

OPINION

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OTHER VIEW | DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Putting Egypt’s military in proper place

Egypt’s new president, Mohammed Morsi, took a bold step last week by replacing the country’s top military leadership and openly rejecting its claims to executive authority. This confrontation had to happen, and it was time for the military to submit to civilian control.

By forcing the issue now - even as Morsi still seemed politically unsteady and vulnerable to top generals’ domination - the president has taken an important step in solidifying the transition to democratic governance.

At the same time, Morsi must reiterate publicly that he is president of all Egyptians, not just those who adhere to the Islamist beliefs of his Muslim Brotherhood. Just because the Muslim Brotherhood’s candidates won this year’s presidential and parliamentary elections doesn’t mean their power is absolute, nor does it negate the sacrifices of other Egyptians in ousting the previous dictatorship.

Morsi still must convince the world that Egyptians haven’t merely traded one form of tyranny for another.

He seized his opening last week when the military leadership, obviously preoccupied with events in Cairo, failed at its main duty of securing Egypt from military attack. Islamist gunmen in the Sinai Peninsula, apparently allied with Hamas militants in Gaza, killed 16 Egyptian soldiers, exposing major vulnerabilities. Morsi grabbed the opportunity to oust the top generals who had challenged his authority.

Big difficulties remain. Egypt has yet to adopt a new constitution and

establish distinct lines of authority between the judiciary, legislature and presidency. Amid a vacuum of checks and balances during the transition, top military leaders played a useful watchdog role over Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Still, Morsi had no choice but to put the military in its proper, subordinate position. History is rife with examples of what happens when military-dominated dictatorships cede only partial authority to the civilian leadership while continuing to exercise control behind the scenes.

The decades of strife, coups and thousands of extrajudicial killings in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Chile and Argentina all had roots in their respective military leaderships’ refusal to cede control to civilian leaders. Britain, France and Italy failed to install strong democratic traditions after they granted independence to the Arab nations they controlled after World War I. That’s what laid the foundation for decades of military-backed Arab dictatorships and the regional turmoil that has accompanied them.

Breaking the military’s domination is exactly what the Arab Spring revolts are all about, which is why Morsi’s actions are so momentous in setting the standard for democratic rule across the Arab world.

Morsi will no doubt be tempted with the new power he wields. The measure of this man will be in his exercise of restraint, his inclusion of all Egyptian sectors in designing a new constitution, and his ability to put democratic principles above his personal religious views as he blazes this new path.

BEST OF THE BLOGS

Window to the West: Two treasures - saved



House

“Last summer Mrs. House and I attended a Finger Lakes Museum presentation on the preservation of Hemlock and Candice Lakes. This process started back in the 1870s with the City of Rochester desperate for fresh water. It climaxed in 2010 with what the state Commissioner of Environmental Conservation called, ‘without a doubt, the most important land acquisition project the state has undertaken outside of the Adirondack and Catskill Parks in more than a generation.’”

To read more about Window to the West by Kirk House, visit http://www.the-leader.com/blog_window_on_the_west.

ONLINE COLUMN



Boggia

Parenting with a purpose

Parenting expert Diana Boggia has collected 80 of her “Family Matters” columns in her book “Parenting with a Purpose: Inspiring, Positive Alternatives to Reach and Teach Your Child How to Behave.”

Read more about “Family Matters” at www.the-leader.com/lifestyle/family.

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COMMENTARY

Hire-a-Vet can help economy

According to the federal Bureau of Labor, unemployment has reached a staggering 20 percent for veterans under the age of 30 who have recently returned home from Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, statistics show that a significant number of recently returned veterans report service-connected disabilities.

It’s a tough economy all over, we know that. But the impact has been especially hard on veterans returning home during this recession to a weak private-sector economy. Simply put, it’s hard to find work. That’s particularly true for wounded veterans.

America’s servicemen and servicewomen make enormous sacrifices. That’s exactly why so many of us strongly support efforts underway in New York State – and nationally – to recognize this service and, in particular, encourage economic opportunities and jobs for returning veterans.

For example, Gov. Andrew Cuomo recently signed a new law that will assist returning servicemen and servicewomen in their job search by requiring the state Division of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) to establish an employment portal on its website, <http://veterans.ny.gov/>, that will include links to appropriate federal and state programs that assist veterans in obtaining employment.

The governor said, “Military veterans are highly



TOM O'MARA

trained, often in specialized skills that are in great demand in the public and private sectors. It is essential that our returning service men and women have access to the many resources available on the state and federal level to help veterans find jobs in the civilian workforce.”

Specifically the new DVA employment portal will provide information regarding resources that are available to assist veterans in finding jobs, including governmental programs on the federal and state levels and links to resources available through the federal and state labor departments. To ensure the portal successfully serves veterans, DVA will consult with members of the community devoted to helping veterans obtain employment.

It’s a continuation of efforts over the past two years to enhance New York’s commitment to ensuring the valuable military experience our veterans offer is better recognized during their re-entry into the civilian workforce. This commitment has included the “Experience Counts” campaign, which was launched last November

to facilitate the transfer of military skills to the public and private sectors. Earlier this year the Cuomo administration announced that the state Department of Motor Vehicles will waive road tests for veterans applying for a commercial driver’s license if they have military experience operating a similar vehicle. Similar efforts are under way at the federal level.

We can and should do more. In a column published in the The Leader earlier this year Keith Nosbusch, chairman and CEO of the Milwaukee-based Rockwell Automation, the world’s largest industrial automation company, highlighted the opportunity facing America to train highly skilled returning veterans for the jobs needed to revitalize U.S. manufacturing.

Nosbusch wrote, “The shortage of skilled workers is one of the top challenges slowing industrial growth in the United States. Technical colleges won’t be able to keep up with the demand as an estimated 2.6 million people retire from the manufacturing sector over the next decade. It’s time for business and government to work together in a public-private partnership ...to train veterans in the manufacturing jobs of the future.”

He goes on to promote a nationwide investment in a 26-week training program that would result in the employment of 20,000

veterans “to maintain ‘smart factories’” like Rockwell Automation. He believes the training of these 20,000 veterans would create at least 60,000 to 80,000 additional jobs in fields other than manufacturing as a result of the multiplier effect.

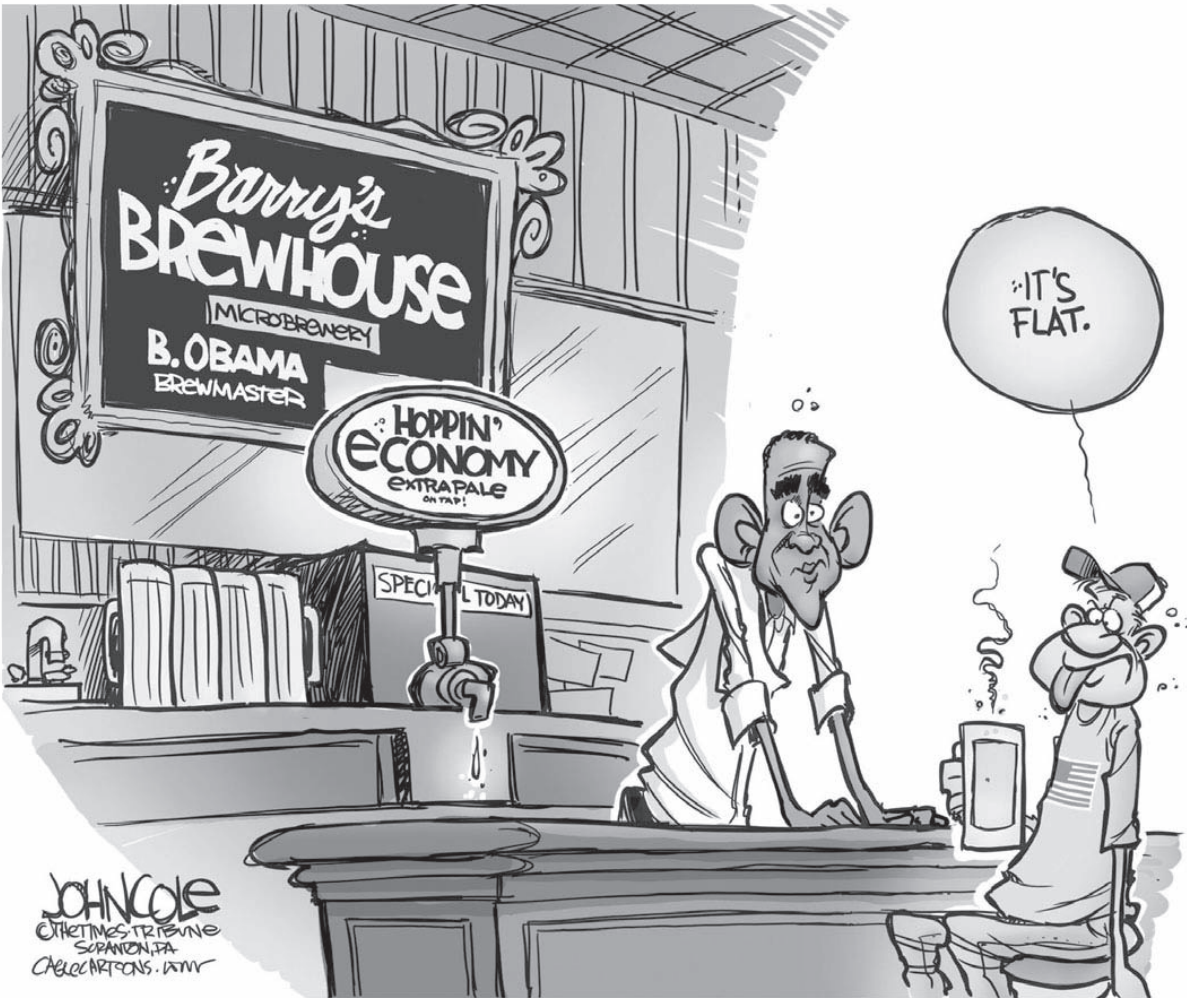
It’s a compelling idea.

Near the end of this year’s regular legislative session, I was proud to vote in favor of legislation, approved by the Senate with strong bipartisan support, to provide tax credits to state businesses that hire returning and wounded veterans. This legislation (Senate Bill Number 6024-C), which was not acted on by the Assembly leadership but that we’ll continue to fight for, proposed a \$3,000 tax credit for businesses that hire a returning veteran, and a \$4,000 tax credit for hiring a wounded veteran.

The Senate first advanced the idea of a “Hire-a-Vet” tax credit earlier this year as part of our comprehensive New Jobs-NY economic development program – a program that, looking ahead to the 2013 legislative session, will continue to form the foundation of our own commitment to rebuilding and revitalizing New York State’s manufacturing sector and economy as a whole.

Let the message be clear: We believe returning veterans have a place in this rebuilding. *State Sen. Tom O’Mara is a Republican from Big Flats.*

ANOTHER VIEW



COLUMN | MAEGAN E. ORTIZ

Why ‘English only’ is a loser for GOP

Republicans should give up their ugly campaign to declare English our official language. But Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, keeps pushing it.

Earlier this month, the House Judiciary Committee held a hearing on HR 97, known as the English Unity Act of 2011, the latest version of an English-only bill that King has been trying to pass since 2005. It would place an English language requirement in workplaces and at official government functions.

The introduction of the

law is meant to marginalize non-English language speakers in general and to specifically target Spanish speakers and Latinos. One would think that King would understand that this is not the time to push a bill that antagonizes one of the fastest-growing demographics in the United States and one of the most coveted voting blocs.

According to the U.S. Census, “Those who hablan espanol constitute 12 percent of U.S. residents.” More than half of these Spanish-speakers speak English “very well,” and

there are 50.5 million Latinos in the United States and growing.

While not all Latinos speak Spanish, it’s quite likely that their parents or grandparents do. Latino voters, who could be critical in determining this year’s presidential election, certainly will not feel any affinity towards a party that seeks to isolate and even attack them or their loved ones.

King claims the purpose of the bill is to unify people under a common language. But no one is denying the importance of English or

that it already is the de facto language of the United States. However, we need to reconsider the myth of the melting pot. The United States is more like a mixed salad, every piece retaining its flavor while existing in one bowl.

The fact that Latinos are a larger part of the bowl should not be a cause for alarm, much less hate. And it certainly should not be at the root of legislation that divides us, rather than unites us.

Maegan E. Ortiz is publisher of VivirLatino.com.