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OUR VIEW

‘Green New Deal’ undercuts agriculture

New York Congresswoman and socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, along with a group of other Democrats in Congress, earlier this month released the framework for a 10-year plan to fight climate change.

Agriculture figures prominently in the scheme.

If enacted, the “Green New Deal” would reorder all aspects of life in the United States in ways that would have made even the most ambitious Soviet central planners blanch.

The stated purpose of the Green New Deal is to mobilize the country’s resources to fight climate change in much the same way the country mobilized to fight World War II. It seeks to achieve “net-zero” greenhouse emissions in 10 years and eventually eliminate all fossil fuels and nuclear power.

It requires the upgrading of all existing buildings to achieve maximum efficiency and a complete overhaul of the transportation system that includes the conversion to all-electric vehicles, the expansion of public transportation, the development of high-speed rail and the elimination of air travel.

For good measure it also guarantees universal single-payer health care



EO file photo

A team of volunteers processes a shipment of donated potatoes for the Oregon Food Bank at the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center near Hermiston in October 2015.

and a living-wage union job for everyone — or at least for those “willing” to work.

Farming, which is blamed for 9 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, would also be transformed.

The resolution establishing the framework says one of the ways the plan’s goals will be reached is by working “collaboratively with farmers and ranchers in the United States to eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural

sector as much as is technologically feasible, including — by supporting family farming; by investing in sustainable farming and land use practices that increase soil health; and by building a more sustainable food system that ensures universal access to healthy food.”

The 14-page resolution is short on specifics, though a fact sheet released (and later withdrawn) with the document says that agriculture must be overhauled and alludes to the need to

“get rid of farting cattle.”

Fellow travelers who support the resolution are filling in the blanks. Think tanks are proposing New Deal-era supply management systems and parity pricing to provide a farming “minimum wage.” Others rail against, but do not define, “industrial agriculture.” Large dairies, also undefined, and “factory” meat farms would be taboo.

Others envision that the owners of large farms could get by on smaller plots given parity pricing, and would sell, rent or otherwise transfer the rest of their holdings to hired hands or to others who want to farm — a modern “40 acres and a mule” proposal, perhaps literally because it’s unclear how a farm would be worked except with draft animals.

It appears the Democratic leadership of the House does not intend to put the resolution up to a vote. But that doesn’t mean it is dead.

Farmers, whose livelihoods and property are on the line, are right to be wary of the possibilities. And the American people, who are the beneficiary of bountiful and inexpensive food, should be careful to embrace the massive overhaul of the industry that provides that bounty without knowing the details.

OTHER VIEWS

Much talk that something’s up with Mueller — too bad nobody knows

There are two diametrically opposed lines of thinking about Robert Mueller’s investigation.

The first is that he is winding down his probe and is unlikely to allege that the Trump campaign and Russia conspired to fix the 2016 presidential election.

The second is that he is still going strong, with the biggest charges, perhaps including the fabled collusion allegation, yet to come.

Which is correct? No one outside the Mueller office knows. There are data points, or at least tea leaves, pointing in all directions. But whatever the reality is, there is at this moment a sense that something is imminent from Mueller, and that sense is shaping Trump-Russia politics.

House Democrats are revving up Trump investigations, and one of the questions they face is whether to try to replicate the Mueller probe or rely on the special counsel’s findings when it comes time to consider impeaching the president.

If the House carries out a full-scale, retracing-Mueller’s-steps investigation, it will be led by Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff. In recent days, Schiff has vowed that his new Trump-Russia probe will cover material he says Mueller — who has far more investigative power than the House — might not have been able to examine.

Now, Schiff is taking an extra step. He is refusing to say if he will accept Mueller’s judgment, should Mueller issue a report that does not allege collusion.

“If (Mueller) finds that there was no direct collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia, will you accept that?” CNN’s Dana Bash asked Schiff recently.

“Well, we’re going to have to do our own investigation,” Schiff responded.

Schiff said he would be “very interested” to learn what Mueller has found.



But he did not say he would accept Mueller’s findings. So Bash asked again.

“Will you — given the fact (Mueller) has had such an extensive investigation, will you accept the findings, separate from the investigation that you are doing?”

“You know, I will certainly accept them in this way,” Schiff said. “I have great confidence in the special counsel. And if the special counsel represents that he has investigated, and not been interfered with, and not been able to make a criminal case, then I will believe that he is operating in good faith.”

The bottom line is that Schiff would not answer whether he would accept a Mueller no-collusion conclusion. But his non-answer made abundantly clear that the answer is no.

At the same time, Schiff still harbors hopes for Mueller. Asked about the Roger Stone indictment for lying to Congress — yet another Mueller process crime charge that does not allege a criminal conspiracy — Schiff expressed hope that there will be more.

“It is very possible that the best evidence is yet to come,” he said. “There may be, for example, evidence of collusion or conspiracy that is clear and convincing, but not proof beyond a reasonable doubt.”

One takeaway from all that is that

Schiff, who likely knows as much about Trump-Russia evidence as anyone in the House, has no idea what Mueller has.

That puts Schiff in the same place as everyone else on Capitol Hill. “I am in the dark,” one plugged-in lawmaker said when asked where Mueller might be headed. “Zero visibility about what is next.”

All Congress really knows about Mueller is the cases he has brought — the charges of lying to the FBI or to Congress, the charges, in the case of Paul Manafort, of tax evasion and other financial crimes, and the charges against Russians.

There are also the cases he has not brought. He hasn’t alleged collusion. He hasn’t outlined any scheme between Trump and Russia, even though he has thoroughly investigated some of the figures — Manafort, Rick Gates, Michael Flynn — most likely to have been part of such a scheme, had it existed.

So Mueller remains a black hole. Maybe he really is finishing up his investigation. Maybe he’s not. House Democrats, on the other hand, are far more transparent. They’re going after Trump full-tilt from now on, regardless of what Mueller does.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

YOUR VIEWS

It’s national FFA week

It’s National FFA week, and the Pendleton FFA Alumni & Friends Association invites you to celebrate with us by wearing blue on Friday, Feb. 22!

What started as an effort in 1928 by a group of Kansas farmers to educate local students about farming has grown to a nationwide organization of more than 669,000 student members in 8,630 local chapters. FFA’s founders wanted to teach kids that agriculture is more than planting and harvesting; it’s a science, it’s a business, and it’s an art.

Over the years FFA has evolved and changed, and today is stronger and more vibrant than ever. One thing that hasn’t changed is the important role that the local community plays in helping to make FFA successful. This past November the Pendleton FFA Alumni & Friends Association presented the 8th Annual Dinner & Auction.

Our event was very successful and we are grateful to all who donated to the auction and those who were able to attend. Many of our FFA chapter members attended and helped. Having talked to a number of them, I can tell you that the future of agriculture in our community is bright.

The FFA program advisors at Pendleton High School are Kylee Jenson and Marty Campbell. Thanks to their leadership, membership continues to grow, and students are excelling in local, regional, and statewide career development opportunities and competitions.

FFA still helps young people learn about farming, but students also learn about leadership, public speaking, goal setting, caring for livestock, teamwork, and the importance of assuming personal responsibility.

As the current president of the Pendleton FFA Alumni & Friends Association, and on behalf of our board, I am proud of the phenomenal changes and growth we see in the students who participate.

Having great FFA advisors and a supportive school administration is great, but we also need the community involvement for students to be as successful as possible. If you have been part of an FFA program or would like to participate as a friend of FFA please let us know.

You may contact us by email at pendletonffaalumni@gmail.com; you can find us on Facebook at Pendleton FFA Alumni Association; or by mail at Pendleton FFA Alumni & Friends Association, P.O. Box 865, Pendleton, OR 97801.

Bob Rosselle, President of Pendleton FFA Alumni & Friends Adams

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