



## Inside Track

### Secretary of Defense: “We Are Not Winning in Afghanistan”

During testimony on June 13 before the Senate Armed Services Committee in support of President Trump’s Defense Department budget request for Fiscal Year 2018, Defense Secretary James Mattis asserted, “We are not winning in Afghanistan right now. And we will correct this as soon as possible. I believe by mid-July we will be able to brief you in detail.” Mattis’ statement was made during a tense exchange with the committee’s chairman, Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.).

McCain, one of the Senate’s most outspoken interventionists on foreign policy, expressed noticeable frustration with what he perceives as a failed U.S. military strategy in Afghanistan, telling Mattis during the hearing, “We’re now six months into this administration. We still haven’t got a strategy for Afghanistan. It makes it hard for us to support you when we don’t have a strategy. We know what the strategy was for the last eight years: Don’t lose.”

The Arizona senator also warned Mattis that senators will “start getting more vocal in our criticism” if a plan isn’t delivered soon. “I was confident that within the first 30 to 60 days [of the Trump administration] we would have a strategy from which to start working,” McCain said. “So, all I can tell you is that unless we get a strategy from you, you’re going to get a strategy from us.”

Senator Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) asked Mattis to “define for us what winning in Afghanistan means.”

“What does winning look like?” Mattis answered. “The Afghan government — with international help — will be able to handle the violence and drive it down to a level that local security forces can handle it.” Still, “With our allies, it would probably require residual force doing training and maintaining the high-end capability” to take out security threats, Mattis said. “It’s going to be an era of frequent skirmishing, and it’s going to require a change in our approach from the last several years if we’re to get it to that position.”

### Government Collects \$240 Billion in May; Still Runs \$88 Billion Deficit

The U.S. Treasury announced June 15 that the federal government collected more money in May than in any other month in history: \$240.4 billion. In the same breath, it said that the government spent \$328.8 billion, creating a deficit of \$88.4 billion.

From a wage-earner’s perspective, it meant that in May the average worker paid \$1,572 in taxes but the government spent \$2,149, making up the \$577 difference by borrowing. Such deficit spending is making the S&P Global credit rating agency increasingly nervous.

Just a week earlier, the agency affirmed its best rating — A-1+ — for the government’s “short term” debt, which means, in its own parlance, that the federal government’s ability to pay its current bills is “strong.” But in the longer term, the agency is far less sanguine. While holding its current long-term rating at AA+ (one full notch below its best rating), it said it’s unable to give the United States its highest rating (AAA) because of “high general government debt, relatively short-term-oriented policymaking, and uncertainty about policy formulation” for the future. It explained what it meant about that “uncertainty”:



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The U.S.'s net general government debt burden (as a share of GDP) remains twice its 2007 level. While, in our view, debt to GDP should hold fairly steady over the next several years, we expect it to rise thereafter absent measures to raise additional revenue and/or cut nondiscretionary expenditures.... Although deficits have declined, net general government debt to GDP remains high at about 80% of GDP. Given our growth forecasts and our expectations that credit conditions will remain subdued, thus keeping real interest rates in check, we expect this ratio to hold fairly steady through 2020. At that point, it could deteriorate more sharply, partly as a result of demographic trends.

It appears to be an unstoppable locomotive. Non-discretionary spending is on autopilot. And interest rates now coming off historic lows are only going to increase those annual deficits into the future as far as the eye can see.

## **Homosexual Agenda Has Morphed Into Anti-Trump Activism**

As homosexual activists gathered in major cities across America for their gay pride parades June 11, it was clear that the annual homosexual spectacle had morphed into a massive, nationwide anti-Trump rally. NPR.org noted June 12 that at more than 50 homosexual marches in cities across the nation, "LGBT people and their allies gathered to stand in solidarity against the Trump administration."

The *Los Angeles Times* reported June 11 that its nearly 50-year-old "LGBTQ" pageant was replaced this year "with what can best be described as a symbol of the Trump era — a protest march, complete with a hashtag in its name: the #ResistMarch."

Brian Pendleton, one of the organizers of the Trump protest march, told the *Times* that "this year, the LGBTQ community is lending our iconic rainbow flag to anyone who feels like their rights are under threat and to anyone who feels like America's strength is its diversity. The political climate we find ourselves in has driven us to galvanize and unite."

The LA parade was replete with the requisite Trump-bashing signs, along with the t-shirt of choice sporting the slogan, "Make America Gay Again" — a perverse play on Trump's patriotic campaign tagline. And throughout the parade could be heard such rants as: "We're here, we're queer, get that Cheeto out of here" — a juvenile jab at Trump's hair color and one-time spray-on tan.

And in Charlotte, North Carolina, "gay pride" organizers refused to allow a pair of homosexuals to participate in their parade because they identified themselves as Trump supporters. Brian Talbert told local Charlotte news sources that he and another man, part of a group calling themselves "Gays for Trump," had applied to enter a float in Charlotte's "Pride Parade," but were promptly rejected.

Ironically, pro-Trump homosexuals have found that in order to be accepted in the gay community, they must stay "in the closet" as supporters of the president. "Generally" said Vincent Foster of Miami, Florida's Log Cabin Republicans, "in 2017, it's a lot easier to be openly gay than to be openly Republican."

## **U.K. Leaders: Fight Terror With Global Internet Censorship**

Speaking after the June 3 London Bridge terror attack that left seven dead and some 50 wounded, an attack that followed a suicide bombing in Manchester, England, U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May blamed free speech, ideology, online freedom, and a lack of government regulation for the atrocities. "We cannot allow this ideology the safe space it needs to breed," May said June 4, without elaborating



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on the ideology but demanding more war abroad and an end to “safe spaces” for extremism online. “Yet that is precisely what the Internet and the big companies that provide Internet-based services provide.”

May again called for “international agreements” to regulate and censor the Internet under the guise of battling “extremism.” International agreements would be used to regulate speech in cyberspace with a goal of stopping “ideologies” that authorities do not agree with from having a “safe space” online. She outlined a vision suggesting she wants the war against unapproved ideologies and speech to be global in scope: “We need to work with allied democratic governments to reach international agreements that regulate cyberspace to prevent the spread of extremist and terrorism planning.... We need to do everything we can at home to reduce the risks of extremism online.”

Of course, even before the latest terror attacks, May and other top British politicians were pushing the exact same agenda. Most recently, the ruling Conservative (Tory) Party released a manifesto calling for an Orwellian censorship regime to control speech and ideology online. “Some people say that it is not for government to regulate when it comes to technology and the internet,” the manifesto explains. “We disagree.” Under the plan, the United Kingdom would become “the global leader in the regulation of the use of personal data and the internet.”

Giving up more liberty will not stop terrorism. Instead, it will further empower government and will undoubtedly be followed by further government attacks on fundamental human rights. The British people must stand firm for their liberty by refusing to be bullied or terrorized by either Islamist terrorists or totalitarian politicians.

## **AG Jeff Sessions Ends DOJ Bankrolling of Radical Activists**

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has announced an end to the Department of Justice sweetheart deal that has funneled hundreds of millions of extortion dollars to left-wing activists. On June 5, Sessions issued a memorandum to all U.S. attorney’s offices and all components of the Department of Justice (DOJ) prohibiting payouts to third parties in settlements reached by the Justice Department.

The new order is aimed at curtailing a massive political extortion racket that has allowed activist attorneys and their left-wing client organizations to rake in millions of federal tax dollars, as well as shake down American corporations for billions of dollars to fund their Marxist agendas. The practice has been going on for decades but was boosted to stratospheric heights during the Obama administration, with radical “community organizers” from groups such as La Raza, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA), Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE), NeighborWorks (NW), the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC), and the National Urban League (NUL) — and many more — receiving billions of dollars extorted from corporations that the radical grievance lobbies accuse of racism, sexism, and discrimination. Teaming up with the federal Department of Justice and the liberal-left Big Media, they have cowed corporations into coughing up huge “social justice” payoffs to radicals claiming to represent the allegedly aggrieved ethnic or social group “victims.”

“It has come to my attention,” Sessions noted, “that certain previous settlement agreements involving the Department included payments to various non-governmental, third-party organizations as a condition of settlement with the United States. These third-party organizations were neither victims nor parties to the lawsuits.”



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The DOJ memo then made clear that this practice of subsidizing the political activity of radical partisans will cease: “The Department will no longer engage in this practice. Effective immediately, Department attorneys may not enter into any agreement on behalf of the United States in settlement of federal claims or charges, including agreements settling civil litigation, accepting plea agreements, or deferring or declining prosecution in a criminal matter, that directs or provides for a payment or loan to any non-governmental person or entity that is not a party to the dispute.”

A follow-up DOJ press release on June 7 noted that Attorney General Sessions had issued the above-mentioned memo to all 94 U.S. attorneys’ offices. “When the federal government settles a case against a corporate wrongdoer, any settlement funds should go first to the victims and then to the American people — not to bankroll third-party special interest groups or the political friends of whoever is in power,” said Sessions. “Unfortunately, in recent years the Department of Justice has sometimes required or encouraged defendants to make these payments to third parties as a condition of settlement. With this directive, we are ending this practice and ensuring that settlement funds are only used to compensate victims, redress harm, and punish and deter unlawful conduct.”

Under the Obama administration, the press release noted, “the Department repeatedly required settling parties to pay settlement funds to third party community organizations that were not directly involved in the litigation or harmed by the defendant’s conduct. Pursuant to the Attorney General’s memorandum, this practice will immediately stop.”

The Trump administration’s move to end the DOJ funding mechanism for subversives is a welcome effort, but just a start; it does not affect the direct taxpayer funding of radicals through numerous grants from the Departments of Energy (DOE), Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Education (DOEd), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Public Broadcasting System (PBS), and many other federal conduits.

However, stanching the flow of payoffs from extortionate lawsuits will put a significant dent in the political war chests of the professional agitators. In addition, it gives hope that the new administration will go even further and eliminate the ongoing practice of many federal agencies and departments of funding radical immigration, environmental, racial, education, labor, voter registration, and LGBT groups. Doing so would go a long way toward eliminating the organized antics of disruptive demonstrators and violent rioters that are wreaking havoc in our cities and destroying public comity. Going further, investigations (by Congress, DOJ, FBI, IRS) and prosecution of illegal funding of political activists and rioters by tax-exempt foundations — such as the Soros, Rockefeller, Ford, and Tides foundations — would drastically curtail the orchestrated chaos that is ravaging our land.



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