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Pawlenty calls for end to sacred cows – except defense spending

By NBC's Mark Murray and Lauren Selsky

In a speech outlining his belief in limited government, Republican presidential hopeful **Tim Pawlenty** today said there should be "no sacred cows" when it comes to finding ways to reduce government spending.

But he made an exception after the speech: defense spending.

"The base budget of the United States military, in my view, shouldn't shrink," Pawlenty said to reporters afterward. "The rate of growth can be slowed down, but it shouldn't shrink in absolute terms. And then within that, we need to find more efficiencies and redeploy resources."

On Monday, in Iowa, the former Minnesota governor called for an eventual end to ethanol subsidies. And today, he said, other subsidies should be cut as well. "Now we're not gonna be able to get rid of every one, but we should get rid of as many as we can."

And he praised the House Republican budget plan -- authored by Republican Congressman **Paul Ryan** -- which would phase out Medicare for those under 55. "I think, in general, you know the direction of it is positive. But I'm gonna have my own plan, and so we're going to have some differences from his plan."

These remarks by Pawlenty came after a speech at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank in DC, which last year awarded the then-governor an "A" for his fiscal record.

The thrust of Pawlenty's speech at Cato -- his third since formally announcing his presidential bid on Monday -- emphasized the need to rein in federal workers' pay and benefits.

"So, first thing we have to do is continue to freeze the salary of federal employees -- and, in my view, public employees more broadly -- until they're the same or no greater than the private sector employees."



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Pawlenty also described his general philosophy of government. "The American story, the story of the greatest and most successful nation in the history of the world, is not a story about the American government. It's largely a story about the American people." He continued, "Our government has been strong and good. But it has to be limited."

Pawlenty concluded his remarks by saying that the way forward won't be easy. "Will it be easy? No, but it never has been easy. You know Valley Forge wasn't easy. And settling the West wasn't easy. And winning World War II wasn't easy. And going to the moon wasn't easy."

Then again, at least two of those -- World War II and going to the moon -- were achieved almost exclusively by the federal government and federal funding.

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Feisty Redhead Roselle, IL



"no sacred cows"

That's his story and he SHOULD stick to it!

It seems to be working out SO well for Ryan! lol

Does this mean 'chicken hawks' are still sacred? lol

#1 - Wed May 25, 2011 5:24 PM EDT

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