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Thank you for reading The Conaway Chronicle, a weekly review of my activities in Congress. This newsletter is to let you know what's going on in Washington and what important issues are being debated in Congress.

Back from Afghanistan and Pakistan

Last weekend, I had the opportunity to travel to Afghanistan and Pakistan to review the situation that these two countries are currently facing. We first went to Kabul, Afghanistan, where we met with leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and also with the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, who the next day was actually at the site of the assassination attempt on President Karzai, but was not injured. We then flew to Bagram, Afghanistan and spent some time with some of the finest warriors I have ever met who protect America from some really bad people. It was one of the highlights of the trip to get to shake their hands and spend some time getting to know them.

Conaway with National Afghan Army Soldiers

We then flew to Kandahar, which is in Southern Afghanistan, and met with the Canadian forces that are responsible for security in the Kandahar province. They have a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kandahar, and we had the opportunity to visit with them about their strategy for extending the reach of the central government to the region.

That night we left for Islamabad, Pakistan, and while we were in the air, the assassination attempt on President Karzai took place. Although there were many casualties, President Karzai, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne Patterson, and General Daniel McNeil were uninjured.

While in Pakistan, I had the pleasure of meeting with President Musharraf and Prime Minister Gillani, as well as the head of the Pakistan Intelligence Service, Nadeem Taj. They each expressed that the fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is a Pakistani fight and is theirs to solve. They appreciate the help and assistance of the United States, but at the end of the day, it is the responsibility of the Pakistanis to solve that very difficult problem. However, their military is not well-constructed for counter-insurgency, and we will continue to give them assistance in the form of advice as to how we have gone about dealing with the fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Iraq and Afghanistan.

All-in-all it was a wonderful and informative trip. With each trip I take to the Iraq and Afghanistan, the dedication and morale of our troops continues to amaze me. It is important that we thank each and every soldier fighting for our freedom, as well as the military families and friends who offer their endless support and steadfast resolve.

Gas Prices Continue to Skyrocket

With the rising costs of gas, food, housing, and other necessities, hardworking Americans and small businesses across the country are feeling the burn. Two years ago, Speaker Pelosi promised a 'commonsense plan' to lower gas prices, but all we have seen are higher prices at the pump. There is no short-term sure solution to this problem, but I do believe Congress can take steps now to increase our domestic energy supply, encourage innovation of renewable energy sources, and promote conservation to lower our current demand. It is past time for the Speaker to unveil her plan.

Weekly Farm Bill Update

Last week, President Bush signed a two-week extension of current farm law. I continue to remain optimistic that a new Farm Bill will be brought to the floors of the House and Senate this week or next; however, issues still remain between the House, Senate and Administration. America's farmers and ranchers deserve certainty and the ability to make business plans and decisions in a timely, organized fashion. Congress must work to finish a good Farm Bill that will provide certainty in the agriculture sector. Congress must make the Farm Bill a priority and move to pass a conference report this week.

The Conaway Chronicle will be issued every week when Congress is in session. I hope that you will find it informative and will continue to stay informed with my recent legislative activities in Washington. In the meantime, if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for future issues of the Conaway Chronicle, please visit the website at **www.house.gov/conaway** or don't hesitate to call me at (202) 225-3605. Check out my blog at **www.conawayblog.com**!

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