



Congress Passes a Mingle of More War and Waste

The only quibble one might have with Sobran's sagacity is that the supplemental bill for U.S. foreign wars intermingles itself with lots of other big government programs.



A big part of the \$105.9 billion bill that cleared Congress last week was foreign-aid giveaways. The bill [included](#) \$79.9 billion for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also \$10.4 billion for foreign aid, and \$7.7 billion to respond to the so-called H1N1 flu "pandemic."

Congressman Ron Paul [opined](#) against the bill, in part on the grounds that the United States is already running a record deficit and therefore can't afford to give away more U.S. tax dollars:

As Americans struggle through the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, this emergency supplemental appropriations bill sends \$660 million to Gaza, \$555 million to Israel, \$310 million to Egypt, \$300 million to Jordan, and \$420 million to Mexico. Some \$889 million will be sent to the United Nations for so-called "peacekeeping" missions. Almost one billion dollars will be sent overseas to address the global financial crisis outside our borders.... Perhaps most outrageous is the \$108 billion loan guarantee to the International Monetary Fund. These new loan guarantees will allow that destructive organization to continue spending taxpayer money to prop up corrupt leaders and promote harmful economic policies overseas.

The [conference report version](#) has \$2.97 billion in "economic support" for foreign nations, plus \$1.294 billion in "foreign military assistance" to Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, and Mexico. This doesn't count a \$700 million authorization for counterinsurgency for Pakistan. Remember, this is "supplemental" aid. That's more than the ordinary foreign aid.

The bill also contains more than a dozen pork earmarks that have nothing to do with funding the nation's foreign wars. For example, there's an earmark of \$10,000,000 by Senator Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) for fixing roads in North Dakota and \$439 million for three senators — Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.), Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) and Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) — for "Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies" for Mississippi's Barrier Island and Upper Newport Bay in California.

The bill also [contains](#), according to the conference report, \$1 billion toward the "cash for clunkers" auto industry bailout. The bill would provide "vouchers of \$3,500 or \$4,500 to be applied toward the purchase or lease of a new fuel efficient automobile or truck from July 1 - November 1, 2009," according to a House conference committee report ([111-151](#)). "To qualify for a voucher under this authority the vehicle turned in must be scrapped, and the purchased vehicle must achieve greater fuel efficiency than the vehicle to be turned in."

The conference report would [increase the budget deficit](#) \$13.7 billion over existing estimates, and most of that increase in the deficit is a direct result of the foreign-aid giveaways. The federal government is borrowing money and saddling taxpayers with a heavy debt burden in order to give that money away. The [current official estimate](#) for the fiscal 2009 budget deficit is \$1.84 trillion, but that estimate is



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based upon wildly optimistic economic projections that have already proven incorrect. [President Obama's budget assumes](#) that U.S. Gross Domestic Product would shrink only 1.2 percent during fiscal 2009 (which began in October 2008), but the economy has [already contracted a full three percent in the first two quarters of fiscal 2009](#).

The bill also includes restrictions on releasing Guantanamo detainees into the territorial United States, and a reporting requirement to Congress on the status and evidence against Guantanamo detainees.



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