

## **Letters**

Sunday, July 1, 2007

### **Pentagon can be more efficient**

Republican presidential candidates Rudy Giuliani and Mitt Romney have been talking a lot lately about cutting the size of the federal government, cutting taxes and increasing spending on the military. They hearken back to the Reagan administration, hailing him as a true fiscal conservative.

Here are a few points we should keep in mind when considering their recommendations:

- The size of the federal work force is at an all-time low, but the number of contract workers is at an all-time high, so the amount of money being spent has not decreased under a Republican administration.
- Real spending, adjusted for inflation, on one significant area of the federal budget -- training, employment and social services -- has decreased by 6.5 percent over the past six years. Meanwhile, spending on the military has increased by a staggering 115 percent.
- The federal debt tripled during Reagan's eight years in office because of tax cuts for the wealthy combined with increased spending for the military. Reagan submitted a balanced budget only once during his eight years in office.

It is ironic that so-called fiscal conservative candidates for president are running on cutting the size of the federal government while giving a pass to the largest, most inefficient and bloated part of the government: the Pentagon. I hope the candidates will take a serious look at trying to make the Pentagon the lean, mean fighting machine it should be.

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