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JOE CONASON

Rudy's G.O.P. Pals Betray New York

New York loves Rudy Giuliani, as the saying goes, now more than ever. And as he told us in his farewell advertisement during the Mayoral campaign, Rudy Giuliani loves New York. Yet his recent behavior gives credence to the suspicion that he loves the Republican Party more—and that, all sentiment aside, his blind partisanship could cost the city billions of dollars.



The departing Mayor's dominant role has been magnified even more in recent weeks by contrast with Governor George Pataki, who hasn't been heard from since his brief, bungled effort to wangle $54 billion from Washington, much of which he reportedly planned to spread around to his cronies upstate. Silent and remote, Mr. Pataki has been about as effective as a cigar-store dummy in securing federal assistance for the city.

Unfortunately, Mr. Giuliani has turned out to be just as unhelpful as Mr. Pataki, at a moment when the White House and Republicans in Congress are reneging on George W. Bush's heartwarming $20 billion commitment. It didn't take long for the President to decide that he really meant to spend less than half that amount right now, with more to come—probably, maybe, if budget conditions permit, if anyone still cares about New York, if we aren't at war with Iraq, if his friends don't need another tax cut—next year or even the year after.



HAI KUAFO

RUDY GUILIANI

By then, the damage to the downtown economy will be irreversible, including the loss of 200,000 jobs or more. While the Mayor concentrates on the removal of tons of debris from ground zero, there are many other pressing needs that may remain unmet unless more money is appropriated before year's end: reimbursing hospitals and schools, replenishing the state's almost bankrupt unemployment-insurance fund and restoring small businesses downtown.

Amazingly, rather than demand the $20 billion—which is precious little in light of the terror attack's devastating effects—Mr. Giuliani echoes the Bush budgetary propaganda. Along those lines, he said something quite stupid a few weeks ago: "Right now, we don't need $10 billion. We would put it in [Treasury notes] if we got it. As we need money, we get it."

That remark, which made the Mayor's own staff cringe, is brandished in the faces of New York representatives whenever they attempt to restore the President's original commitment in legislation. That remark, and the inaction of both the Mayor and the Governor, encouraged the House Republican leadership to kill a bill that would have provided another $7.5 billion for New York. That remark provided Republican members from upstate, Long Island, Connecticut and New Jersey with an excuse to vote against the city's interests. The margin of defeat was five votes.

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Imagine what Mr. Giuliani and his eager sidekick Mr. Pataki might have done to swing those votes and insure full funding of the city's $20 billion. They could have leaned on the upstate Republicans to join Democrats in battle on the House floor. They could have led a delegation of firefighters, police officers and rescue workers to Capitol Hill, where a request for assistance from the nation's heroes would not have been rejected by any sane politician. And they could have brought those heroes—and victims, too, if necessary—down to Washington every day until they won.

Instead, New York's enemies in the Republican hierarchy have found other uses for that money. For instance, the $7.5 billion that Mr. DeLay and Mr. Armey held back equals the amount they propose to refund to the nation's 16 biggest businesses by repealing the alternative minimum tax. (Enron Corporation would get back $254 million it paid in corporate income taxes since 1992—a very nice return on its $4 million in campaign contributions to Republicans. Too bad the firm's energy plays didn't work out as well.) And they have done this to the city with complete confidence that the Mayor wouldn't challenge them.

Actually, the Republican leaders think that Mr. Giuliani's renewed celebrity will help them maintain control of the House in the upcoming midterm elections. No matter how badly they treat his beloved hometown, they believe he will travel around the country next year, urging voters to re-elect his fellow Republicans and raising money for them. Mr. Giuliani has said nothing to the contrary, and indeed proved how far he's willing to stoop for partisan purposes in October, when he taped an endorsement for Mark Earley, the gay-baiting, far-right Republican gubernatorial candidate in Virginia. (He probably didn't mention that to his gay roommates when they asked him how his day went.)

The Mayor will have another chance to help the city before his successor takes office. He could tell the Republican Congressional bosses that he'll do nothing to help them in 2002 unless the city gets full funding when the House and Senate meet in conference on the anti-terror spending bill. He could even threaten to campaign against them. That is what he would do—if he loved N.Y. as much as he loves the G.O.P.

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