

# Republican Leaders Develop Alternatives To Democrat Failures

By Sen. Bob Packwood (R-Ore.)

*"Important principles may and must be flexible."*

Abraham Lincoln  
1865

When the power plant suddenly went out in Easton, I was immediately struck by the symbolism. Here we were, a room full of Republican Senators, Congressmen and statewide office holders, looking for answers to some of the nation's problems when an electrical generator blew and the lights flickered, dimmed and finally went dark altogether.

In a larger sense, that was why we had gathered for the third consecutive year at Easton, Maryland, for the third annual Tidewater Conference. Under a Democrat President and a Democrat-controlled Congress, the bright hopes of America are now flickering and dimming in the minds of its people.

Inflation is rampant, doubts about the nation's resolve and its military capability raise anxieties throughout the land, energy deficiencies hold us hostage to the vagaries of other nations, and that was why nearly 100 Republican officials from all over the country gathered. We were there to see that the hopes of this country, unlike the lights of Easton, never go dark, but begin once again to burn brightly with the promise expected of America.

To that end, unity, achievement and progress were the characteristics of the Republican spirit displayed at Tidewater III. There was a single-minded goal in the Conference that brought together men and women of the widest philosophic persuasions: to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

The overriding achievement at Tidewater III was the display of Republican unity in legislative purpose, and a determination to elect a Republican Congress and President.

This purpose was seen in the passage of five non-binding resolutions that expressed the Republican will to strike directly at the most immediate and major of the issues facing our country. The essence of these resolutions were actions to:

- deal with inflation, unnecessary government regulation, and personal and national economics by passing tax reductions, working toward a balanced budget and a Constitutional amendment to limit federal spending and taxes as a percentage of the Gross National Product.

- rebuild our defense capabilities to meet Soviet aggression and protect our vital interests; reaffirm our role of world leadership by developing further incentives to revitalize reserve and national guard forces and by registering all eligible males to ultimately meet readiness requirements, but not to reinstate the draft at this time.

- strengthen our intelligence gathering ability by limiting strictly the intelligence committees and persons to which the President shall report covert activities; revising the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act to prevent abuses and waste of intelligence resources.

- create a balanced energy policy by providing incentives for conservation, reducing regulation and unnecessary control, increasing production of domestic energy supplies; streamlining regulatory procedures which guarantee safe but effective development of nuclear power and nuclear waste management; pursuing alternative energy options as well as developing interchanges of power resources with adjacent nations.

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*Senator Bob Packwood founded and organized the first Tidewater Conference three years ago. The Tidewater concept is patterned after Oregon's Dorchester Conference, an annual meeting of the state's elected officials which has been held for the past 16 years.*

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- revise the Internal Revenue Code and the Social Security system to end economic injustices for men and women in the work force.

The GOP leaders focused the debate around actions to put the nation back on a proper course, sending a clear message that a Republican approach was the better approach to solving the ills plaguing America.

The participants refused, for example, to view in isolation the problem of national defense. Instead, they expressed the belief that "...our national security and general welfare can only be as strong as the national economy supporting them."

Then pointing a finger at the Democrat-controlled Congress and the President, the GOP leaders demonstrated through evidence and arguments that the Democrats are responsible for the fiscal mess we are in. We pointed to a record high peacetime budget offered by the President,

to an increase of 300 percent in inflation under this Democrat in the White House and the Democrat-controlled Congress, and to the millions of Americans who will be jobless soon if our economic problems are not solved. Under the Democrat Administration and the Democrats in Congress, the American family's real take-home pay has shrunk to the lowest level since 1964.

International problems confronting us were closely covered. In calling for a rebuilding of defense capabilities, the participants not only tackled the lack of leadership offered in this area by the President and Congress, but they also debated the issue of whether women should be drafted. Ultimately, the Conference voted that only males should be registered and that there is no need at this time to reinstate the draft. The GOP officials voiced a warning, however, that we must quickly increase our military capability to protect our vital national interests from aggression. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets has awakened many to what a few of us pointed out even before the Iranian crisis: it's time to arm for peace.

Some of the frustrations that have been voiced recently by Americans regarding our national security and our prestige became evident at Tidewater during the debate on our intelligence resources. What some had expected to be quiet debate became a strong attack on the handcuffing of our intelligence community. The Democrat Congress and the President have unnecessarily restricted the effectiveness of the intelligence community and so the Tidewater group recommended the unshackling of American intelligence so that we may remain alert to forces that threaten us.

On an important domestic concern, this session of Tidewater took up a serious problem for American women. In calling for changes in the Internal Revenue Code and the Social Security system, the Republicans noted that current laws written in 1935 were outmoded. The GOP leaders went directly to the heart of the matter by examining the impact of these old laws on a new and changing society as far as concerns family structure and work force equity.

There was a cohesiveness about this Tidewater Conference that went beyond its intention. Even in the shirt-sleeve atmosphere, a sense of common direction and purpose filled the room.

Republicans in Easton, the first three days of February, showed that we hear the questions the nation is asking, and have answers. We proved we can work as a team to find remedies for what ails the nation. ■