

By Don Walton - Lincoln Journal Star

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry says federal "government overreach and overspending" is risking U.S. security.

It has reached the point of potentially undermining both the nation's economic security and U.S. national security, the 1st District Republican congressman says.

That, along with Iran's apparent determination to develop nuclear weapons, tops Fortenberry's concerns in this election year.

Fortenberry will be seeking a fourth term in November.

The international community needs to "ratchet up pressure" on Iran's ruling elite, the congressman says, by targeting a new round of economic sanctions at the personal assets of the Revolutionary Guard.

Iranian development of nuclear weapons and the capacity to deliver them would be "a geopolitical game-changer," Fortenberry says.

That would spark a nuclear arms race in the Mideast, he says.

With Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad threatening Israel with "statements that are apocalyptic," Fortenberry says, a nuclear Iran would emerge as "a threat to the future of mankind."

The "wild card now," Fortenberry says, is the opposition movement in Iran.

"It's important to clearly understand its depth and potential for continuity (and) focus on these people's call for a more moderate and just form of government."

Fortenberry is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

The current level of U.S. domestic spending is unsustainable, the congressman says, and has created "tremendous anxiety and anger" in the country.

That, along with "the extraordinary overreach by government," has energized citizens into what is being characterized as the tea party movement, he says.

Domestic policy needs to focus on jobs now, Fortenberry says.

"An entrepreneurial wave is the solution," he says.

"But we need to start by getting the government's fiscal house in order."

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