

## Congress should confirm B. Todd Jones at ATF

Written by Fred Easter

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Nobody asked me, but it sure looks like B. Todd Jones is getting "Susan Rice'd" by Republicans in the Senate at the request of the National Rifle Association (NRA). Susan Rice is the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. She shoulda, coulda, woulda been Secretary of State but, born again henchman, Sen. John McCain used untruths, innuendo and misinformation to announce Republicans' intention to withhold her confirmation. Jones is the U.S. Attorney for Minnesota. He has also been acting as interim director of the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). How, you ask, can a man hold a challenging, full-time job in St. Paul while holding another challenging, full-time job in Washington D.C, at the same time? How, you ask, can this brother do a great job at both positions? The point is ... no human could; which is how the NRA likes it.

This is how our fractured system of government works, or doesn't. There hasn't been a dedicated director of the ATF in more than six years. This allows NRA Pres. Wayne LaPierre to sit piously in Congress and argue that we only need to enforce existing laws, rather than enact new gun regulations.

George W. Bush and his "dad," Dick Chaney, saw no need to fill the ATF position. Obama has been blocked from filling it, as well as scores of other appointments he has made to the federal

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bench and other posts. This is the Republicans plan to hamstring his administration. Not only are we saddled with the greatest "do-nothing" Congress ever, but there are many more subtle, under the radar, tactics right wing big money has been using to halt the change Obama and the American people want.

If Mitt Romney had been elected, confirmations of right wing judges would've rained down. Believe it. No director of the ATF Bureau would've been appointed though. The NRA is perfectly satisfied with a leaderless, underfunded ATF. The Tea Party can't sleep at night worrying about the Supreme Court and the federal court system moving to the center-left of the political spectrum.

Jones has the double handicap of being the same color as Rice, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and President Obama. As far as we know, though, he is neither Kenyan nor Muslim, and was born in the good old U.S. of A. Still, people all over the country are coming out of the woodwork to besmirch his reputation and credentials. You'd think that after six years of no director, they'd be willing to welcome what they're calling an "incompetent, flawed" one. For the Republicans, Barack is already one too many brilliant and principled African-American in powerful positions in America. Allowing him to appoint more is seen by them as out of the question.

The idea of President Obama leaving a lasting mark on the fabric of American life gives the right wing apoplexy.

With accomplishments of healthcare for all Americans, looming immigration reform, a vibrant auto industry, the end of two wars *and* Osama Bin Laden dead, we can add the possibility of a more liberal Supreme Court and federal bench. Add to that the possibility of the end of subsidies to Big Oil. Then add an America that is not so quick to kill for what it purports to believe. While we're at it, add a country where the richest 1 percent of the American population is no longer enjoying more wealth than its poorest 60 percent and we see evidence of his legacy that could outlive Sasha and Malia Obama – and it should.

If we and our president are successful with his agenda for *change*, America will have begun to fulfill its promise as a true bastion of democracy and softened its reputation as a greedy, imperialist superpower. It will have begun to be what our Navy calls, "A global force for good."