

Security necessary to prevent attacks

THE ISSUE | The economy, energy and the war in Iraq far overshadow concerns about another terrorist attack.

OUR OPINION | National security must remain in the forefront if another attack is to be prevented.

Do you worry that the United States will be hit by another terrorist attack?

That question was asked a lot Thursday on the seventh anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, as it always is when that day comes around.

Indeed the whole notion of national security resurfaces, but certainly not to the degree that it once did.

For example, 30 percent of Americans say they think an attack on American soil is likely over the next several weeks, according to a CNN poll. That's down 11 points since the same time last year and half the amount of Americans who thought on the first anniversary of 9/11 that another attack was coming.

Clearly, the tension Americans felt just after the attacks has subsided. That's understandable considering we haven't had another attack on the homeland.

But are we becoming comfortable or complacent?

America's war on terror that followed 9/11 knocked the evil-doers back on their heels, but by no means knocked them out. In fact, evidence shows that al-Qaida and other terrorists groups are on the rebound and rebuilding their malevolent

network.

Americans need to remember how vulnerable we are even though numerous steps have been taken to make us more secure. More importantly our leaders need to keep national security in the forefront even though Washington's attention is more focused these days on the economy, energy and the war in Iraq.

Domestic air travel is more secure and there's surveillance now on overseas transactions and phone calls. A big fence is going up along the Mexican border and traveling in and out of Canada will soon require identification above and beyond a driver's license.

But much more needs to be done, like greatly shoring up security at our ports and around nuclear plants and making sure our food and water sources are tamper-proof.

The fact that more Americans feel more secure is an indication that life has returned to normal following that terrible national tragedy seven years ago. But it would be foolish to think we can let our guard down and must remain diligent in preventing another attack from happening.

NATIONAL VIEW | MIAMI HERALD

Be a good neighbor

The 2008 hurricane season has not been kind to Caribbean nations. Haiti is in sodden tatters. Cuba has taken the brunt of what Ike delivered, and that after Hurricane Gustav slammed the island. The Dominican Republic may be better off than its neighbor, Haiti, but only because it was better off economically and ecologically before this year's storms began pouncing. Jamaica, Turks and Caicos and parts of the Bahamas also have been pounded by storms, none meaner than Ike. And there are 2 1/2 more months before the season ends.

Having been blessed so far with no hurricanes, South Florida residents have reason to show their gratitude and their humanity by reaching out to our island neighbors. This is all the more natural because so many residents in this community have family and friends back "home." For most wanting to help, barriers will be minimal.

Not so for Cuban Americans, whose natural instincts to reach out to fellow Cubans are stymied by tightened restrictions for visiting and sending remittances to the island.

The restrictions, adopted by the Bush administration in 2004, placed new, stricter limits on the amount of

money and other aid Cuban Americans could send back to the islands. It also restricted family visits to the island to once every three years.

Many Cuban Americans who oppose the 2004 rules are calling on the president to suspend them in order to expedite relief and recovery supplies to Cuba. President Bush should heed their pleas. Sending food, water, clothing, building materials and other goods to Cuban citizens will instill goodwill and strengthen the bond between Cubans and South Florida. It is, simply, the right and humane thing to do regardless of politics.

Equally necessary is for President Bush to suspend deportations to Haiti and grant Haitians here facing deportation Temporary Protected Status under the Immigration and Nationality Act. Haiti is in shambles. Flooding and other obstacles have made delivery of relief supplies extremely difficult, according to U.S. military officials. This is not the time to be repatriating Haitians.

Haiti is still crippled from Tropical Storm Noel's torrential rains, which killed 66 people and destroyed 20,000 homes in 2007, and from Tropical Storm Jeanne, which killed more than 2,500 and left 250,000 homeless in 2004.

LETTERS POLICY | THE LEADER

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ARTIST'S VIEW

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EXTREME MAKEOVER



COMMENTARY | CARL P. LEUBSDORF

Can Palin help McCain?

The nomination of a female running mate had energized the convention, buoying prospects for the underdog presidential candidate, when I ran into a veteran party activist.

"Today, we feel invincible," she said. "But in a few days, reality will set in."

The month was July 1984. My friend was a Democratic delegate at the convention that nominated Geraldine Ferraro for vice president. Now, the question is whether Sarah Palin's infusion of energy to John McCain's campaign will last longer than the short-lived boost Ferraro gave Walter Mondale's.

If it does, it would be another remarkable twist in a remarkable election. It has been 48 years since a vice-presidential nominee had a tangible impact on a presidential election outcome.

In 1960, John F. Kennedy's choice of Lyndon B. Johnson kept Texas Democratic, prompted wary Southern Democrats to back the ticket and united the party for what proved to be a close election.

Palin's effect is potentially broader but less certain. She remains relatively unknown to many Americans. Polls show most people like her personally but that many are skeptical about her qualifications, attitudes that may vary more than for a better-known figure.

Post-convention polls and growing crowds show the Alaska governor has given McCain a big boost with Republicans, many of whom

have been unenthusiastic.

Some polls also show she helped with white women and independents, two crucial voter groups that could be decisive in November. An ABC News-Washington Post poll shows McCain bounced from an eight-point deficit among white women to a 12-point advantage. In several surveys, he took the lead among independents.

The polls also show McCain with one in five voters who backed Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primaries.

If these gains hold, Palin could help McCain win such Republican-leaning states as Missouri and North Carolina and perhaps foil the Barack Obama campaign's effort to break the recent GOP grip on Colorado, Ohio and Virginia.

Democrats, meanwhile, have been thrown off stride, unsure whether to go after Palin or McCain. Their problems were underscored by a McCain effort to capitalize on Obama's oft-made comment that, even with lipstick, a pig is "still a pig."

History gives contradictory evidence whether the Palin-fueled bounce will last or recede.

Mondale's boost after picking Ferraro vanished quickly. So did Al Gore's post-convention gains.

On the other hand, the 1988 GOP convention propelled George H.W. Bush from behind to a lead he never relinquished, despite negative coverage of his running mate, Dan Quayle.

In each case, voters' judg-

ments of the top of the ticket proved decisive.

Though the focus on Palin may last longer than usual, in part because she delayed the inevitable media interviews, attention inevitably will return to McCain and Obama.

And though the Democratic nominee this week challenged Palin's positive aura by disputing her positions on budget earmarks and the notorious "bridge to nowhere," his single best argument is that McCain would continue many Bush administration policies the country opposes.

Besides, despite the hype and favorable publicity for Palin, this week's polls show the two tickets basically tied. They also show that Obama retains a double-digit lead as the candidate most likely to bring change. And many voters remain concerned about McCain's age and believe he would maintain Bush policies.

Still, the GOP convention seems to have undone some of Obama's progress in persuading voters he is ready to be president and a strong leader.

In the end, the debates starting in two weeks are still likely to be decisive. They are Obama's chance to persuade voters he can do the job, despite a slender resume.

Until then, however, there can be no doubt that Palin's emergence has added an unpredictable new factor that neither side really expected.

■ Carl P. Leubsdorf is Washington bureau chief of the *Dallas Morning News*.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Massa has solid ideas on energy

TO THE EDITOR | So Randy Kuhl is "working hard" to solve the energy crisis. Even Bush's Department of Interior notes that offshore production "will not have a significant impact on domestic crude oil and natural gas production or prices before 2030. No new oil or gas could likely be produced before 2017."

"Drill, Baby, drill!" is a farce conjured up to sooth the public reaction to decades of political inaction that has finally started to hurt.

To quote Tony Kreindler at the Environmental Defense Fund in Washington "This is a proposed short-term solution for a problem that doesn't lend itself to short-term solutions." Let's quote Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger: He dismisses claims of offshore drilling providing a quick fix. He says: "Anyone who tells you this would bring down gas prices anytime soon is blowing smoke." It's shameful that the entire country gets just 2% of its energy from renewables while California

gets six times that.

Gee whiz, Randy, you didn't need to run back to Washington to talk to the empty walls. You could have stayed in Steuben County and scheduled some debates with Eric Massa. Read Eric's Web site. He has some solid ideas for ultimately solving the energy problems that include conservation and design efficiency that start working immediately.

Ruth S. Young
Horseheads

Kuhl should apologize

TO THE EDITOR | We are local steelworkers and veterans of U.S. military service. We write to thank all men and women who have and now are serving our country in uniform. All have sacrificed years, sweat and in some cases their blood and lives, to defend us.

Too many of us believe that giving up careers, homes and comforts for armed services is a job for someone else's son or daughter. Unfortunately, our current Congressman J. "Randy" Kuhl is just such a person.

To make it worse, recently Mr. Kuhl insulted a real American who made the sacrifice of service: U.S. Navy Capt. (Ret.) Emiddio Massa, Eric's father.

The elder Mr. Massa entered the Navy an enlistee man and rose, over 34 years of honorable service, to be a captain. Yet Randy felt free to lash out at this good man just because his son dared ask Randy to accept a debate on the issues. Had Randy Kuhl insulted our parents this way, we would have offered him a much more direct response.

We now ask Congressman Kuhl to show a spark of decency by apologizing for his personal attack on an honorable American who proudly served our flag and deserves to be thanked, not insulted, by a sitting member of the U.S. Congress.

Mike LeBarron,
Roger Dean,
John R. Schwartz,
Jbe Speciale,
Robert A. Watson Jr.,
Military veterans and members of the executive board of United Steelworkers Local 1000, Corning

Time to give Kuhl credit

It's time to give credit where credit is due.

And that, dear reader, is at the feet of

Randy Kuhl.

Yes, I've given our congressman hell in this space for his dependence on contributions from

Big Oil, his votes against environmental improvement projects, a comprehensive energy bill and his opposition to requiring electric companies to use renewable energy.

They were all votes that should not have been made. But what, you ask, does Randy stand for if he's against so many other measures?

Post offices, I'm told.

To be more to the point, the naming of post offices.

While trying to defeat so many environmental measures, Kuhl has managed to vote in favor of new names for 45 post offices across the country.

He even sponsored a bill to rename the post office in Scio, N.Y., in honor of Jason Dunham, an armed services member who was killed in Iraq.

So don't think Randy just sits back and follows the George Bush-John McCain party line whenever he's in Washington. If they ever objected to a new name for a post office, you can depend on Randy to declare "Enough! Enough!"

And for a few brief moments, actually become his own man.

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Have politicians and lobbyists declared war on kids?

It's beginning to look that way.

When 100 college presidents including the heads of some of the most prestigious schools in the country, came out for dropping the drinking age to 18, you'd have thought somebody had stolen the original Declaration of Independence.

The neo-prohibitionists wrapped themselves in the cloak of safety and declared that was the worst idea they'd ever heard, even if it was intended to curb binge drinking.

Now, another branch of the so-called "Safety Promoters" wants to raise the age kids can get a driver's license from 16 to at least 18 - and higher if they can manage it.

Once again, they'd destroy one of the most significant dates in the lives of millions of young people, and do so in the name of safety.

What none of these people seem to understand is that you can't protect everyone from everything that could possibly harm them.

It can not be done, no matter how many "do-gooder" laws you enact.

Please, Lord, protect us from those who want to protect us, no matter how pure their motives might be.

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Bob Rolfe