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McKeon's War Chest

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A few months ago, Brookings Institution scholar Robert Kagan told *Washington Post* blogger Jennifer Rubin that anyone looking to cut military spending was “cowardly” because “defense has no domestic constituency.”^[3] That remark seemed ridiculous then, and it seems even more ridiculous now.

Why? Because Rep. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (R-CA), the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, has stated that he would prefer raising taxes to cutting military expenditures. This is the same Buck McKeon who signed Americans for Tax Reform’s “Taxpayer Protection Pledge”^[4] [.pdf] promising never to raise taxes. Unsurprisingly, ATR’s Grover Norquist has emerged to remind McKeon that “He was elected by his constituents promising to them that he will never raise taxes. I hope he keeps his word.”^[5]

So if there’s no domestic constituency for military spending, there must really be no constituency among conservatives for low taxes, since McKeon prefers raising taxes to cutting military spending. Perhaps Rubin and Kagan can illuminate us on this peculiar development.

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[4] <http://s3.amazonaws.com/atrfles/files/files/Federal%20Pledge%20Signers%20112th%20Congress.pdf>

[5] <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/09/12/gop-rep-buck-mckeon-tax-cuts-not-as-important-as-defense-spending.html>