



Free Congress Foundation Commentary

Jeopardize Our Military and Establish a Department of Peace: National Suicide or a Joke?

By Paul M. Weyrich

October 28, 2008

Many conservatives agree that since the mid-20th Century the Federal Government has grown too large, its bloated bureaucracies unaccountable to the American people and its oversight too broad vis-à-vis its Constitutional prerogatives. Unfortunately, Congress soon may add a new bureaucracy to the Federal Government. And this would not be another run-of-the-mill bureaucracy but a perilous threat to America's future.

Representative Dennis J. Kucinich (D-OH) has proposed H.R. 808, the Department of Peace and Non-Violence Act. The bill would establish a "Department of Peace and Non-Violence...headed by a Secretary of Peace and Nonviolence appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate." The mission of the Department would be to..."hold peace as an organizing principle; endeavor to promote justice and democratic principles to expand human rights; and develop policies that promote national and international conflict prevention, non-violent intervention, mediation, peaceful resolution of conflict, and structured mediation of conflict." H.R. 808 also would establish within the Department an "Intergovernmental Advisory Council on Peace and Non-violence [to] provide assistance and make recommendations to the Secretary and the President concerning intergovernmental policies relating to peace and non-violent conflict resolution; a Federal Interagency Committee on Peace and Non-violence; [and] Peace Day." The purpose of

Peace Day would be to urge all citizens to observe and celebrate the blessings of peace and on that day to strive to create peace.

While this may sound like a joke, the bill currently has 70 co-sponsors. And it appears that some liberal Members of Congress eagerly anticipate establishing such a Cabinet-level department. Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) recently told a local newspaper that the Democratic Majority in the next Congress may slash the budget for the Department of Defense by up to 25%, thereby eviscerating the American military and leaving the Nation weak and defenseless. Of course, with the new Department of Peace and Non-Violence (DPN-V), perhaps financed by the funds cut from the Department of Defense, America would have no need of a military. Direct diplomatic talks between the DPN-V and “rational” authoritarians like Vladimir Putin, Hugo Chavez and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad would solve all international problems.

One can imagine Patrick Henry, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, among other Founders, arguing strenuously against such a dangerous and naive absurdity. Those historical men of great genius and patient deliberation were willing to sacrifice their lives, fortunes and sacred honor to violently resist a government which had become “an absolute tyranny,” in the words of the Declaration of Independence.

The establishment of the Department of Peace and Non-Violence would be an egregious mistake for America’s security, its international relations and the safety of the free world. While the expenditures of the Department of Defense certainly are worth debating (there are many which could be reduced, reorganized or cut), it would be difficult for America to recover from a 25% reduction in our defense budget and the concurrent creation of the Department of Peace and Non-Violence. Government bureaucracies are notoriously hard to eliminate once created. Americans would do well to oppose H.R. 808 and whatever form it may take in the next, 111th, Congress. Its sponsors may not be joking.

Paul M. Weyrich is Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation.