



Margaret Spellings

CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington

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Tell Us What To Eat

by Donald Devine

The cops apprehended the suspect. She was caught trying to smuggle contraband into the hallways of West Friendship Elementary School and was upbraided severely, causing her to cry. I figured cocaine and so sympathetically told my granddaughter she was lucky to have avoided prison. She cried again.



The suspect hides in a line-up

The smuggled goods turned out to be candy. She is the biggest sweet-tooth since her great-grandmother. In spite of my prime directive that a government monopoly will always produce negative unintended consequences, I admit I was flabbergasted. What now was going on in our own poor public schools?

The criminal trail traces back to September 2004 as students were returning to school, an irresistible occasion for politicians to pull a public relations stunt. Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige and White House education advisor Margaret Spellings introduced a first year \$69 million program with 229 grants generously sprinkled across the nation to eliminate childhood obesity, as part of President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act. Spellings was so good at fighting chubbiness, she was promoted to secretary herself, where she presides over the national fat police program telling us what to eat.



Margaret Spellings



Humphrey Bogart

It is not only children. New York City, Philadelphia and Washington D.C. suburb, Montgomery County Maryland, among others, have outlawed the use of trans fats in restaurants and grocery stores. These have strange exceptions. Since they cannot control interstate commerce, such as packaged goods from outside the jurisdiction, these are excluded from the prohibition. Sarah Lee fat is ok but Dunkin Donuts, which makes its own on site, is not. Heh, it helps big contributors too, but that is the price you pay for doing good. Unfortunately, the church supper is out. Sorry for that.

Hollywood has joined in the spreading nannyism. Just recently the movie

aters decided to give an R rating to any motion picture that presents people smoking on film. Betty Davis and Humphrey Bogart call your agents. Aimee Semple McPherson--she is alive and well at the cinema. Can trans fats be far behind?

Of course, environmentalists had been way ahead of these Johnny-come-lately moralists. My own children came home spouting pantheism and demanding separate trash containers way back then. Bambi was the national totem and lamb chops became "little meat." Hunters became birdwatchers, or had to pretend to be. At the instigation of their public payroll teachers, children have been preaching the dogmas to their parents ever since, who have enacted them into law.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the fountainhead of schoolmarmism that devised and first promoted the wonderful idea of controlling obesity, conducted a poll proving people actually want them and the schools and government to control their fat intake. A whopping 83 percent liked the idea and even supported getting rid of school vending machines with soft drinks, fatty (i.e., good tasting) snacks and candy. That is where my granddaughter fell into the fine mesh of the fat law: no snack greater than 100 calories. A scarlet letter from the community for a chocolate-covered granola bar--and at such a young age!



Alexis de Tocqueville

The great French analyst of American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville, warned us this would happen almost two centuries ago:

The first thing that strikes the observation is an innumerable multitude of men, all equal and alike, incessantly endeavoring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is as a stranger to the fate of all the rest; his children and his private friends constitute to him the whole of mankind. As for the rest of his fellow citizens, he is close to them, but he does not see them; he touches them, but he does not feel them; he exists only in himself and for himself alone; and if his kindred still remain to him, he may be said at any rate to have lost his country.

Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident, and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood; but it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood: it is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labors, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness; it provides for their security, foresees and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances: what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living?

Thus it every day renders the exercise of the free agency of man less useful and less frequent; it circumscribes the will within a narrower range and gradually robs a man of all the uses of himself. The principle of equality has prepared men for these things; it has predisposed men to endure them and often to look on them as benefits.

After having thus successively taken each member of the community in its powerful grasp and fashioned him at will, the supreme power then extends its arm over the whole community. It covers the surface of society with a network of small complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not

shattered, but softened, bent, and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting. Such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd.

Even the perceptive Frenchman could not have foreseen Sheryl Crow. The glamorous rock star recently instructed students how to “become part of the solution to global warming:” use only one square of toilet paper for each visit. Yes, it has gone that far and undoubtedly soon will become law. And no one will complain. I foolishly thought when the Feds regulated the amount of water allowed for a flush insufficient to clear the bowl, there would be a revolution. But de Tocqueville apparently had it just about right.



Sheryl Crow

Donald Devine, the editor of Conservative Battleline Online, was the director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management from 1981 to 1985 and is the director of the [Federalist Leadership Center](#) at Bellevue University.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Roaches in Schools

by Alex A. Avery and Dennis T. Avery

Our local radio station is encouraging parents to protest the use of pesticides in our schools. The station is broadcasting "public service announcements" saying pesticides used in the schools are "linked" to cancer, asthma and lower IQ scores among the kids. Probably you are hearing the same announcements on your radio stations. They're produced by Earthworks, a consortium of eco-groups, and sponsored by The Ad Council.



Pesticide fears are clearly mainstream these days. The reality is that we worry about pesticides because so few of today's parents have actually seen the diseases that rats, mice, and roaches have historically brought with them. Public health officials are certain that if vermin took over today's schools, as they took over 19th-century cities before modern pesticides were developed, our children would not be safe in schools from diseases we have been able to forget.

The dried urine and feces from rats and mice can spread such diseases as leptospirosis, rat-bite fever, and at least one form of meningitis. Rats are the historic vehicle for epidemics of Black Plague. Cockroaches can spread typhoid fever, dysentery, gastroenteritis, and carry in their guts the bacteria that cause salmonella and staphylococcus infections.

Nor is there any evidence that the pesticides approved for use in schools pose any dangers to the kids-or anybody else. The source materials cited by Earthworks don't provide any peer-reviewed documentation of pesticide harm. Their statements are full of weasel-words such as "linked," with the linkage perhaps just somebody's printed accusation. Or they say "researchers hypothesize," which is the professional's word for guessing.

Earthworks says researchers "hypothesize that pesticides are among the preventable causes of asthma in children." In fact, the evidence says it's the discarded casings of cockroaches that are a major cause of asthma. If you don't control the roaches, you get more asthma attacks among the kids.

The EPA once told us we could control cockroaches just by taping up our windows, doors and the cracks along the baseboards-but I never found anyone who believed that. If you can't control cockroaches at home by taping up the cracks around the house, don't expect it to work in a public building. Especially with eggs sacks hiding in lunch sacks and grocery bags, just waiting for a free ride into the building.

Even uncontrolled weeds in the schoolyards pose danger. More ragweed means more allergy attacks. But the anti-pesticide activists oppose even the use of herbicides such as glyphosate, which health authorities say is about as toxic as tea and talcum powder.

However, the members of the Pesticide Action Network apparently cannot emotionally tolerate the use of any pesticide anywhere, any time, no matter what dangers to our children they prevent. We should be able to rely on the Ad Council to check out their "public service" announcements. In this case they should take another look at the Earthworks' agenda.

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Decline of Feel Good?

by Renny Hartmann

Maybe the educators are learning something. In the last few months, there have been two major affirmations of traditional teaching from educationists. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics suggested that schools go back to teaching basic math and a professor at San Diego State University found that teaching "self esteemism" and "feeling good about one's self" does not improve education.



Although math has long been under fire by the loosey-goosy set, in 1989 basic math was replaced in trendy California with Mathematics for Understanding. This movement had the good intentions (they all start with good intentions) of teaching logical thinking, now called cognitive development. The problem was the methods employed de-emphasized elementary arithmetic like memorizing the times tables and produced such anomalies as "math" word problems without any numerals or calculations. By the mid-1990s, individual parents in California started worrying about their children's lack of arithmetic skills and dubbed the entire concept "fuzzy math."

By that time, the California fad had infected math instruction across the nation. Math scores plummeted, no surprise. Now NATM has stepped into the debate with some common sense and even an advertisement. The NATM says calculator use should be limited in elementary schools and pupils should learn the times tables by rote. Math computations should be done outside the current ubiquitous word problems. My view is, how good is it for students' self esteem if to buy five \$5 movie tickets, they have to fumble with a calculator while everyone else in line groaned. But now even the sacred text of self esteemism itself is under fire.

Professor Jean Twinge of SDSU avers that decades of praising young people for no reason has produced young persons with narcissist personalities. They cannot function without constant awards and trophies because they grew up receiving A's for just attending class and plaques for mere bench warming. Now, even businesses say some employees must be constantly coddled and stroked even for such a common work achievements as appearing at work from Monday to Friday. These young persons have such an overweening image of themselves as wonderful and perfect that they may even become anti-social when they are not repeatedly told how terrific they are. These narcissist traits do not bode well for life-long relationships like marriage and family. They also don't offer a positive view of social commitments like volunteering, joining para-military (fire and police) or military services, or any self sacrifice.

Since 1972, SATs and other standardized tests have demonstrated declining or stagnant scores. Finally, two members of the education establishment have blown the whistle. Although these are reasons to be hopeful about changes in public education, I doubt an immediate effect—because today's "modern" teachers were raised under the earlier failed thinking and, unfortunately, do not know any other way to teach.

**E-mail the
Editor**

When Hollywood Went To War

by Spencer Warren

The active participation of Hollywood in World War II, so different from the broad anti-American, anti-West stance of contemporary Moviedom, stands as a vivid measure of how divided our country is today, and of the gulf separating the culture elite from regular Americans.

Many of the top movie stars volunteered for service and even insisted on combat duty when their commanders wanted to give them safety behind the lines. James Stewart, aged 33, volunteered for the Air Force and paid for his own flying lessons so he could qualify as a bomber pilot, subsequently leading twenty combat missions over Germany. Clark Gable, aged 41, volunteered for the Air Force after his wife, the great comedienne Carole Lombard, was killed in a plane crash returning home after leading the first national war bond tour. Overturning the wishes of his commanders, Gable flew a number of bombing missions over Germany as a combat photographer. Robert Montgomery, aged 37, joined the Navy and commanded a PT-boat in the Pacific before serving as an operations officer on a destroyer on D-Day. Earlier, in 1940, he left Hollywood to volunteer as an ambulance driver during the Nazi invasion of France. (Montgomery was a leading conservative who helped lead the fight against communist infiltration of the movie craft unions after the war; in 1947 he passed the torch to Ronald Reagan, who succeeded him as president of the Screen Actors Guild.)



Clark Gable

Older men, prominent directors, also volunteered. William Wyler (*Wuthering Heights*, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *Ben-Hur*), flew combat missions over Germany as a photographer. The footage he shot became his deeply moving 1944 documentary about a B-17 crew, *The Memphis Belle, A Story of a Flying Fortress*. Wyler suffered permanent hearing damage as a result of his service. George Stevens (*Gunga Din*, *Shane*) headed the unit that photographed (in color) D-Day and the final campaigns in France and Germany, including the liberation of Dachau. John Huston (*The Maltese Falcon*, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*) made a documentary on location about the war in Italy, *The Battle of San Pietro*. And John Ford, the most prestigious director of the time, having just won the best direction Oscars in 1940 for *The Grapes of Wrath* and in 1941 for *How Green Was My Valley* (he also won for *The Informer* in 1935 and, in 1952 for *The Quiet Man*), signed up with the Navy, aged 46.



John Ford

Ford always was considered the director with the best luck in terms of weather and other circumstances. And so it was his Irish good luck that landed him on tiny Midway Atoll, about 1000 miles northwest of Hawaii, on June 4, 1942, when the huge Japanese armada, bent on finishing the job it started with such treachery against Hawaii on December 7, 1941, launched its bombing attack. Ford was acting as a forward observer in the powerhouse and had a 16mm camera loaded with color film. As all hell broke loose, Ford kept his position and started filming – with his eye fixed to the lens, he was hardly in a position to protect himself as enemy fighters shot up his building with machine-gun fire. A piece of concrete struck him in the head, knocking him out cold. Regaining consciousness, he resumed filming until shrapnel tore a hole in his upper arm, sending him to the infirmary.

Thus, his 18-minute documentary *The Battle of Midway* is absolutely the real thing, although it actually misses the strategic center of the battle – our naval aircraft, Dauntless dive bombers,

flying off of our three carriers destroying all four of the enemy carriers, for the loss of one of ours. This was the decisive turning point of the war in the Pacific and the greatest naval victory in U.S. history.

But the point here is Ford's portrait of our men in battle. The narration, by three of Ford's favorite actors (Henry Fonda, Donald Crisp and Jane Darwell (Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*)), plus his friend, director Irving Pichel, ties the amazing images to central themes of Ford's Hollywood films: family, belonging, home, community, and the living bond between present and past, the living and the dead. This is Ford's America.

At the outset we are told Midway is "your front yard." Before the attack we see B-17 reinforcements landing, and the one female voice, Jane Darwell, asks, "Is that one of them Flying Fortresses?" "Yes, M'am," Fonda's voice replies. "Why, that's young [name indistinct on my video copy]," Darwell exclaims. "He's not going to fly in that great big bomber?" Ford then shows a photograph of the boy's father, standing beside his train locomotive – "Thirty-eight years on the railroad," we're told. Then we meet the mother, knitting in her parlor, "just like the rest of us mothers in Springfield or any other American town," Darwell says. And the sister, Patricia, sitting nearby. "She's about as pretty as they come," Darwell comments, to which Fonda enthusiastically replies, "I'll say so."

To many readers this might sound awfully corny. But it is heartfelt and genuine, and offers a tangible picture of how our country saw itself in those long ago days, when its sons and some daughters were being shipped off to places few had ever heard of to defend hearth and home. Yes, it is indeed Norman Rockwell. As the B-17s then take off, Darwell's motherly voice prays, "Good luck. God bless you, son."

Then, "the Japs attack!" Black smoke billows skyward from bombed oil tanks. The rapid pop of anti-aircraft guns and the roar of engines fill the soundtrack. Hangars are bombed. Debris flies everywhere. Our boys leap into action. The camera shakes from explosions nearby. And amidst the fury of the battle, Ford creates one of his classic noble compositions, instantly recognizable to admirers of his movies: a low angle shot, looking upward, slightly to one side, of a flag pole as the Stars and Stripes are run up to the top. And on the soundtrack we hear a chorus solemnly singing this from the Star Spangled Banner:

And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,

Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.

The narrator observes quietly, "This really happened." Sixty-five years on, the scene sends a chill down one's spine.

Following a brief sequence of the battle at sea ("The invasion forces were hit and hit and hit again"), Ford turns to the warriors returning from battle. "Men and women of America," the narrator says, "Here come your neighbors' sons. Home from a day's work. You ought to meet them." To the accompaniment of Anchors Aweigh, we see one Navy pilot after another, goggles up, smiling, climbing out of their cockpits, their names announced on the soundtrack. Again, every Ford admirer will be reminded of similar scenes, of troopers returning after patrol or a battle, in Ford Western classics like *Fort Apache* (1948) and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949).

And the aftermath: the search for survivors at sea and the burial of the honored dead. With a big orchestral treatment of Onward Christian Soldiers on the soundtrack, we see first the happy rescued smiling from their stretchers – Logan Ramsey, Frank Fessler, and others. As ambulances drive up to rush the wounded to the hospital, Darwell's motherly voice returns, entreating: "Get those boys to the hospital. . . . Quickly. . . . Get them doctors and medicine. And a nurse's soft hand. Get them to the hospital. Hurry. Please." At this, the chorus picks up

from the orchestra with the lyrics of Onward Christian Soldiers. Eight years later, in his Western *Rio Grande*, Ford's first scene is of the cavalry regiment filing back into the fort after a campaign, with the wives looking on anxiously at the column of wounded men being pulled in makeshift stretchers. To achieve true artistry, the artist must be expressing feelings from deep down within his soul. This was John Ford.

Finally, burial and divine service, for some, on land, for others, at sea. The chorus softly sings from *My Country, 'Tis of Thee*:

land where my fathers died,

land of the pilgrims' pride

As the chaplains recite their prayers and the honor guards fire their salutes, the chorus continues:

long may our land be bright

with freedom's holy light;

protect us by thy might, great God, our King.

And with the last shot of the Stars and Stripes flying in the wind, the black smoke still darkening the sky, the chorus very softly ends:

Amen.

Music plays a ritualistic role in Ford's Hollywood films: the Welsh miners' hymns in his Oscar-winning *How Green Was My Valley* and the famous song *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* and other Army songs in his Westerns, to cite only two examples.

The dead also feature importantly in Ford's films, because he saw life as a living continuum between past and present: the protagonist speaks of his life and love directly to the grave or portrait of a lost wife or brother in *Judge Priest* (1934), *My Darling Clementine* (1946) and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949). *How Green Was My Valley* and *The Long Grey Line* (1955) both end with overwhelming shots of much loved lost ones living on in eternity, bonded with the living. For Ford, the spirit of the past was alive, inspiring the present. The Star Spangled Banner sequence above gives vivid witness to his abiding faith.



Franklin D. Roosevelt

This is pertinent for us today. President Bush declined the invitation of the organizers to attend the sixty-fifth anniversary commemoration on Midway. Nor did he attend Pearl Harbor's sixty-fifth anniversary ceremony. He thus lost a golden opportunity to invoke, not the abstract, universal ideals (democracy the world over) that are beloved of the neocon radicals who draft his speeches, but our history – great stories, patriotic American and Christian songs and living symbols. He could have used our historical culture to emphasize and renew our unique, concrete identity as the American nation, as Ford did in his film and as President Reagan did at Normandy in 1984. He also could have used this opportunity to educate the public how elites wedded to "diversity" and "multiculturalism" are hollowing out our historical cultural identity by not teaching in the schools great events like Midway and, indeed, much if not most of our nation's history. Such omissions demonstrate the elites' disrespect for the memories of the men who fought and died for today's young Americans.

The President could have explained how this hollowing out impedes assimilation of new immigrants into what the old school patriotic liberal President Franklin D. Roosevelt called "our American civilization" and "culture" when he commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Statue of Liberty in October 1936. And the President could have further explained how the hollowing out endangers America's survival, as the unique nation we have been for two centuries, especially in the face of the current mass immigrant- illegal alien invasion and a radical Muslim threat. That's what a conservative president would have done.

Spencer Warren is ConservativeBattleline's movie critic.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Shaping the Culture

by Lisa De Pasquale

In his bestseller, *A People's History of the United States*, author Howard Zinn writes: "I think it extremely important for young people to learn a different history that will make them skeptical of what they hear from authority. I think if people knew, for instance the history of lies and violence that have accompanied American foreign policy, they would not be enticed into joining the armed forces." You may ask yourself why Zinn's 'history,' which has sold more than 1.5 million copies, has eluded the failure that plagues so many other left-wing authors. Zinn's raucous anti-Americanism can survive only with institutional support of his ideas and virtually no debate from those who disagree with his worldview. Consequently, *A People's History of the United States* is being read by thousands and thousands of American college and high school students.



There are numerous organizations dedicated to combating the left on college campuses, but authors Myrna Blyth and Chriss Winston argue that by then it may be too late to save the next generation from forming a cynical view of America and its values. In their new book, *How to Raise an American*, they discuss the views and patriotism of younger generations and those of older generations.

Blyth, a mother of two sons, is author of *Spin Sisters: How the Women of the Media Sell Unhappiness -- and Liberalism -- to the Women of America*. She is also the former editor in chief of Ladies' Home Journal and founding editor in chief of More magazine. Winston, the mother of one son, worked in President George H.W. Bush's administration and was the first woman to head the White House Office of Speech Writing. She has written several books, including *What Color is a Conservative?* with former Rep. J.C. Watts (R.-Okla.). Both have interesting personal stories on raising little Americans (and one British husband) that are peppered throughout their new book.

The authors write, "It was our love of America and our belief in its inherent goodness and greatness that led us to write this book. It was also our fear that raising good Americans in today's political and cultural climate is becoming more and more difficult." For proof, look no further than the May 4 Republican debate in which MSNBC's Chris Matthews asked presidential contender Mitt Romney, "What do you dislike most about America?" Romney answered the same way most of us would have, "Gosh, I love America. I'm afraid I'm going to be at a loss for words." Actually, most of us wouldn't have been as diplomatic. How do you think the crop of Democratic candidates would have answered that question?

More than a narrative on patriotism, *How to Raise an American* is a toolkit for parents seeking ideas and support for integrating patriotic life lessons, trips and memories into their children's lives. Rather than dwell for too long on the obvious question of why these important lessons aren't being taught in America's schools, the authors implore parents to take control and use the activities as supplemental education and quality family time. As heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey often said, "The best defense is a good offense." Dempsey, himself a patriot, quit boxing and volunteered for service during World War II.

Having spent more than a few childhood car trips with boredom increasing with each mile-marker, I can certainly sympathize with children who groan at the mere mention of the nearest historic battlefield. A learning experience doesn't have to be boring in order to have educational value. The authors remind us that boys will love the gory details of a battle while girls will swoon over the love letters exchanged between soldiers and their wives and Abigail Adams' plea to her husband, John, that he "remember the ladies" and their contributions to the country.

In the chapter "Some Last Thoughts," the authors remind parents of their unique role in shaping their children's views: "Never forget that more than any movie they see or music they hear, more than any celebrity they idealize or any textbook they read, you are the most important force in your children's lives. If you believe nothing else, believe that, and then use that influence to make them the proud Americans you want them to be."

One of the most important last thoughts from Blyth and Winston is this: "[R]emember that kids long to be part of something bigger than themselves, something they can be proud of." September 11 engaged our generation in the most important battle of our lifetime. To preserve freedom for future generations to enjoy, we must start with the belief that America's birth, values and people are worth fighting for. Like generations past, we are on the verge of greatness for ourselves and freedom-loving people all over the world. That is something all Americans, young and old, can be proud of.

Miss De Pasquale is CPAC director at the [American Conservative Union](#) in Alexandria, Va.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Assault On Reason

by Brian Lynch

Al Gore's book, "Assault on Reason," is a tome so full of idiocy, fallacy and sophism that it's hard to decide whether it should be reviewed as simple ravings or simply be tossed in the rubbish and ignored.

In a nutshell, the book's thesis is this:

1) Al Gore believes that American democracy is in dire peril because he and his liberal friends have not been able to force their agendas through the political systems for the past 25 years. He states, "American democracy is now in danger-not from any one set of ideas, but from unprecedented changes in the environment within which ideas either live and spread, or wither and die." In the 'marketplace of ideas, Gore believes that it is simply no longer possible to ignore the strangeness of our public discourse. "I know I am not alone in feeling that something has gone fundamentally wrong", he writes.



2) Al Gore believes that everything is OK, because the internet (which he no longer claims to have invented) is democratizing information and opportunities for everyone. He states that broadband interconnections are supporting decentralized processes that reinvigorate democracy. We can see it happening before our eyes: As a society, we are getting smarter.

3) Despite his confidence in the power of broadband internet, Al Gore has an impression of telecommunications generally that borders on outright paranoia. He says that TV is manipulating mass opinions and feelings. Methods initially discovered by commercial advertisers are now being even more aggressively exploited by a new generation of media Machiavelli's, states Gore.

"Sophisticated public opinion sampling techniques and the increasing use of powerful computers to parse and subdivide the American people according to psychographic categories that identify their susceptibility to individually tailored appeals has further magnified the power of propagandistic electronic messaging. that has created a harsh new reality for the functioning of our democracy."

Well which is it? Are the communications media remotely manipulating everyone through the use of sophisticated mind control techniques, or are the media democratizing the market places of ideas?

So, American democracy is in danger of being destroyed because something has gone fundamentally wrong in the marketplace of ideas, but don't worry, use of broadband internet will solve everything. Or maybe not.

It's a good thing that the electoral system worked in 2000 to keep a man as muddled, confused and paranoid as Al Gore out of the White House. Let's hope that the nation's electoral system continues to function so well.

**E-mail the
Editor**

CIA on Green Patrol

by Bob Barr

They didn't predict the fall of the Soviet Empire. The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 caught them by surprise. But never fear, Congress has now directed that officials at the Central Intelligence Agency keep watch on global warming so we are not taken by surprise if the calamity foreseen by Al Gore causes a spike in temperature in the future.

Congress, now under new management, apparently has concluded that the CIA has far too much time on its hands trying to follow, anticipate and help thwart terrorist attacks. It seems that spending our nation's foreign intelligence resources trying to figure out what lies behind Vladimir Putin's beady eyes, or trying to pierce the wall separating North Korea from the civilized world, are all less important than the intelligence community's latest congressionally mandated responsibility.

In the 2008 intelligence authorization bill, just passed by the House of Representatives, the directorate of national intelligence or "DNI" (also known as the "intelligence czar") has a new job — to develop within the next nine months a top-level paper laying out the "anticipated geopolitical effects of climate change and the implications of such effects on the national security of the United States." Whew. Sounds like another "Inconvenient Truth" as the former vice president and global warming seer might say.

The mandated global warming study was pushed into the intelligence authorization bill by the House intelligence committee's new chairman, U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-Texas). This is the same Reyes who, earlier this year in an interview just prior to taking the helm of the intelligence committee, couldn't accurately relate to a reporter the differences between the various warring factions in Iraq.

Perhaps in an effort to make up for that earlier phenomenal lack of basic knowledge about the one country in the world in which U.S. taxpayers are spending billions of dollars each week, and in which nary a week goes by without multiple deaths of American soldiers, Reyes has decided to stake out the new cutting edge of intelligence work.

Unfortunately, during the committee's debate on whether to include the global warming mandate in the legislation, the chairman showed as little understanding of this issue as he possessed earlier on Iraq. After stating publicly that global warming was indeed an area in which the United States might be "vulnerable" to "terrorists," U.S. Rep. David Dreier (R-Calif.) inquired of the chairman if he really believed that "a terrorist could impact global climate change?" The chairman answered decisively, "we don't know."

Rather than Congress focusing on streamlining the CIA and the other components of our sprawling intelligence community, and reducing rather than increasing the myriad tasks for which it bears responsibility, this latest effort is a giant step backward. Unfortunately, it is not the first foray into the scientific miasma that is global climate change analysis.

During the first Clinton administration, the subsequently disgraced CIA director, John Deutch, in perhaps the ultimate feel-good bureaucratic move, formed the director of the Central Intelligence Environmental Center. Human and fiscal intelligence resources were for years thereafter wasted in the study of volcanic eruptions, migratory fish patterns, shrinking ice caps and air pollution. If perhaps those intelligence analysts had been directed instead to study patterns of terrorist behavior rather than climate patterns, our government leaders might have been not quite so surprised at what happened on Sept. 11.



Bob Barr

Perhaps also Reyes and his many Democrat colleagues who voted to divert intelligence resources to the study of climatology, were impressed with a report just issued by a panel of former active-duty military officers under the auspices of the "Military Advisory Board" of the CNA Corp., a nonprofit research group. This report, entitled "National Security and the Threat of Climate Change," formed the basis for at least some of the testimony that supported the inclusion of the global warming mandate in the intelligence bill this month. Among other observations contained in this private-sector report, was the notion that climatologic problems in areas of the world such as Africa and the Middle East will turn them into "breeding grounds" for terrorists.

Well, guess what? These areas of the world already are "breeding grounds" for terrorists. And they are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, regardless of whether Al Gore's "Inconvenient Truth" is proved or disproved in the centuries to come.

Perhaps it will take another multimillion-dollar study and countless wasted hours by dozens of high-paid analysts for the CIA to realize that the Marine barracks in Beirut was not bombed because of a drought, that the warlords in Somalia did not decide to murder and desecrate the bodies of American Army personnel because they weren't getting enough rain, and that the terrorists on Sept. 11 did not kill thousands of Americans because they were upset with our country's unenthusiastic response to allegations of global warming.

Unfortunately, while the Democrats in Congress are busy greening the CIA, our real, human adversaries are out there plotting against us. The weather will be the least of our worries.

Former Congressman and U.S. Attorney Bob Barr practices law in Atlanta.

Web site: www.bobbarr.org.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Rationing Health Care

by John Goodman

One of the most fascinating books I have ever read in health economics is "The Painful Prescription," an analysis of rationing in the British National Health Service (NHS) by Henry Aaron and Bill Schwartz. The Brookings Institution has now published an update, "Can We Say No?" and it's every bit as rewarding as the original.



John Goodman

Britain spends less than half of what the U.S. spends on health care on a per capita basis. (The British also get less.) For more than a half century, the NHS has promised health care free of charge to all its citizens. Yet upward of a million people are on waiting lists for care. Unable to get what they need from the public system, many pay out of pocket in the private sector, which provides one out of every five surgeries and almost one-third of all hip operations. Although equality of access to care has always been an overriding goal, gaps in mortality rates among British social classes have been widening over the past three decades.

Although British politicians for years described the NHS as "the envy of the world," Aaron, Schwartz and coauthor Melissa Cox show that the British are routinely denied services Americans take for granted. For example:

- Bone marrow transplants per capita are one-third more frequent in the US than in the UK.
- The rate at which the British provide coronary bypass surgery or angioplasty to heart patients is only one-fourth of the US rate.
- Britain has only one-fourth as many CT scanners as the US and one-third as many MRI scanners.
- The NHS hip replacement rate is only two-thirds of the US rate.
- To provide the level of intensive care unit (ICU) services that US hospitals have, British hospitals would have to increase their spending by five fold.
- The population-adjusted treatment rate for kidney failure (dialysis or transplant) is five times higher in the US for patients age 45 to 84 and nine times higher for patients 85 years of age or older. Overall, to achieve a level of care comparable to US standards, Britain would have to increase its level of spending by one-third, according to the authors.

The one thing missing from the book was also missing in the original - a "public choice" explanation of how rationing choices in Britain flow logically from the politics of medicine. I tried to fill that gap in a book I wrote almost 30 years ago. For the most recent version, see "Lives at Risk," the book I wrote with Gerry Musgrave and Devon Herrick.

John C. Goodman is President of the National Center for Policy Analysis

[Link to Can We Say No? on Amazon.](#)

[Link to Lives at Risk on Amazon.](#)

**E-mail the
Editor**

National Animal Register?

by Henry Lamb

When the sun rose on the first day of June, Freedom started moving across the nation.

Freedom, in this case, is the name of a Texas Longhorn steer, owned by Jauson King who lives in Corning, Iowa. On June 1, Jauson - riding Freedom - began a journey she hopes will eventually take them to Cheyenne, Wyoming in time to participate in Cheyenne's 111th "Frontier Days" celebration that begins July 20.

Sure, Jauson could find more comfortable transportation, but she is not just going to a party. She is riding her steer across the country to draw attention to a government program which she believes will destroy much of her freedom: the National Animal Identification System (NAIS)

Jauson will not be alone. Her "girl Friday," Waloshi Morgan, will travel with her. Waloshi is the scheduler, and will also help Jauson tell people along the way about the many dangers she sees in the NAIS. Although their route will take them through, or near, cities such as Omaha, Lincoln, and Denver, the real targets for information delivery are the small towns, such as Geneva and Holdrege, Nebraska, and Holyoke and Sterling, Colorado. These are towns where people really need to know about the horrible program, Jauson reasons. These are the towns where people live who own livestock animals that are targeted by the NAIS.

Were the NAIS to be fully implemented as first proposed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jauson would have to register her premises with the federal government and be assigned a premises number, as would every other person who owns livestock animals. Then she would have to "tag" each livestock animal on her ranch, most likely with a Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID), as would every other owner of livestock animals. Then she would have to notify the federal government - within 24 hours - every time a tagged animal is moved off the premises, as would every other livestock owner.

The USDA has now abandoned its mandatory time-line, and announced that the program is "voluntary," but few ranchers believe that it will stay voluntary. Even while it is voluntary, the USDA is providing funding to states that make the program mandatory, and is promoting coercive measures that "require" registration in the program before animal owners can participate in certain other programs. For example, many 4-H and Future Farmer students are being told that they must register in the NAIS before they can show their animals at the county fair.

Jauson knows this program is an invasion of her private property rights. She knows its implementation will erode the U.S. Constitution. She also knows that the only way to reverse the program is to alert and educate fellow citizens. That's why she is undertaking this arduous mission. She hopes to speak to students and citizen groups along the way. She welcomes invitations to meet with reporters along the way, and to talk with farmers, ranchers, county commissioners, and anyone else who will listen.

Henry Lamb is the Executive Vice President of the Environmental Conservation Organization, and the Chairman of Sovereignty International, Inc.

**E-mail the
Editor**

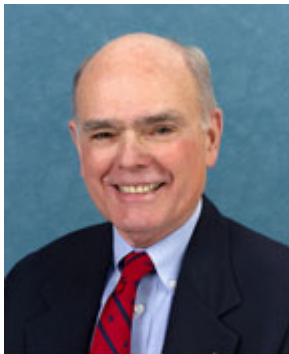
Victims of Communism

by Paul M. Weyrich

Thanks to the late Dr. Robert Kriebel, I had the great opportunity to train thousands of people all over the Soviet Union in how to participate in the political process. I did this before the fall of the Berlin Wall but while there still was a Soviet Union although after the fall of the Soviet Empire. It was a remarkable opportunity. Everywhere I went I heard about the victims of Communism. In Sverdlovsk, which I visited in April of 1990, I decided that Boris Yeltsin was okay because he permitted young people in his home jurisdiction to build a memorial to the victims of Communism. Mind you, this was while the Soviet Union still was in existence. The youth of that country calculated that the Communists had killed 70 million people. Imagine that they said this while no one could believe at that point that the Soviet Union would disintegrate. That memorial had been constructed for some years before we saw it. That Yeltsin permitted the youth of that city (now Yekaterinburg) to build such a memorial demonstrated to me that he should be backed. When we visited Siberia we learned that there were millions more who had been killed by Stalin. And when we visited the Gulag, it was clear that all sorts of others were transferred there by Stalin and if they protested often they were killed.



Paul M. Weyrich



Lee Edwards

That was why, when I returned to the United States, I was so pleased to learn that Lee Edwards and Professor Lev Dobrianski had begun to plan a memorial to the victims of Communism. The memorial will be dedicated on June 12th at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue, NW, New Jersey Avenue, NW and G Street, NW, in Washington. I first met Edwards in 1965, when I flew to Washington from Milwaukee to discuss an anti-Communist idea I had with the Member of Congress for whom Edwards worked at that time. When I came to Washington for good 40 years ago, I worked with Willard Edwards, Lee's father, who was employed by THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE, at that time a greatly admired conservative newspaper.

Over the years I had encountered Edwards in various venues. He wrote the story of the Heritage Foundation on its 25th anniversary. He is the one and only writer who got the story correct. The point is that I trusted him. Over a long period, from 1990 to 2007, Edwards worked hard, stone by stone you might say, to build this monument. He needed to raise close to a million dollars. Finally he succeeded. Then he had to persuade the Interior Department to agree to grant space for the Memorial. It is in a good place where it can be seen. Democrats as well as Republicans approved the resolution for the Monument to the Victims of Communism. The story of how Edwards managed to get even President William J. (Bill) Clinton to approve the legislative part of this effort is one which only Edwards can tell, perhaps on the day-long program on June 12th, featuring among other things in addition to the actual dedication, a reception at the National Guard Association Hall of States, an afternoon roundtable discussion at the Heritage Foundation and a gala awards dinner at the J W Marriot Hotel at 1330 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, in Washington.

The Victims of Communism Foundation has stated that 100 million were the victims of Communism, which is the number determined by the "Black Book of Communism" published by Harvard University Press. Edwards wants to be sure that the world never forgets the victims of Communism and he is absolutely correct. I was sure when I witnessed the fall of the Soviet Union there would be all sorts of movies based upon the incredible stories from the victims of Communism. We have had none. In fact, while a few books have been written about the unbelievable story of the vicious way in which the Soviets kept their people from knowing what

was going on, there is far too little recognition of the terrible suffering that the poor people had to endure.

I only wish I had acted as a reporter so that when the people told me their stories in the various parts of the Soviet Union I could have written about what had happened. That having been said, I am so grateful for what Edwards has done.

It is hard to believe that any nation would have behaved as the Soviets did. I well recall what Dr. Vladimir Bukovsky told us when we gave him a special award. He told us that from Lenin to Stalin if you disagreed with the Soviet leadership you were killed. After that the Soviets embarked on an even more vicious path. When he (Bukovsky) disagreed, he was put in a mental hospital. He was given experimental drugs which often made him feel crazy. He would be kept there, usually until there was enough protest from the West that he would be released. I spoke with a general from the Ural Mountains. He told me, "Every day I got up in the morning and I said 'what are the ten things I can do to defeat America,' I had no idea I had been lied to all these years. There was no way I could tell that our leaders day after day had deliberately told us false things." This fellow, with huge hands and a burly frame, grabbed me and looked into my eyes and said, "Can you help me?" In Siberia, men built radios. When the weather was right at night they were able to pick up some news from the West. They could not discuss what they heard with anyone except someone from the West. I recall, while the Soviet Union was still in operation, that a fellow took me aside and asked if various things were true. I said they were. He said, "You understand why I ask. The authorities told us the opposite." So one of the other ways the Soviets stayed in power was to tell their citizens lies.

I well recall driving with a member of the Soviet Duma in a slum part of Washington, D.C. The member, who had stayed at my home and thought it was a great luxury, looked at the slums and said, "This is how the Soviets depict all of America." Later he said, "Would you like to see the Soviet Union fall immediately?" I said I would. He said, "Buy every member of the Soviet Union a roundtrip plane ticket to the United States." Now, these folks were those who survived. They were not "victims of the Soviet Union" as are being memorialized this June 12th. The point I am making is that virtually all the residents of the Soviet Union also were victims, not only those who were killed. They were victims because the system abused them. They sent them to mental hospitals. They told them constant lies.

Only those who ran the Soviet Union and who really knew what was going on were not victims. The kind of victims who will be commemorated next month are those who were killed. But those who lived could well be added to the list.

At any rate, the whole nation should be grateful to Edwards for what he has done. How much media do you think will cover this event? Outside of movement media I doubt Lee will get much coverage. That would be a tragedy because people need to know what the Communists did -- not just the Soviets but the Chinese, Cuban, Cambodian and Vietnamese Communists as well. Many millions since the fall of the Soviet Union have been born and probably do not know its atrocities. Think of 25 years from now? How about 50 years? If you know any media twist their arms to cover this great event.

Paul M. Weyrich is Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Filthy Coal?

by Paul Driessen

Prominent advertisements in major US papers recently featured an ethnic spectrum of smudge-faced California models, whose misleading claims about emissions from coal-fired electrical generating plants were reinforced by a CleanSkyCoalition.com website. The campaign urged citizens to tell government officials, "No more filthy coal plants."

But the Coalition wasn't another gaggle of environmental pressure groups, like those listed on the website. It was a [cabal](#) of natural gas companies, led by Chesapeake Energy of Oklahoma. Their goal wasn't really helping Americans get "clean skies" and "live longer," as their ads proclaimed. It was fattening corporate wallets.



Paul Driessen

The cabal hoped new laws would make it harder to build more coal-fired plants or retrofit old plants to meet tougher air quality standards, and force massive switching to natural gas. As demand rose and supplies tightened, gas prices would surge. Consumers, especially poor families, would suffer, but Coalition partners would haul wheelbarrows of cash to the bank.

Every \$1 increase in gas prices costs US consumers an additional \$22 billion a year for heating, air-conditioning, food, consumer goods and services – many of which use natural gas for energy or raw materials – says the Energy Information Administration (EIA). Indeed, consumers paid \$140 billion more in 2006 for gas and electricity than they did in 2000 – an extra \$1900 a year for every family of four.

That hit poor families especially hard, and the US manufacturing sector lost 3 million jobs.

Chesapeake has 9 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proven gas reserves, which it wants to sell at the highest possible price. How much the other partners have is impossible to say, because the company won't reveal the names of its co-conspirators.

But America doesn't have enough gas to supply needs that energy demand and legislative air quality mandates have helped stoke. Demand has outstripped domestic production since 1985, forcing us to import the difference, largely from less than friendly countries, and in competition with other nations. Following the disingenuous ads' prescription – substituting gas for coal-fired electricity – would send tsunamis rippling through our economy.

America certainly could produce more gas. Geologists say the US Outer Continental Shelf could contain 420 Tcf – enough to meet current demand for 15 years. But over 85% of these areas are off limits to drilling; the situation is similar with onshore public lands; and eco purists want to keep it that way.

Electricity provides 40% of all the energy we use, and the EIA and other analysts say the United States will need 100,000 megawatts of new electricity by 2020. Colorado alone will need another 5,000 Mw; Texas, over 25,000. Conservation and efficiency efforts could pare that back somewhat. But growth in population and technologies that use electricity mean we will need every available source of energy: gas, nuclear, hydroelectric, wind, biofuel, waste-to-energy – and coal. Right now, coal generates 50% of all the electricity we consume, and we have no viable alternatives in the near term.

The ads and environmental group websites say coal-fired power plants are responsible for scary-sounding portions of total US air pollution. While burning coal obviously does generate

pollution, some inconvenient truths make their Pollution Monsters look more like Sesame Street Cookie Monsters.

Between 1970 and 2004, the US population grew by 40% ... its Gross Domestic Product by 187% ... miles traveled by 171% ... electricity consumption by 115% ... and coal burning by 80 percent. And yet, during this period, our aggregate air pollution was cut in half, thanks to steady advances in efficiency and pollution control, air quality expert Joel Schwartz points out. Lead and certain other pollutants were reduced by 90% or more.

Since 1998, annual power plant SO₂ emissions have declined 28% and NO_x 43 percent, he notes. New rules require large additional reductions during the next decade that will eliminate most remaining power plant emissions. The ads also fail to mention that:

- * total air pollution is now so low that it poses no significant health risks, even for [children](#);
- * asthma prevalence has been rising even as all types of air pollution have been falling, so air pollution cannot be a factor;
- * even eliminating all human-caused ozone would reduce respiratory hospital visits by at most a few tenths of one percent; and
- * coal-generated electricity costs much less per kilowatt hour than alternatives – leaving families with more money to spend on nutrition and healthcare.

Coal-fired power plants are now the primary source of US mercury emissions, not because their emissions are large or increasing, but because the real sources of mercury (incinerating wastes and processing ores containing mercury) have been eliminated. The US reduced total mercury emissions by over 80% since the early 1980s; America accounts for only 2% of global mercury emissions; two-thirds of mercury deposition in the States comes from other countries; 55% of global emissions come from volcanoes, oceans and forest fires; and Americans' mercury exposure is a tiny fraction of levels necessary to cause brain damage.

Nevertheless, new EPA rules require a further 70% reduction in mercury from power plants over the next decade. That's tremendous bucks for the bang, but it will be done.

Climatologist John Christy points to another consideration. In 1900, the world supported 56 billion human life years: 1.6 billion people times a 35-year average life span. Today it supports 429 billion life years: 6.5 billion people times a 66-year average life span – and they are living far better than anyone in history.

For that we can thank energy, primarily fossil fuels. And in exchange for this incredible progress – if fossil fuels are a primary cause of global warming – we have had a net increase in average global temperature, over the past 100 years, of about 1 degree Fahrenheit, or 0.7 degrees Celsius. (As a percentage of Earth's atmosphere, carbon dioxide emissions from US coal-fired power plants equal the thickness of a single human hair on a football field.)

All in all, the Chesapeake & Collaborators ad campaign added greatly to the pervasive misinformation that drives so much US energy, health and environmental policy. It will doubtless be used to justify global warming legislation, such as the Sanders-Boxer bill (S. 309) that a new [MIT study](#) concludes would impose a tax-equivalent of \$4,500 annually on every family of four by 2015 – and more thereafter.

As Congress conducts additional experiments on constituents – with mandates, cap-and-trade, tax incentives and other pork-laden "environmental" legislation – the problem will only get worse. Unless citizens demand a change in business-as-usual.

Paul Driessen is senior policy advisor for the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow and Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise, and author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power · Black death (www.Eco-Imperialism.com).

**E-mail the
Editor**

Turkey Challenge

by Daniel Pipes

My recent visit to Istanbul came in the midst of the greatest challenge to the Turkish secular republic since its creation in 1923.

Founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire, the republic came into existence at about the high-water mark of Western confidence, when it appeared that European ways would become the global template. Atatürk imposed a [dizzying array of changes](#), including European laws, the Latin alphabet, the Gregorian calendar, personal last names, hats instead of fezzes, monogamy, Sunday as the day of rest, a ban on dervishes, the legal right to drink alcohol, and Turkish as a liturgical language.



Daniel Pipes

Many reforms took root; going back to the Arabic script or discarding last names is inconceivable. That said, the country has generally reverted to Islamic ways. Increased religious instruction in the schools and more state-funded mosques are complemented by more women taking on head-scarves.

Several factors account for this development: the predictable reaction against Atatürk's excesses; Turkey's greater democratization, which gave the masses a chance to express themselves; the [higher demographic rate of Anatolians](#), generally cooler to Atatürk's changes; and the Islamist surge that began in the mid-1970s.

This surge translated into a substantial Islamic representation in the Grand National Assembly, beginning as a single seat in the 1960s and then – aided by Turkish electoral peculiarities – reaching a nearly two-thirds majority today. Islamic parties have twice controlled the prime ministry, in 1996-97 and since 2002. The first time, Necmettin Erbakan's headstrong personality and overt Islamist program prompted the military, guardian of Atatürk's traditions, to oust him from power within a year.

After Erbakan's collapse, a former lieutenant, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, founded Justice and Development (or AKP), now the governing party. Learning from the 1996-97 fiasco, Erdoğan and his team took a much more cautious approach to Islamization. Also, they displayed competence at governing, handling well the economy, the European Union, Cyprus, and other matters.

But last month Erdoğan reached too far in picking Abdullah Gül, his close associate, to run for the republic's presidency. In a fast-paced sequence of events, Gül failed to get the necessary votes, the Constitutional Court voided the election, [millions of secularists took to the streets](#), the military hinted of a coup, and Erdoğan dissolved parliament. Both it and a new president will soon be voted on.

Questions abound: Can the AKP again win a majority of seats? Failing that, can it form a ruling coalition? Will it succeed in installing one of its own as president?

More fundamentally, what are the AKP leadership's intentions? Did it, having witnessed Erbakan's fate, retain a secret Islamist program and simply learn to disguise its Islamist goals? Or did it actually give up on those goals and accept secularism?

These questions of intent can only be answered speculatively. Judging whether the AKP has a hidden agenda, I [concluded after a trip to Turkey](#) in mid-2005, resembles a "sophisticated

intellectual puzzle," with persuasive evidence in both directions. That remains the case, I find on this visit two years later. There's just more data to process and interpret.

Each Turk must judge the AKP for himself, as must key foreign governments. If the polls show Turkish voters still quite undecided, foreign leaders have opted in Erdoğan's favor. The [Council of Europe](#) condemned military intervention and U.S. Secretary of State [Condoleezza Rice](#) has gone further, praising the AKP for "pulling Turkey west toward Europe" and specifically endorsed its efforts to make Turkey's laws conform to Europe's in the areas of individual and religious freedom.

But her statement ignores AKP efforts to apply the Islamic law by [criminalizing adultery](#) and [creating alcohol-free zones](#), not to speak of its [privileging Islamic courts](#) over secular courts, its reliance on [dirty money](#), and its bias against [religious minorities](#) as well as the persecution of [political opponents](#). Further, European Union membership offers the AKP a huge side-benefit: by reducing the political role of Turkey's arch-secular military leadership, paradoxically, it eases the way to apply Islamic laws. Would the AKP's caution outlast its neutering the officer corps? Finally, Secretary Rice ignores AKP-induced [tensions in U.S.-Turkish relations](#).

But her superficial analysis has one inadvertent benefit: given [Turkey's fervid anti-Americanism](#) these days, American support for the AKP might actually cause it to lose votes. Such cynical humor aside, Washington should stop bolstering the AKP and instead side with its natural allies, the secularists.

Mr. Pipes (www.DanielPipes.org) is director of the Middle East Forum.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Ashcroft Class Act

by David Keene

In light of what's happened since, it now sounds foolish that the Bush Administration would ever have put out word that the new attorney general, Alberto Gonzales, would be more open and bring a softer touch to his job than did his controversial predecessor, John Ashcroft.



David Keene

In the days following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Ashcroft became the point man for an administration seeking controversial new powers to fight what many saw as a new and potentially deadly enemy willing and able to strike at the U.S. homeland itself. Liberals had opposed the former Missouri senator's appointment as attorney general and were immediately skeptical of his performance in an office that had become more important than ever before.

Ashcroft and his people cobbled together and won overwhelming support for the still-controversial USA Patriot Act and seemed to turn a blind eye to any suggestion that as attorney general he had an obligation not simply to reflect the president's desires, but to advise the president on what could and could not be done under the strictures of our Constitution. Leftists around the country operated on the assumption that Ashcroft and others within the administration were involved in a conspiracy to undermine civil liberties and transform the country into something none of us would much like.

It turns out, of course, that Ashcroft was doing no such thing. He was, in fact, doing exactly what he should have been doing. He was trying to balance the need for new weapons to thwart our nation's enemies with his dedication to the Constitution. In doing so, it now appears that he was in a constant war with others in the administration who thought him soft on terrorism and too wedded to what they viewed as outmoded ways of looking at the Founders' restrictions on executive authority.

Ironically, when he finally packed it in, civil libertarians celebrated his departure without realizing that within the administration there were celebrations among those who thought he was too dedicated to observing constitutional niceties. They didn't realize that in terms of constitutional rights, he wasn't the fox in the chicken coop, but the guard keeping the fox out.

What's more, Ashcroft did his job the way it is supposed to be done. He made his views known within the administration in the strongest terms possible, but accepted the role he had to play when he lost the argument and then decided, when he could no longer go along in the direction his colleagues were taking, that it was time to leave. He could have handled things differently. Anyone who has lived in this town can name a dozen former government officials who lived by the leak to curry support for their positions through the media.

Ashcroft was better positioned to do this than almost anyone imaginable. Think for a minute of what might have happened if the attorney general had let it be known that his concerns for traditional constitutional safeguards were being ignored or that the White House chief of staff and the president's counsel had tried to do what Alberto Gonzales and Andy Card in fact tried while he lay in pain in George Washington Hospital.

To say that it would have been front-page news is an understatement. He would have transformed himself in an instant from press goat to hero and put the administration in an incredibly awkward position.

There are those who would have applauded him had he gone public or at least allowed his views to leak to the press, but that would not have been John Ashcroft. Whatever anyone thinks about him, he has always been a man of honor who has stuck with his values no matter

what.

I disagreed with much of what transpired during his tenure at Justice and wondered from time to time just how the John Ashcroft I knew and admired from his days in the Senate and before could act as he seemed to be acting in his new job. I noted publicly that his voting record as a senator revealed him as a man dedicated to the Constitution and the views of the Founders, but assumed that he had forgotten or was ignoring his predilections as the administration moved quickly, if not always cautiously, to mobilize for this new threat to the country.

I was wrong. John Ashcroft never compromised his beliefs or bowed to expediency. He lived up to his oath and his values.

He was, in short, that rarest of politicians: a class act.

[David Keene](#) is the chairman of the American Conservative Union and a managing associate with the Carmen Group, a Washington, D.C.-based governmental-affairs firm.

**E-mail the
Editor**

New Immigration Plan

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release May 17, 2007

Border Security And Immigration Reform

Administration And Bipartisan Group Of Senators Reach
Bipartisan Agreement On Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Today, Administration Officials And A Bipartisan Group Of
Senators Reached Agreement On Comprehensive Immigration
Reform Legislation. The proposal includes:



- * Putting Border Security And Enforcement First: Border security and worksite-enforcement benchmarks must be met before other elements of the proposal are implemented.
- * Providing Tools For Employers To Verify The Eligibility Of The Workers They Hire: Employers will be required to verify the work eligibility of all employees using an employment eligibility verification system, while all workers will be required to present stronger and more verifiable identification documents. Tough new anti-fraud measures will be implemented and stiff penalties imposed on employers who break the law.
- * Creating A Temporary Worker Program: To relieve pressure on the border and provide a lawful way to meet the needs of our economy, the proposal creates a temporary worker program to fill jobs Americans are not doing. To ensure this program is truly "temporary," workers will be limited to three two-year terms, with at least a year spent outside the United States between each term. Temporary workers will be allowed to bring immediate family members only if they have the financial ability to support them and they are covered by health insurance.
- * No Amnesty For Illegal Immigrants: Illegal immigrants who come out of the shadows will be given probationary status. Once the border security and enforcement benchmarks are met, they must pass a background check, remain employed, maintain a clean criminal record, pay a \$1,000 fine, and receive a counterfeit-proof biometric card to apply for a work visa or "Z visa." Some years later, these Z visa holders will be eligible to apply for a green card, but only after paying an additional \$4,000 fine; completing accelerated English requirements; getting in line while the current backlog clears; returning to their home country to file their green card application; and demonstrating merit under the merit-based system.
- * Strengthening The Assimilation Of New Immigrants: The proposal declares that English is the language of the United States and calls on the United States Government to preserve and enhance it, as well as enacting accelerated English requirements for many immigrants. In addition, the DHS Office of Citizenship will be expanded to include coordinating assimilation efforts in its mission, and the Education Secretary will make an English instruction program freely available over the Internet.
- * Establishing A Merit System For Future Immigration: The proposal establishes a new merit-based system to select future immigrants based on the skills and attributes they will bring to the United States. Under the merit-based system, future immigrants applying for permanent residency in the U.S. will be assigned points for skills, education, and other attributes that further our national interest including: ability to speak English; level of schooling, including

added points for training in science, math, and technology; job offer in a specialty or high-demand field; employer endorsement; and family ties to the U.S.

* **Ending Chain Migration:** The immigration system would be reformed to better balance the importance of family connections with the economic needs of our country by replacing the current system, where nearly two-thirds of green cards are awarded to relatives of U.S. citizens, with a system in which future family immigration will focus on the nuclear family and parents.

* **Clearing The Family Backlog In Eight Years:** Millions of family members of U.S. citizens now wait years in line for a green card, with some waits estimated at as long as 30 years. Family members who have applied legally and have lawfully waited their turn in line will receive their green card within eight years.

Putting Border Security And Enforcement First

Border Security And Worksite Enforcement Benchmarks Must Be Met Before A Temporary Worker Program Is Implemented. These benchmarks include:

- * Miles of fence constructed.
- * Number of Border Patrol Agents hired.
- * "Catch and Return" continues at the border.
- * Employment Eligibility Verification System ready to process all new hires.

The Proposal Establishes New Penalties For Border Crimes And Gives The Border Patrol Additional Tools To Stop Illegal Border Crossings. Through the deployment of additional Border Patrol agents with supporting equipment, the construction of additional fencing and vehicle barriers in targeted areas, and the development of a proper mix of sensors, radar, and cameras, the proposal establishes a true commitment to securing our borders.

Providing Tools For Employers To Verify The Eligibility Of The Workers They Hire

Employers Will Be Required To Verify The Work Eligibility Of All Employees, While All Workers Will Be Required To Present Stronger And More Verifiable Identification Documents. Tough new anti-fraud measures will be implemented and stiff penalties imposed on employers who break the law.

- * The Employment Eligibility Verification System will allow for real-time verification of employee photos and documents.
- * The Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration will be able to share "no-match" information to ensure that illegal immigrants cannot use the Social Security information of Americans to pose as legal workers.
- * Employer audits will serve as an additional check on employer compliance with the system.

Creating A Temporary Worker Program

To Relieve Pressure On The Border And Provide A Lawful Channel To Meet The Needs Of Our Economy, The Proposal Creates A Temporary Worker Program. The program allows workers to enter the country to fill jobs that Americans are not doing. The temporary worker program:

- * Protects American workers by requiring U.S. employers to advertise the job in the United States at a competitive wage before hiring a temporary worker.
- * Provides additional labor protections for temporary worker program participants.
- * Allows temporary workers to enter the United States to work for three two-year terms, with at least a year spent outside the United States between each term.

- * Sets a cap of 400,000 on the temporary worker program, which can be adjusted up or down in the future depending on demand.
- * Requires temporary workers who want to bring their immediate family to show that they have the financial means to support them and that they are covered by health insurance.
- * Recognizes the unique needs of agriculture by establishing a separate seasonal agriculture component under the temporary worker program.

No Amnesty For Illegal Immigrants

Illegal Immigrants Who Come Out Of The Shadows Will Be Given Probationary Status. To maintain their probationary status, they must pass a background check, remain employed, and maintain a clean criminal record.

Illegal Immigrants Who Fulfill Their Probationary Requirements Can Apply For A Z Card, Which Will Enable Them To Live, Work, And Travel Freely. Z card holders will be required to pay a \$1,000 fine, meet accelerated English and civics requirements, remain employed, and renew their visa every four years.

Z Card Holders Will Have An Opportunity To Apply For A Green Card, But Only After:

- * Paying an additional \$4,000 fine,
- * Applying at the back of the line and waiting until the current backlog is cleared,
- * Returning to their home country to file their green card application, and
- * Demonstrating merit under the merit-based system.

Strengthening The Assimilation Of New Immigrants

The Proposal Declares That English Is The Language Of The United States And Calls On The United States Government To Preserve And Enhance It, As Well As Enacting Accelerated English Requirements For Some Immigrants. The success of our country depends upon helping newcomers assimilate into our society and embrace our common identity as Americans – our shared ideals, an appreciation of our history, and an ability to speak and write the English language. Therefore, the Secretary of Education is directed to make an English instruction program freely available over the Internet. The DHS Office of Citizenship is expanded to include coordinating assimilation efforts in its mission, and additional funding is authorized for the Office.

Establishing A Merit System For Future Immigration

The Proposal Establishes A New Merit-Based System To Select Future Immigrants Based On The Skills And Attributes They Will Bring To The United States. A merit system is used by many other countries.

* Under The Merit System, Future Immigrants Applying For Permanent Residency In The United States Will Be Assigned Points For Skills, Education, Employment Background And Other Attributes That Further Our National Interest. These skills include:

- * Ability to speak English.
- * Level of schooling, including added points for training in science, math, and technology.
- * Job offer in a high-demand field.
- * Work experience in the United States.
- * Employer endorsement.
- * Family ties to the United States.

Ending Chain Migration

In Place Of The Current System Where Nearly Two-Thirds Of Green Cards Are Awarded To Relatives Of U.S. Citizens, Our Immigration System Will Be Reformed To Better Balance The Importance Of Family Connections With The Economic Needs Of Our Country.

* Visas for parents of U.S. citizens are capped, while green cards for the siblings and adult children of U.S. citizens and green card holders are eliminated.

* A new Parents Visitor visa is created to ensure that parents are allowed to visit their children in the United States regularly and for extended periods of time.

* The Diversity Lottery Program, which grants 50,000 green cards per year through random chance, is ended.

* These rebalanced green cards are used to clear the Family Backlog in eight years and then applied to the new Merit System for future immigration once the backlog is cleared.

Clearing The Family Backlog Within Eight Years

Family Members Who Have Applied Legally, And Lawfully Waited Their Turn In Line, Will Receive Their Green Card Within The Next Eight Years. Today, millions of family members of U.S. citizens wait years in line for a green card, with some waits estimated at as long as 30 years.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Stop Sea Treaty

by Frank J Gaffney Jr.

President Bush has just made a fateful mistake. He announced that his administration will make a concerted effort to secure the prompt ratification of a deeply flawed multilateral accord universally known by its acronym " LOST, as in the Law of the Sea Treaty.

Sadly, being party to the Law of the Sea Treaty is not going to keep our foes from using it against us. Like those of virtually every other international organization, LOST's institutions (executive, legislative and judicial, if you please) are rigged-games. The United States will be routinely outvoted or otherwise unable to prevent infringements on its sovereignty and, yes, in all likelihood over time even its military operations.



Frank J Gaffney Jr.

Some earnest officers insist that should the latter happen, America can always withdraw from the treaty. Don't count on it. The only instance in memory when such a step occurred was the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and that took 20 years to accomplish. Moreover, it could only have occurred because the very survival of the nation could plausibly be argued to require it.

Even if the Navy and its sister sea-services were right about the value of the treaty from their parochial perspectives, roughly 60 percent of LOST's provisions have to do with the supranational management of two-thirds of the world's surface and its resources. The argument about whether such arrangements will prove to be in the long-term interest of the nation as a whole should be considered on their merits, not subordinated, let alone ignored, out of misplaced deference to some in the military.

When it comes to LOST, of course, prompt is a relative thing. It was first opened to signature and ratification in the early 1980s, but Ronald Reagan rejected it. In the mid-1990s, Bill Clinton resuscitated and negotiated a side-deal designed to fix, or at least obscure, what Mr. Reagan found objectionable.

There things might have rested with the United States continuing to do what it has done since President Reagan's day: remain a non-party to the Law of the Sea Treaty, observing its unobjectionable provisions concerning navigation and transit rights, while not subjecting itself to the accord's myriad supranational institutions. The latter purport to govern the international sea beds and, according to some, the oceans and even the airspace above them.

Regrettably, a new correlation of forces is operating in Washington. The Bush administration is now under the influence of American Transnational Progressives, notably, Foreign Service Officers like Under Secretary of State Nick Burns and his nominal superior, Deputy Secretary John Negroponte. Thanks to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's virtual domination of the international affairs portfolio, the Transie agenda is largely supplanting what once was the Bush 43 version of Reagan's exceptionalist program for peace through American strength.

To be sure, the leading edge of the sales campaign for LOST will not be the Foreign Service or, for that matter, its allies among various environmental and commercial special interests. (Don't ask how both the Greens and the deep-sea oil and gas industry can believe that the Law of the Sea Treaty will advance their programs; one of them is surely wrong.)

Rather, the administration is trotting out lawyers and other officials of the armed forces to make the case for LOST. In particular, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard are on record as favoring the treaty. Their argument has a certain superficial appeal: The treaty

establishes rules of the road for littoral waters that are better than might otherwise apply and, if we are a party to LOST, we can ensure they stay that way. The alternative, we are told, is that the Navy will have to take risks to assert our rights to untrammelled innocent passage. And, frankly, we no longer have sufficient naval vessels or the political will required to undertake such potentially risky operations wherever necessary.

Then, in 2004, the Bush administration decided to embrace the Law of the Sea Treaty. The argument seemed principally to be that, in the aftermath of the bruising fight over Iraq, doing so would demonstrate that the United States could still play well with its allies and other nations. Most were parties to LOST and are slavishly devoted to this and other treaties on the agenda of the Transnational Progressives (or Transies, for short).

Fortunately, a happy correlation of forces kept the Transies at bay temporarily. Despite an effort to secure Senate advice and consent to LOST in the parliamentary equivalent of the dark of night, a broad coalition of largely conservative and libertarian organizations came together in adamant opposition. Then-Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, who had presidential ambitions, recognized the inadvisability of bucking such forces. To his credit, he also came to see how substantively problematic LOST would be and kept the treaty bottled up.

The push President Bush intends to make for the Law of the Sea Treaty will win him few friends among his enemies. It will, however, cost him dearly among those who have steadfastly supported him, but are dead-set against the Transnational Progressives and their agenda. One would think that a man with an approval rating below 30 percent would not be so cavalier with what remains of his base, especially on behalf of so dubious an enterprise as ratification of LOST.

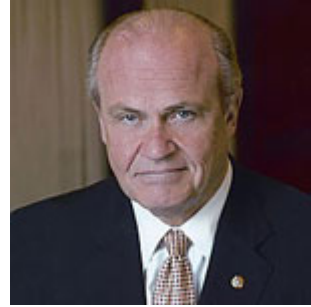
Frank J. Gaffney, Jr. is the founder, president, and CEO of The Center for Security Policy. During the Reagan administration, Gaffney was the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Forces and Arms Control Policy, and a Professional Staff Member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, chaired by Senator John Tower (R-Texas).

**E-mail the
Editor**

Scrap Migrant Bill

by Fred Thompson

Most Americans know that we have an illegal immigration problem in this country, with perhaps as many as 20 million people residing here unlawfully. And I think most Americans have a pretty good idea about how to at least start solving the problem – secure our nation’s borders.



But there’s an old saying in Washington that, in dealing with any tough issue, half the politicians hope that citizens don’t understand it while the other half fear that people actually do. This kind of thinking was apparent with the “comprehensive” immigration reform bill that the U.S. Senate and the White House negotiated yesterday.

I’d tell you what was in the legislation, but 24 hours after the politicians agreed the bill looked good, the Senate lawyers were still writing what may turn out to be a one thousand page document. In fact, a final version of the bill most likely will not be made available to the public until after the legislation is passed. That may come five days from now. That’s like trying to digest an eight-course meal on a fifteen-minute lunch break.

We’ve tried the “comprehensive” route before to solve the illegal immigration problem with a bit more care and deliberation, and the results haven’t been good. Back in May 1985, Congress promised us that it would come up with a comprehensive plan to solve the problem of illegal immigration and our porous borders. Eighteen months later, in November 1986, that comprehensive plan was signed into law.

Twenty-two years and millions of illegal immigrants later, that comprehensive plan hasn’t done what most Americans wanted it to do -- secure America’s borders. Now Washington says the new “comprehensive” plan will solve the problem that the last comprehensive plan didn’t.

The fact is our border and immigration systems are still badly broken. We were reminded of this when Newsweek reported that the family of three of the men, arrested last week for allegedly plotting to kill American military personnel at Fort Dix, New Jersey, entered the U.S. illegally more than 20 years ago; filed for asylum back in 1989, but fell off the government’s radar screen when federal bureaucrats essentially lost track of the paperwork. Wonder how many times that’s been replicated?

Is it any wonder that a lot of folks today feel like they’re being sold a phony bill of goods on border security? A “comprehensive” plan doesn’t mean much if the government can’t accomplish one of its most basic responsibilities for its citizens -- securing its borders. A nation without secure borders will not long be a sovereign nation.

No matter how much lipstick Washington tries to slap onto this legislative pig, it’s not going to win any beauty contests. In fact, given Congress’s track record, the bill will probably get a lot uglier -- at least from the public’s point of view. And agreeing to policies before actually seeing what the policies are is a heck of a way to do business.

We should scrap this “comprehensive” immigration bill and the whole debate until the government can show the American people that we have secured the borders -- or at least made great headway. That would give proponents of the bill a chance to explain why putting illegals in a more favorable position than those who play by the rules is not really amnesty.

Fred Thompson is an actor and former Senator. His radio commentary airs on the [ABC Radio Network](#) and he blogs on [The Fred Thompson Report](#).

**E-mail the
Editor**

Ban Doctors or Guns?

There are 700,000 physicians in the United States

According to HHS statistics, 120,000 Americans die accidentally each year from medical treatment from these physicians.

This means the accidental death rate per physician is 0.171.

Now Think About This:

There are 80,000,000 gun owners in this country.

According to FBI statistics, about 1,500 people die each year as a result of gun related accidents.

This means the accidental death rate per gun owner is .000188

So, statistically doctors are approximately 9,000 times more dangerous than gun owners.

Remember: "Guns don't kill people, doctors do."

Scary Fact: Not everyone has a gun, but almost everyone has at least one doctor.

Please take a minute to alert your friend to this truly alarming threat. We must ban doctors before this gets completely out of hand.



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Editor**

Reader Comments

**CONSERVATIVE
BATTLELINE
ONLINE**

Editor: "How To Win War on Terror" is a fine article. We need more info of this genre. Robert F Hamilton

Editor: You guys are so right, so on-the-mark in "How To Win War on Terror," it's disgusting! It's also disgusting that this country has sunk so low, and bent over so far to accommodate those who deserve it the least, that an organization such as yours is necessary in the first place. Frankly, between the enemy from within and the enemy from without, I don't see the United State surviving as the country it has been more or less for the past 230+ years. In fact, I've encouraged my children to NOT have children of their own, for the sole reason that I don't want my descendants to have to deal with the horrors of the world they will surely be facing! Paul Kahn

Editor: Enjoyed your article "How To Win War on Terror" and Daniel Pipes' "Million Moderate Muslims" very much. I am not so sure that the USA, while publicly endorsing non military involvement in the Turkish election, isn't privately encouraging opponents to Islamism to do all that is needed to retain secularism in Turkey. Our public position may be just to please the EU who are really facing the most difficulty in this matter. I think it is even possible that the EU fears its own huge Muslim population and their reaction if it appeared the EU wasn't taking the public position it has taken. The EU may quite possibly also be privately encouraging resistance to Islamism. EU or not, I think the old factions of nationalism in Europe realize the dangers to them of a member state being a fundamentalist haven for the advancement of Islamism into old Europe. France could very well become the leader in the protectionist movement in old Europe. Italy will stand firm. I think that Germany is rapidly moving in that direction as will. I believe that they are accepting that if they do not resist Islamism now, that in a "war of the worlds", east versus west, the west could lose. At least, I hope they realizing this. Keep doing what you do so will. Educate, warn, encourage watchfulness. I thank you for your attention to these matters. Rog

Editor: Given "War on Terrorism", obviously conservatives have failed on this issue by leaving our borders wide open for illegal aliens and terrorists because they care more about cheap labor than our safety. BL

Editor: Regarding your article "War on Terrorism", I have a simpler plan:

1. Declare war on Islam.
2. Seal the borders.
3. Outlaw the practice in America and deport all adherents. Execute any failing intelligence inspection.
4. Seize all assets.
5. Announce rules of engagement that says ten thousands Islamists die for each infidel

murdered and then do it.

6. That is the prescription for peace in our time.

Any questions? Bill Ford

Editor: In your article addressing the "War on Terrorism", you stated in part, as follows: "Winning the domestic war on terrorism only needs good police work but it needs to be done more systematically yet selectively and more thoroughly, especially at the borders". I believe this could have been better stated as follows: "THE DOMESTIC WAR ON TERRORISM BEGINS WITH DUE DILLIGENCE, WILL CONTINUE WITH DUE DILLIGENCE, AND WILL NEVER END. HOWEVER, WHEN OUR BORDERS ARE SECURED, MAINTAINED AND ENFORCED TO PREVENT ILLEGAL ENTRY AND STRENGTHEN IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS, OUR COUNTRY WILL HAVE TAKEN THE FIRST STEPS IN PROTECTING CITIZENS FROM THOSE WHOSE ONLY INTENT IS THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AT ANY AND ALL COSTS." If you had only written this...you would have said it all....and wouldn't have had to write such a long drawn-out piece in attempting to explain the reasons for terrorism directed at our country since 9/11. Remember the first rule of writing or reporting...KISS, I hope you know what it means. Regards, Gail A. Dahlstrom, Richmond, VA

Editor: Regarding Daniel Pipes' "Million Moderate Muslims" if the PC media were to place a name tag on a Christian person who is willing to use guns and bombs to kill innocent Muslim men, women and children in order to promote/protect their religion, would they use the word "Moderate"? So why the use of "Moderate" when these people are willing to condone suicide bombers and murder to install their way of thinking? Is this religion so off the scale with hate and fascism, that condoning the murder of innocent bystanders is a Moderate view? I also wonder with all the fears by Muslims on the Fed's effective data mining (information tracking) efforts, if the poll answers express a true feeling of Muslims, or just a toned down statement where the poll responder is playing it safe and close to the breast. O.G.

Editor: In response to Alan Caruba's "War on American Lawns," I love my beautifully green 35,000 sq ft lawn and will use whatever it takes to keep it that way! I vehemently disagree with Rachel Carlson's philosophy and that of the other doom and gloom naysayers about being poisoned to extinction by "chemicals", but you were wrong when you said organically grown spinach caused sickness. It was NOT "organically grown" spinach that caused sickness. It was spinach grow on farms that were sprayed with "organic?" sewage sludge which is NOT allowed to be used on any food labeled "organic"! You need to get past the NY Times spin machine! Foods grown under the "organic" method are most likely the safest and healthiest and also the most expensive! Thank you, Randy Wright, Edmond, OK

Editor: The group "SAFE LAWN" that Alan Caruba mentioned in his article "War on American Lawns" is nothing but a bunch of pointy nosed elitists who want to control every aspect of peoples' lives. It is, and I'm not afraid to say it, a communist group that wants to tear down all free enterprise as well as the American economy. They will do it a little at a time. They are patient. If they win this, what's next, underarm deodorant is harming the environment? Thank you, Ed Indelicato, Levittown, NY

Editor: I just finished reading Alan Caruba's article entitled "The War on American Lawns". Now please understand right off the bat, that I believe Greens represent possibly the most dangerous threat to humanity long-term. They hate humans fundamentally, and want us all to die so that the other wild beasts can roam the planet freely. However, the arguments that Alan uses in attacking them don't stand up to even a cursory examination of what the opposition is actually saying. The foundation of his argument is that SafeLawns Foundation wants you to have an ugly, weedy, unhealthy lawn, as opposed to a chemically-drenched, and thus pretty and "healthy", lawn. Simply going to www.safelawns.org presents a slideshow of gorgeous lawns that have been maintained without the use of chemicals. This completely obliterates the lion's share of the article, showing that he has set up a false dichotomy! His second basic point is embodied in the rhetorical question "Do you know anyone who has ever died from having a healthy, green lawn?" Again, if you actually listen to what that SafeLawns is saying, you will see that there is a growing body of scientific literature supporting the idea that yes, your "healthy, green lawn" can kill you, as well as harm you in many other ways. I'm just concerned that we in the conservative movement must maintain the strictest possible standards for truth, accuracy and integrity in our reporting on, and debating of, liberals. If we sink to their level, and do nothing but demagogue and rip straw men to shreds, it can only hurt our cause. Thank you for your time. God bless, Josh Virkler

Alan Caruba responds: Aside from distorting what I asserted in my commentary, this letter then repeats essentially what the Safe Lawns folks want people to believe concerning the use of any chemical utilized to maintain a healthy lawn. This kind of chemophobia is rampant thanks to an unrelenting propaganda campaign by various self-appointed environmental groups and those who prefer to believe that all lawn care chemicals, used according to the label and property applied, pose a hazard no matter what other benefits they may impart to our lives.

Editor: I loved B. Friend's "Real Nappy Headed Ho." Paligap

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Editor**