Our foreign aid just isn’t enough

By DAVID L. CARR

AN OVER-THE-TOP HOMELAND LAW

By TOM TEPSEN

ATLANTA — After months of noisy labor, Congress finally birthed the Homeland Security Act. And what a monstrosity, mishmash whelp it is, the ugly product of a feast that all along had as much to do with homeland politics as with homeland security. The idea of gathering some 22 federal agencies that deal with security into a single Cabinet-level department makes perfectly good sense. In that case, should facilitate focused cooperation among field stations that have spent as much time protecting our own bureaucratic turf as trying to come up with each other as they have spent in their missions. But politics, though productive after its fashion, begets all sorts of odd outcomes, and this matter is a classic.

Looking for some quick post-9/11 security bauxites, Democrats pushed the idea of a massive agency-wide, President Bush halted at first, but the president’s political staffie, Karl Rove, who can spot an angle faster than a顾视 predatory prey, saw the issues could be used to political advantage. Bush’s legislation was gimmicked to dismantle traditional civil service protections for the 170,000 employees in the affected agencies and give the president authority to bypass union rules and contracts, setting up Republican animosity toward labor unions and toward public employee unions especially. Pro-labor and the beneficiary of union financial and voting support, Democrats were bound to oppose the president’s union busting, and when they did Bush effectively nationalized the congressional elections, beatig the Democrats with their own idea by making them seem unpatriotic for opposing his own partisan misuse of the concept. And then, not content to hurl an otherwise reasonably straightforward bill though the post-election Congress, the House loaded the bill with goodies for special interests.

The pharmaceutical industry, a major financial player in the recent GOP victory, gets liability exemptions, as do insurers and companies that develop anti-terrorist technologies or provide airport security. The bill thus jumps-starts the Republican program to legit the legal system against plaintiffs and in favor of the corporate bar.

The legislation delivers a nice pork chop to Texas by setting up Texas A&M to become a new security research center, and, in a pungently nosy move, restores ability for federal security contracts to companies that create paperheadquarters to dodge U.S. taxes. (Note to foes: don’t try this on your own.)

Most worrisome, although the augurs is a bit murky, the act seems to create a quasi-agency that can toll through the periscope of data in search of lurking threats — a double whammy against后方 when matched with the recent or ruling licensing the Justice Department spy on citizens free from the usual civil liberty protections. Recognizing that even many in the whose causes were uneasy with these excesses, Republican leaders has promised to consider the amendments next year, clean way to do that would be to strip all the add-ons and require each to through the customary hearings are stand or fall on its individual merit.

In effect, the GOP leadership has a “Trust us on this” OK, but as Ronald I guess we have to say, they trust us verify.

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Department of Homeland Security... a couple of years from now

A grim outlook

I remember being taught in kindergarten to clean up my own mess, not hoard my playmate’s Twinkies, and to share the sandbox with neighbors. The world’s kindergarten is more complex, but are we entitled to swallowing consumption while billions earn less in a day than the hourly minimum wage? Is this the “American way of life” we wish to promote overseas?

Our notion of democracy is strongest when grounded in the moral certitude that all people, not just wealthy Americans, desire equal access to opportunity and to bequeath a healthy environment to tomorrow’s children. The reaction of global delegates at the Sustainable Development summit was one in a series of recent wake-up calls; our position on the Kyoto Protocol on Global Warming and the World Court, and Iraq are some others that immediately come to mind. While we squander on domestic taxation and “the war on terror,” are we not missing something? To quote Lord Acton (1804-1882), “When a rich man becomes poor it is a misfortune, it is not a moral evil. When a poor man becomes destitute, it is a moral evil, teeming with consequences and injurious to society and morality.”

With all branches of government now firmly controlled by the Republican Party, environmental deregulation, further tax cuts, increased military spending, domestic farm subsidies and a foreign policy colored by counter-terrorism will be prominent features of an emboldened presidency.

I wonder how this agenda will affect multilateral efforts to reduce global poverty and environmental degradation?

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