



DEFAZIO: AFGHANISTAN LIKE VIETNAM

Congressman Peter DeFazio strongly urged the president last week to get not just a new Afghanistan general but a new policy to largely withdraw from the decade-long war.

Obama should “move toward a much less expensive, much less troop intensive strategy that would bring about a much better result in Afghanistan,” DeFazio said in a June 24 speech on the U.S. House floor.

DeFazio said he agreed with a strategy proposed by Vice President Joe Biden to withdraw most combat troops and let special forces and aircraft target the few actual al Qaeda terrorists in the country. “Let the Afghans work out their tribal and intra-tribal conflicts that they’ve been carrying on for over 600 years,” DeFazio said.

“We have a choice,” DeFazio said. “We can either get into a very long-term engagement at a cost of \$30 billion a year and tremendous sacrifice by our troops on a strategy that has not worked. Or, we can re-think that strategy.”

DeFazio said the current strategy authored by ousted insubordinate general Stanley McChrystal has not worked. “His theory was that it would be a clear, hold and transfer to the Afghan police who don’t exist, to the security forces who are in disarray and to the government which doesn’t exist in any meaningful way outside of the capitol,” DeFazio said. “There is unbelievable corruption rife throughout the Karzai government, the police and security forces.”

Even Pentagon officials are now saying that the Afghan war, already the longest in U.S. history, “is going to take years and years, may require a second surge and require additional troops in Afghanistan,” DeFazio said. “Is this starting to sound like Vietnam to anyone?” — *Alan Pittman*

GET WILD AND HIKE

Now that the sun (seems) to be back, it’s time to get out into the woods. Conservation organization Oregon Wild continues its series of summer hikes on Saturday, July 10, with guided hikes all around Oregon, including several within easy reach of Eugene. The 12 remaining summer hikes are free or nearly free to the public. There’s limited space, so reserve a space at <http://wkly.ws/mw>

“We connect the public to places we want to protect,” says Oregon Wild Roadless Wildlands Advocate Rob Klavins. This year’s hikes include a long, steep trek to the summit of Mount Bailey, a lesser-known landmark entangled in competing plans: the largest Oregon timber sale since the advent of the 2001 roadless timber rule versus the proposed Crater Lake Wilderness area. “We try to show people places that are pretty and enjoyable to go to, and sometimes to show places affected by different issues,” explains Klavins.

Less demanding hikes on Tidbits Mountain, the North Umpqua and the Rogue River Trail also feature picturesque scenery in places important in ecology or history. Oregon Wild staff will lead most of the hikes, educating hikers about the attributes and challenges of each area.

“Each hike is certainly different,” says Klavins. “We have wildflower hikes, tree identification hikes, mushroom hikes, trekking hikes, waterfalls and snowshoe hikes.” Klavins says Oregon Wild selects its various themes according to the season.

Most of the dozen hikes remaining are free to the public, but some do require a small fee. All are family-friendly, but parents should check www.oregonwild.org for each hike’s length and level of difficulty. Sign-ups open about six weeks before each hike, but they have a history of filling quickly. Klavins suggests signing up for the e-alert system that notifies hikers of list openings. — *Shannon Finnell*



The summit at Tidbits

PHOTO: OREGON WILD

news Briefs

FAIR TRADE LEGISLATION SEEKS REFORMS

Since 1994 nearly 75,000 Oregonians have lost their jobs due to NAFTA-style trade agreements. The Oregon Fair Trade Campaign (OFTC) is a statewide effort to reform current trade policies through federal legislation such as the TRADE Act. Will more jobs be lost? President Obama this past weekend announced plans for a broad new trade agreement with Korea, first negotiated by the Bush administration.

TRADE is an acronym for Trade Reform Accountability and Development, and the act’s basic provisions are mandatory standards in trade agreements for a range of areas, including labor, the environment, anti-dumping, national security and states’ rights.

The OFTC’s website at <http://wkly.ws/na> shows the TRADE Act is supported significantly by both big labor and major environmental organizations. Endorsers include the ALF-CIO, Sierra Club, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and Friends of the Earth.

What will the TRADE Act mean for Oregon? Arthur Stamoulis of the OFTC says the legislation “means more jobs, higher wages, safer food, less forced migration and a cleaner environment in Oregon and around the world.”

The act, first proposed in 2008 in both the House and Senate, restores local autonomy, giving states the power to decide how to spend citizens’ tax dollars, and institutes public regulations that are in the interest of local economies. Rep. Peter DeFazio and Sen. Jeff Merkley joined 130 lawmakers in cosponsoring the bill. Public polling in May 2008 by the Pew Research Center showed that by a ratio of 6-1 Americans viewed trade agreements as destructive to local economy and the environment.

One common criticism of policies that attempt to regulate trade is that they are protectionist and harmful to developing economies.

“Working people in developing countries have been hit even harder by existing

trade pacts than American workers,” says Stamoulis. “These trade deals have never been about one country benefiting over another, but rather a small minority of elites benefiting in each country at the expense of everyone else.”

Stamoulis and other critics of globalization say trade agreements have created a race to the bottom with developing nations competing against each other for the right to allow first-world multinational corporations to exploit their workers and the environment.

The Oregon Fair Trade Campaign can be found on Facebook at <http://wkly.ws/nb> — *Phil Shackleton*

FREE CLINIC MOVES TO MEET NEEDS

With the current politics surrounding health care accessibility, one Eugene clinic remains steadfast in its commitment to providing medical services to those in need.

The Volunteers in Medicine Clinic (VIM) is a non-profit organization with a staff of more than 450 volunteers that include physicians, nurses and pharmacists. Their services include free primary medical care, medication and mental health services to low-income Lane County adults who have no insurance.

“People come in with chronic pain, mental health issues, diabetes and complex diseases that aren’t being served with the general economy,” said VIM Business Manager Susie Goss. “We’re especially seeing a lot more patients due to recent cutbacks in employment.”

When the VIM clinic was established in 2001, its current location at 3321 W. 11th Ave. was sufficient to accommodate Lane County’s uninsured population. However, “we’ve seen the uninsured population progress so quickly that we are out of space,” said Goss. “We are trying to meet the needs of the community, but at times we have to wait four to six weeks to see some patients.”

In the last week of July, VIM will be switching locations to 2260 Marcola Road in Springfield to accommodate the 60,000 Lane County residents who currently have no access to affordable health care. “When people don’t have insurance, they will oftentimes go to the hospital’s emergency room,” said Goss. “It’s very costly for the patient and the hospital. Here, we want to get people the preventative care they need in order to offset a major emergency.”

The VIM clinic collaborates with more than 250 diagnostic services and specialists

lighten up

City Council members who make bad analogies during meetings should be Tasered by the mayor. At the meeting on the new police Taser policy a councilor objected to even considering such a policy. She said it was like telling the public works director “what size tires we should buy.” Actually, making policy is different than ordering up specific sizes. It’s one thing to make a policy against lap dancing in the office of the public works director, which the council has authority to do. It’s another to require any lap dancing that does occur there to be performed by dancers with at least 42 inch breasts, which may violate union contracts.

— *Rafael Aldave, Eugene*