

News from Senator

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PRESIDENT HONORED 'MERITORIOUS EXECUTIVE' WHO OVERSEES EMPTY SPR

WASHINGTON-- Among the 18 Department of Energy employees honored by the President as 'Meritorious Executives' on September 15 and given a \$10,000 cash stipend-- was Harry A. Jones, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve was to have been filled with oil-- 500 million barrels or more-- by 1981. Instead the reserve, which is stored in Louisiana, stands at just over 91 million barrels. It has been at that level for more than a year, despite strong, bi-partisan calls from members of Congress to fill it.

"The President certainly used interesting logic in making this particular award," said Senator Dole, who has led the effort to get the Strategic Petroleum Reserve filled.

"You have to wonder what he told Sec. Jones when he gave him the award," added Dole. "Perhaps he said, 'Congratulations for a job undone.'"

According to Dole, "Using the criteria which brought Sec. Jones his award, I'm surprised the President didn't give \$10,000 to the person who's responsible for not getting the Space Shuttle into orbit on time."

Serious Message

"Of course all of this has a very serious side. I have no quarrel with Sec. Jones-- but I do strongly disagree with the Administration's conscious decision not to fill this reserve. Last November Senator Bradley and I warned that the Middle East was a tinder box, and that it would be in the best interest of the United States to resume filling the reserve. Our plea fell on deaf ears. Then, this summer, we were able to get the Congress to set a minimum fill rate for the SPR at 100,000 barrels per day-- and again the President ignored the will of Congress. Now we have war in the Middle East-- and a Strategic Petroleum Reserve with barely 12 days worth of oil in it. Instead of giving out 18 'Meritorious Executive' awards for 'sustained superior accomplishment in the management of Federal energy programs,' the President should have been looking after the welfare of this nation by finding someone to manage the Strategic Oil Reserve," said Dole.