



Fearing Hagel

- **Mike Shedlock**

The Financial Time reports [Hagel nomination expected this week](#).

US President Barack Obama is poised to nominate Chuck Hagel as secretary of defence, setting the stage for a tough nomination fight focusing on the former Republican senator's views on Israel and Iran.

The announcement by Mr Obama of a new Pentagon chief to replace Leon Panetta could come as early as Monday, administration officials indicated. Mr Obama returned from a holiday in Hawaii on Sunday.

Mr Hagel's possible nomination has caused an uproar among neoconservatives over his questioning of sanctions and military action against Iran and his statement that a "Jewish lobby" intimidates Congress.

Many Democrats have been unenthusiastic as well, because he is a Republican and over a past statement criticising a Clinton-era diplomatic appointment as "openly, aggressively gay".

But the criticism has been especially virulent from the right, with Israel conservatives labelling him borderline anti-Semitic and suggesting he was intent in making dangerously deep cuts to the defence budget.

Lindsey Graham, a Republican senator from South Carolina and a prominent defence hawk, said on Sunday he was inclined not to support his former Senate colleague because of his "antagonistic" attitude to Israel.

"This is an in-your-face nomination by the president for all those who are supportive of Israel," Mr Graham told CNN.

Got That?

Democrats don't want Hagel simply because Hagel is a Republican. The Republicans do not want him because he is not a war-monger.

That's what this whole thing boils down to.

Why the War Party Fears Hagel

Let's fill in the details with a look at [Why the War Party Fears Hagel](#)

Who is Chuck Hagel?

Born in North Platte, Neb., he was a squad leader in Vietnam, twice wounded, who came home to work in Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign, was twice elected U.S. senator, and is chairman of the Atlantic Council and co-chair of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

To The Weekly Standard's Bill Kristol, however, Hagel is a man "out on the fringes," who has a decade-long record of "hostility to Israel" and is "pro-appeasement-of-Iran."

Hagel's enemies contend that his own words disqualify him.

First, he told author Aaron David Miller that the "Jewish lobby intimidates a lot of people up there" on the Hill. Second, he urged us to talk to Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran. Third, Hagel said several years ago, "A military strike against Iran ... is not a viable, feasible, responsible option."

Hagel has conceded he misspoke in using the phrase "Jewish lobby." But as for a pro-Israel lobby, its existence is the subject of books and countless articles. When AIPAC sends up to the Hill one of its scripted pro-Israel resolutions, it is whistled through. Hagel's problem: He did not treat these sacred texts with sufficient reverence.

"I am a United States senator, not an Israeli senator," he told Miller. "I support Israel. But my first interest is I take an oath ... to the Constitution of the United States. Not to a president. Not to a party. Not to Israel. If I go run for Senate in Israel, I'll do that."

Hagel puts U.S. national interests first. And sometimes those interests clash with the policies of the Israeli government.

Chuck Hagel allies launch counter-attack

Politico reports [Chuck Hagel allies launch counter-attack](#).

Brent Scowcroft, who was national security adviser to Presidents Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush, said Hagel "has a very broad view of American foreign policy and the role in the world. He is very judicious, and he has an outstanding record as a senator, which gives him

the knowledge and background to understand about the sometimes fractious relationship between the Congress, especially the Senate, and the administration.”

“He got two Purple Hearts on the front lines,” Scowcroft added. “That’s about the best recommendation you can get from somebody whose job would be to advise on the use of troops around the world. I am honestly surprised, even astonished, at the attacks. I do know where they’re coming from, but I don’t understand the genesis of them.

Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), a former Army Ranger who serves on the Armed Services Committee and has traveled to war zones with Hagel, said: “Every man and woman in uniform in the Pentagon and across the world will know that he’s not only talked the talk, he’s walked the walk. ... He also has a successful business record. He is an entrepreneur who’s succeeded.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser to President Jimmy Carter, forcefully defended Hagel on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe”: “Unlike some of his critics, ... he has fought for his country. He has been wounded for this country. He is a man who knows what war is like.”

Nonviable Options

I support anyone willing to make this statement "A military strike against Iran ... is not a viable, feasible, responsible option." vs. anyone not willing to make the same statement.

A military strike on Iran would be idiotic, and I have no doubt one would have happened had Romney been elected.

It remains to be seen if Obama can get this right. However, Hagel as Secretary of Defense would be a step in the right direction.

[Ron Paul on Military Spending, the Fiscal Cliff, Bipartisan Politics, Hypocrite Republicans](#)

Here is a post on Facebook a couple days ago that is worth a read in entirety. I will post the entire article along with a few thoughts.

[We Are Already Over the Fiscal Cliff](#) by Ron Paul

Despite claims that the Administration and Congress saved America from the fiscal cliff with an early morning vote today, the fact is that government spending has already pushed Americans over the cliff. Only serious reductions in federal spending will stop the cliff dive from ending in a crash landing, yet the events of this past month show that most elected officials remain committed to expanding the welfare-warfare state.

While there was much hand-wringing over the “draconian” cuts that would be imposed by sequestration, in fact sequestration does not cut spending at all. Under the sequestration

plan, government spending will increase by 1.6 trillion over the next eight years. Congress calls this a cut because without sequestration spending will increase by 1.7 trillion over the same time frame. Either way it is an increase in spending.

Yet even these minuscule cuts in the “projected rate of spending” were too much for Washington politicians to bear. The last minute “deal” was the worst of both worlds: higher taxes on nearly all Americans now and a promise to revisit these modest reductions in spending growth two months down the road. We were here before, when in 2011 Republicans demanded these automatic modest decreases in government growth down the road in exchange for a massive increase in the debt ceiling. As the time drew closer, both parties clamored to avoid even these modest moves.

Make no mistake: the spending addiction is a bipartisan problem. It is generally believed that one party refuses to accept any reductions in military spending while the other party refuses to accept any serious reductions in domestic welfare programs. In fact, both parties support increases in both military and domestic welfare spending. The two parties may disagree on some details of what kind of military or domestic welfare spending they favor, but they do agree that they both need to increase. This is what is called “bipartisanship” in Washington.

While the media played up the drama of the down-to-the-wire negotiations, there was never any real chance that a deal would not be worked out. It was just drama. That is how Washington operates. As it happened, a small handful of Congressional and Administration leaders gathered in the dark of the night behind closed doors to hammer out a deal that would be shoved down the throats of Members whose constituents had been told repeatedly that the world would end if this miniscule decrease in the rate of government spending was allowed to go through.

While many on both sides express satisfaction that this deal only increases taxes on the “rich,” most Americans will see more of their paycheck going to Washington because of the deal. The Tax Policy Center has estimated that 77 percent of Americans would see higher taxes because of the elimination of the payroll tax cut.

The arguments against the automatic “cuts” in military spending were particularly dishonest. Hawks on both sides warned of doom and gloom if, as the plan called for, the defense budget would have returned to 2007 levels of spending! Does anybody really believe that our defense spending was woefully inadequate just five years ago? And since 2007 we have been told that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are winding down. According to the Congressional Budget Office, over the next eight years military spending would increase 20 percent without the sequester and would increase 18 percent with the sequester. And this is

what is called a dangerous reduction in defense spending?

Ironically, some of the members who are most vocal against tax increases and in favor of cuts to domestic spending are the biggest opponents of cutting a penny from the Pentagon budget. Over and over we were told of the hundreds of thousands of jobs that would be lost should military spending be returned to 2007 levels. Is it really healthy to think of our defense budget as a jobs program? Many of these allegedly free-market members sound more Keynesian than Paul Krugman when they praise the economic “stimulus” created by militarism.

As Chris Preble of the Cato Institute wrote recently, “It’s easy to focus exclusively on the companies and individuals hurt by the cuts and forget that the taxed wealth that funded them is being employed elsewhere.”

While Congress ultimately bears responsibility for deficit spending, we must never forget that the Federal Reserve is the chief enabler of deficit spending. Without a central bank eager to monetize the debt, Congress would be unable to fund the welfare-warfare state without imposing unacceptable levels of taxation on the American people. Of course, the Federal Reserve’s policies do impose an “inflation” tax on the American people; however, since this tax is hidden Congress does not fear the same public backlash it would experience if it directly raised income taxes.

I have little hope that a majority of Congress and the President will change their ways and support real spending reductions unless forced to by an economic crisis or by a change in people’s attitudes toward government. Fortunately, increasing numbers of Americans are awakening to the dangers posed by the growth of the welfare-warfare state. Hopefully this movement will continue to grow and force the politicians to reverse course before government spending, taxing, and inflation destroys our economy entirely.

Key Points

1. The last minute “deal” was the worst of both worlds
2. According to the Congressional Budget Office, over the next eight years military spending would increase 20 percent without the sequester and would increase 18 percent with the sequester. And this is what is called a dangerous reduction in defense spending?
3. Is it really healthy to think of our defense budget as a jobs program? Many of these allegedly free-market members sound more Keynesian than Paul Krugman when they praise the economic “stimulus” created by militarism.
4. While Congress ultimately bears responsibility for deficit spending, we must never forget that the Federal Reserve is the chief enabler of deficit spending.
5. Without a central bank eager to monetize the debt, Congress would be unable to fund the welfare-warfare state without imposing unacceptable levels of taxation on the American people.

Hypocrite Republicans

Please read points four and five repeatedly until both points are permanently etched in your memory.

I am particularly disappointed in Republican hypocrites bitching about non-cuts in military spending, moaning about the loss of jobs if programs are cut. Yet, the fact remains neither Democrats, nor Republicans are interested in cutting the deficit.

If they were, the budget would be cut.

This "fiscal cliff" idea originated at the Fed, and blatant idiots in the mainstream media latched on to the idea. Of course Obama latched onto it as well, as did Wall Street, the latter always begging for a party.

However, Congress did not have to go along with it. Yet Congress did, including Republicans, in the worst possible way, hiking taxes and not cutting one cent from the budget. The entire process was sickening.

Expect more of the same because hypocrite Republicans have shown they have no backbone whatsoever.

As I stated earlier, [I'll Believe It When I See It.](#)

Does anyone believe the Republicans will really hold out for budget cuts? I sure don't after all the white flag waving we have seen.

I sure hope I am wrong, but what I fully expect is another can-kicking exercise in which Republicans cave in on cuts to entitlements in return for Democrats caving in on cuts to military.