

by Martha Zoller/Human Events

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Last week, Rep. Allen West came home to Atlanta. The man who grew up in the Jewel of the South arrived at Hartsfield-Jackson Airport and visited the places of his youth. Grady High School was where he first put on the uniform of his country. He joined the Junior ROTC program and from that decided to continue the family tradition of service in the military. That decision in large part brought him to the halls of Congress in 2010.

The occasion was the President's Day Dinner for the Georgia Republican Party. The Georgia GOP was celebrating its victory in November, sweeping all the constitutional offices and adding to their majorities in the Georgia House and Senate, as well as picking up a seat in the congressional delegation.

Congressman West, who represents the 22nd District in Florida, was invited to be the keynote and he didn't disappoint. The last Continuing Resolution vote showed a split in the Georgia delegation and in the Republican majority. Fifty-four of the freshmen voted no, and Rep. Allen West was one of those no votes.

"We stand at a critical and historic time for our constitutional republic, and it is a time when America is crying for principled leadership," West said to kick off the event.

West framed the issue in an epic way, comparing our plight with the classic story of The Odyssey, by Homer. Odysseus was the hero of a Greek victory in the war in Troy. It took him 10 years to return home after the war. He made many missteps that delayed him on his way home to his beloved Ithaca.

He compared that delay to the years following the 1994 Republican Revolution. "After a successful victory in 1994, our party then set sail for home, to restore America, this constitutional republic which we call home. However, we suffered misfortunes which resulted in our being ousted just 12 years later. I believe that if we do a comparative analysis with

Odysseus, we shall find many parallels," West said.

He went on to compare Odysseus' detour to the island of cannibals to the GOP detour to "compassionate conservatism" in 2000. He believes it was this new phrase as a way of describing Republicans that led them away from their fiscal conservative principals. I remember at the time being offended by the phrase. Conservatives are compassionate by nature. Being good stewards of resources so that they will be there for the future is the most compassionate way. The road we have been on with Republicans and Democrats over the last 10 years is not compassionate and is what the "Revolt of 2010" was all about.

The next challenge Odysseus encountered was the sweet sound of the Sirens. Their sweet sound lured sailors to their shores only to have them crushed upon the rocks and destroyed. "In the last presidential election cycle, we heard a very sweet song of 'hope and change.' Those who listened were drawn in, and found themselves being cast upon the rocks," West said. He went on to hit the home run of the evening when he quoted one of his former division commanders, Gen. Gordon Sullivan: "Hope is not a method." West went on, "Hope and optimism are important in making your way in the world, but hope without leadership is nothing, and leadership and strategy is absent in this current administration."

West then took us to the next obstacle delaying Odysseus' return home. He had to navigate around a multiheaded monster and a violent whirlpool. West believes the monster is the national debt and the whirlpool is the ever-expanding deficit. "We've added some \$5 trillion in new debt since 2007, and the deficit is appalling, with projections well over a trillion dollars a year for as far as the eye can see. "We are spending \$4 to \$5 billion per day, and this is simply why I do not support any Continuing Resolution which cuts \$6 billion in three weeks of programs which are palatable to the folks who created this fiscal Armageddon," West elaborated.

He said he will not raise the debt limit without key conditions:

1. Cap federal government spending at 18% to 20%.
2. Pass a balanced budget amendment.
3. Cut the corporate/business tax rate in half.
4. Ensure the defunding of ObamaCare.

On top of that, West says, we need to use the Government Accountability Office report that shows duplicative federal programs of \$100 to \$200 billion a year and cut them. I would add that the same group found \$70 billion in fraud and overpayments in Medicare and Medicaid in 2010. If we find duplication and waste that is identified, end it. It seems pretty simple to me.

West concluded with the last obstacle Odysseus faced. He was cast on the Isle of Calypso. It was so wonderful there, with everything provided for him, he lost track of time and was there seven years. "Much as Odysseus became dependent upon Calypso, so do liberals guarantee dependence. It is the dependence which formulates a dishonest tyranny from the Left. One which results in 47% of wage-earning Americans not paying federal taxes. It is one which promotes a new ideal of class warfare," West thundered to a close.

His final challenge was one we should all take. He challenged us to step up and restore our republic. West says we should serve, protect, and defend our way of life and to remember we are the greatest country in the world.

This public school kid from Atlanta traveled the world with the Army and landed in Florida to win a district that "should have been won by a Democrat," but he wouldn't give up, and we can't give up on our republic. Rep. Allen West is a bellwether for our commitment to conservatism. He's already drawing opposition in 2012 and is the "No. 1 target" for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, which is a badge he wears proudly.

Allen West gets it. We need to follow his lead and come home and restore our republic.