it clear that a premature withdrawal from Iraq would cost us the progress that has been achieved. It would allow al Qaeda in Iraq to regain the ground we have taken from it and allow it to gain the freedom to maneuver in Iraq and elsewhere.

The way forward is clear. We will achieve success by supporting the strategy that has produced the progress we can now see on the ground, not by reversing course or beginning a full scale retreat.

Letters to the Editor

Tax Revolt emulating California's Prop 13

Editor:
 Let's see if I understand this. The folks in support of the Arizona Tax Revolt are holding the state of California's Prop. 13 as an example to emulate. Is that the best we can do? How many of us left California (post Prop. 13) because we were dissatisfied with the levels of service and the high fees that suddenly materialized following its passage?

I was an employee of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department when Prop. 13 was implemented. Were there reductions in service? Absolutely, longer response times to calls for service, reduction in the number of officers assigned in some areas, citations instead of arrests for most misdemeanor offense and shorter lookups for many convicted inmates were only some of the reductions in that department.

If you go into the city of Los Angeles and have the misfortune to have a non injury traffic accident, or are the victim of theft or other "minor" crime, you will have to go to the station if you wish to have a report made. They do not respond to such calls for service. Over the years between its implementation and my move to Arizona I watched

as the condition of the roads declined. Take a drive between Needles and Barstow and assess for yourself the state of road maintenance. You think the waits are long now in the Motor Vehicle Department, talk to anyone that needs to do business with the California DMV.

Do we need relief from ever escalating taxes that place senior's homes at risk, absolutely. Do we need to try to kill a little cockroach with a steamroller, absolutely not.

The proposed legislation would roll back valuations and rates. What would be your personal family financial situation if you were forced to live with today's gas prices and cost of living with your earnings of four or more years ago? Is it reasonable to expect that a similar reduction to our public agencies would be anything short of disastrous?

Selective legislation that actually addresses the problem areas, coupled with spending oversight in the public sector will accomplish what reasonable citizens want in tax reform. The Tax Revolt legislation is a recipe for disaster.

David Brusby
 Bullhead City, Ariz.

Guest Editorial

Challenge for the next President (that no candidate is talking about)

By Timothy Ryan

By the time the 2008 elections roll around, it will have been more than 7 years since the attacks of 9/11, but al Qaeda will remain a major issue in that race.

Barack Obama recently said that he would invade the sovereign state, important US ally, and nuclear power of Pakistan if that is what it took to defeat al Qaeda. Rudy Giuliani said that he would not take that option off the table. The debate over Iraq is largely a debate about al Qaeda - the leading Republican candidates believe that we must stay in Iraq in order to fight al Qaeda there, while the leading Democrats believe we should exit Iraq in order to focus on fighting al Qaeda in more pressing areas such as Afghanistan (and Pakistan). Al Qaeda is central to every leading candidate's plans for military and foreign policy. This will be a grave mistake for whoever ascends to the office of the President in 2009.

Al Qaeda is, of course, a deadly threat to Americans, American property, and American interests. They have a professed desire to kill Americans, destroy American property, and to thwart American objectives wherever they are found. Whether they are as capable of following through on these desires as they were at the beginning of the decade is debatable. What is not debatable is that they are not a strategic threat to the United States.

The United States has genuine, strategic interests in the Greater Middle East. Primary among these interests is the need to ensure the free flow of the region's energy resources to the productive centers of the world economy. A decade ago, Geoffrey Kemp and Robert Harkavy identified a "Strategic Energy Ellipse." Stretching from Russia at the northern end of the Caspian Sea to Oman at the southern terminus of the Persian Gulf, the

SEI contains approximately 70% of the world's proven crude oil reserves and about 40% of the worldwide supply of natural gas. Al Qaeda is an operational threat to that flow - they can attack oil tankers, cut pipelines, and blow up refineries - and as such, they merit consideration and concern.

The major strategic threats in the region, though, have been and will remain Iranian and Russian bids for regional hegemony. If either nation - or an alliance between them - is successful in their goals, they will control the most important energy producing region in the world and with it, the ability to dominate the world economy. In this latest iteration of the old Great Game, Russia and Iran are King and Queen; al Qaeda, its affiliates and other terror groups mere pawns.

Fortunately, the United States is remains in a strong position in this game. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, US military planners aggressively pursued arrangements with nations throughout the region with the result that today there is a network of nations already in place who cooperate with Americans on a wide array of military matters. This informal network can be formalized into a true alliance that would serve to (a) contain Iran and (b) block Russia.

Doing so will require, as Dr. W. Andrew Terrill urges, finally "treating allies as allies in the Arab world." Most of all, it will require a President and a foreign policy team willing to move beyond the politically efficacious boogymen of al Qaeda toward thinking - and speaking - deeply and strategically about the real long term interests and threats in the region.

(Timothy Ryan is a geographer, statistician, and research coordinator at InfoTech Information and Research Consultants in Los Angeles, CA. He can be contacted at timryan5749@subco.com.)

AZ Attorney General Terry Goddard on foreclosures

Arizona's subprime loans and foreclosures are reaching record levels in Arizona and across the country.

Arizona ranks second behind Nevada for the most subprime loans in the country. With millions of hybrid mortgage loans with adjustable interest rates scheduled to adjust to higher rates this year and next, the foreclosure crisis will only get worse.

Arizona reached a five-year high last month with notices of trustee sales, the precursors to foreclosures, climbing to almost 2,500 in August just in the Phoenix metro area. Efforts across the country to address this crisis are beginning at all levels of government in an effort to stave off an economic catastrophe.

I am a member of a working group comprised of 10 state Attorneys General and state banking department officials to address this important issue. We will be meeting

saddled with unaffordable loans.

We are not the only governmental entities concerned about this economic crisis. Last week the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Conference of State Bank Supervisors and the regulating bodies of federally chartered banks, savings and loans and credit unions joined a growing list of governmental entities in calling for loss mitigation techniques that will achieve long-term sustainable obligations to provide stability to borrowers, investors and the marketplace.

President Bush announced a program to help more than 80,000 homeowners with risky mortgages keep their homes.



How to Contact Your City Representatives:

Bullhead City, Arizona	Laughlin, Nevada
Mohave County	Clark County



Bullhead City Council ...	Town Advisory Board ...
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Vice Mayor _____ John Anderson	Chair _____ Kathy Ochs
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Councilwoman _____ Jan Ward	Member _____ Gladys Laughlin
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1255 Marina Blvd, Bullhead City, Ariz. 86442 (928) 763-9400	101 Civic Way, Laughlin, Nev. 89029 (702) 298-0828

Read
*The Economic Development Journal
of Mohave County*
For the latest news on Arizona's fastest growing county
At over 2,000 locations countywide

with representatives from the mortgage loan servicing industry at the end of September to determine what more can be done.

It is in everyone's best interests, industry and government, to seek creative solutions to the mortgage crisis. We intend to:

1. Learn about the loss mitigation programs offered by lenders and servicers.
2. Hear about actions the industry is taking to address this issue in a more comprehensive manner.
3. Identify barriers to aggressive loan modification programs and,
4. Identify ways of improving communication with homeowners

