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CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington

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Conservatives Agree on Democracy?

by Donald Devine

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

With all of the disagreement among conservatives these days, can we agree on one thing—that democracy is not our ideal?

America's Founders certainly would. As James Madison put it in Federalist #10:

democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.



James Madison

Of course, the Founders were not opposed to rule by the people. But they opposed the ideal of what Madison called "pure democracy"—a small number of people who meet and rule directly—and the whole underlying rationale for democracy. Those supporting democracy generally, Madison continued, "have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to perfect equality in their political rights, they would at the same time be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions and their passions." Rather than demanding uniformity to majority desires, Madison insisted that human nature is diverse and that the principal job of government is to protect that diversity, that freedom. The "great object" of the Constitution was to prevent either minority or majority abuses of liberty and "at the same time preserve the spirit and the form of popular government."

The solution was to create a "proper structure" for the government that gave the people a say in elections but used competing political and legal institutions to balance off their divergent ambitions. As Madison put it in Federalist #51, "A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions."

In the compound republic of America, power surrendered by the people is first divided between two distinct governments and then the portion allocated to each subdivided among distinct and separated departments. Hence a double security arises to the rights of the people. The different governments will control each other at the same time that each will be controlled by itself.

So the object of government to the Founders was to protect the free rights of the people by controlling the power of all to abuse them, including the people. Freedom was chosen over democracy. With the "double security" of states and national governments and separation of power within both, with many conflicting interests in a large enough society and representative rather than direct democracy, the rights of the people can be protected by "a proper federal system" that balances the diverse powers of the society to protect everyone's liberties.



It is true that over time the populist and progressive movements have moved the United States closer to, respectively, more democracy and then more centralized power, with Woodrow Wilson having the explicit goal of removing the "radical defect" in the Constitution "that it parcels out power and confuses responsibility." But by-and-large the checks on democracy have endured, even with the general support of the people, who generally have understood they themselves needed limits to protect their freedom. Even the clumsy but effective Electoral College has been preserved to limit direct majority rule, as many found to their amazement in 2000 when George W. Bush won the election while losing the national popular vote. Indeed, Americans seem to have generally been suspicious of too much democracy at home, with polls

consistently showing a preference for freedom over equality or direct democracy.

What about democracy abroad? Here the public is more ambiguous, the Pew Research Center showing U.S. popular support for promoting democracy abroad but also reporting that only a quarter of Americans want to make this a priority for their foreign policy. The venerable Sharon Statement of conservative principles held that foreign relations should be based not upon abstract ideology or upon a nation's internal make-up and beliefs, including whether they were democratic or not, but upon what was in "the just interests of the United States." That is pretty much what the U.S. has done historically, at least until post 9/11 when the Bush Administration originally set achieving world democracy as the preeminent goal. But that policy soon changed in the face of foreign policy realities.

As Daniel Pipes says in this issue (www.acuf.org/issues/issue101/080211cul.asp), "encouraging democracy is clearly a worthy goal, but when the Middle East's dominant popular force is totalitarian Islam, is it such a great idea to rush head-long ahead? Yet rushing ahead characterized Washington's [initial approach](#) [in Iraq]—until the policy's damage to U.S. interests became too apparent to ignore, causing it largely to be abandoned." Support for regional U.S. interests that could be supplied only by authoritarians such as Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, Saudi Arabia's King Abdallah and Jordan's King Abdallah II could not be ignored and national interest returned as the U.S. foreign policy standard.

Pakistan is another example. It is ruled by a former army general who seized power in a coup and has governed autocratically ever since, Pervez Musharraf. After first not-so-democratically re-electing himself as president by his old parliament, he then scheduled legislative elections. But that hardly makes it democratic. Pakistan's long-term democracy score from the authoritative Freedom House rating organization is a mere two (on its "electoral process" scale of a possible 12). Even if the upcoming election were amazingly conducted fairly and openly, beyond the ballot box is something else. Political scientist Rasul Bakdsh Rais of Lahore University notes that the political parties are family-based, that many parliamentary seats have been held by the same families (often covering both parties) since the country's inception, and only two national leaders have been elected democratically, Benazar Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, both heads of regionally prominent aristocracies. The professor is not reluctant to describe Pakistan's system as feudal. Whatever it is, American interests require Musharraf's support in the war on terror, overlooking his many departures from democracy, even while trying gracefully to urge him in that direction.

The recent events in Kenya are likewise instructive. Freedom House rated Kenya with a nine score on democracy, compared to an eleven for the U.S. Ok, not so bad with a 75 percent democracy score. As J. Peter Pham of the Nelson Institute of Public Affairs at James Madison University noted, "If, outside the atypical case of South Africa, any country in Africa was viewed as an island of stability with a real shot at breaking free of the 'development traps' which have ensnared the most of the continent, it was Kenya." Yet after its disputed December 27, 2007 election, the country erupted in wholesale ethnic violence that has not abated much to this day. Is it democratic? The response of the democracy-promoting Freedom House was to issue a news release on January 3, 2008 removing Kenya from its democracy list!



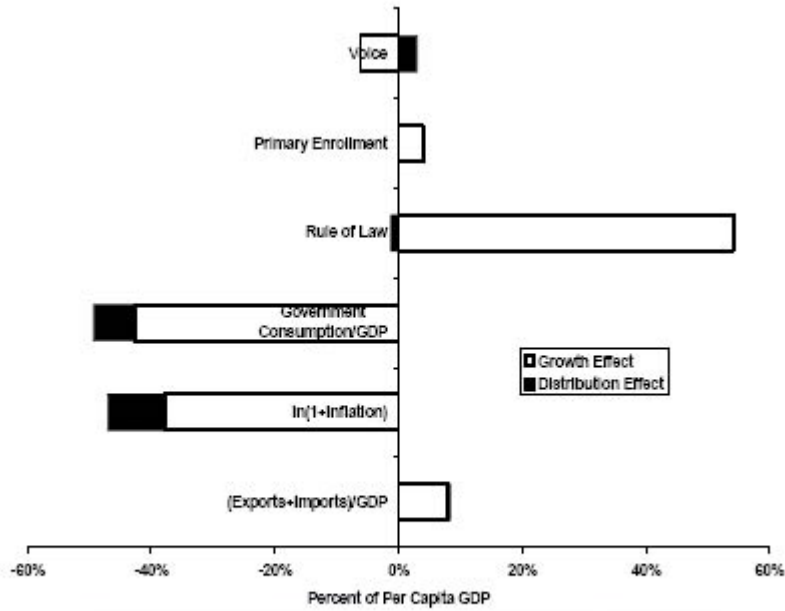
World Freedom (Map by Freedom House)

Holding elections is easy. Creating a working rule of law and supporting culture that also allows for a system of checks and balance are essential but there are few of these. Even the "atypical" Union of South Africa scores only minutely higher than Kenya on the democracy rating, although it is much higher in Freedom House's overall rating on freedom, with Kenya at 3.0 and South Africa at 2.0 (a score of 1.0 to 2.5 is called "free," 3.0 to 4.5 is "partially free," and 5.0-7.0 is "not free"). So being democratic does not separate the two—100 plus countries today are at least nominally democratic—but "free" is also rated too broadly. South Africa is a one party state and although it has the best government in the region it has tribal divisions similar to Kenya's that could boil to the surface in the future. Even a 1.5 score is questionable as truly "free." Ghana, for example, has this score but has had only one peaceful change of leaders after two coups and a long rule by Lt. Jerry Rawlings. Ghana has maintained its constitution since 1992 but as recently as 1994-95 land disputes in the north erupted into ethnic violence, resulting in 1,000 deaths and the displacement of a further 150,000 people.

If democracy does not differentiate very well, what about using the degree of freedom a nation has to decide who is friend or foe instead of how democratic they are? On the narrow 1.0 definition of freedom, not one nation on the list is the remotest threat to U.S. interests and most are allies already. Yet, if the U.S. only chose the truly free as allies, it would only have few and they would not be very geographically disbursed. What about pushing the rest of the nations to become truly free so they could become future allies? The list of 1.0's has remained stable (except for the addition of Eastern Europe with the fall of the Soviet Union and a few micro islands) for a half century and the prospects for admission are few and far between. It seems that selecting allies based on national interest rather than beliefs is not only the conservative and historical U.S. way but the only rational way.

In fact, the overwhelming majority with the 1.0 freedom score are European or of European origin, like the U.S. Only these really deserve to be called "free." But rating agencies do not want to appear ethnocentric so the definition of free is applied very broadly—but inaccurately. Face it, the Freedom House 1.0 rating measures something like what the Founders wanted. Indeed, the whole rating could be called the "Westernness" Rating, measuring the degree to which countries meet the Western ideals of rule of law, separation of powers, limited government, popular participation, individualism balanced by community responsibilities, respect for tradition in private and public institutions, social diversity and rational discussion, and free elections—all of which are components in the rating.

The Wall Street Journal/Heritage Foundation study of world economic data finds conclusively that freedom correlates highly with prosperity and a World Bank study (shown just below) demonstrates that possession of these Western ideals lead to prosperity. The Figure shows that democracy (called "citizen Voice") is actually somewhat negatively correlated with economic growth (as Madison expected and for the same reasons). The number of students receiving education does not explain much (it depends on what is taught). Government policy is very important but it is its legal institutions that limit government power and promote the rule of law that positively promote prosperity. Indeed, more government spending is highly negatively correlated to prosperity. It is not democracy but the institutions of freedom and the values that support them that lead to success. As Pipes makes clear, only individualism and ordered freedom can solve the intractable problems that exist in the Middle East, and the World Bank data reported here suggest that is also so elsewhere throughout the world.



**David Dollar and Aart Kraay, Development Research Group,
World Bank, Property Rights, Political Rights, and the Development of Poor Count**

So, are we all agreed? It is not democracy but freedom and limited government that we admire in domestic affairs and, in foreign policy, decisions must be based on just interests rather than either?

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**

Federalist ID Cards

by Paul Weyrich

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has now issued its final regulations for minimum security standards for state-issued drivers' licenses and identification cards under the REAL ID Law passed by Congress in 2005. The law was created in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and prohibits Federal agencies from accepting state-issued drivers' licenses unless they meet the requirements issued by the Secretary of DHS.



Paul M. Weyrich

The new requirements include a digital photograph and a security measure within the cards to prevent counterfeiting. Also, states must verify each applicant's personal information and legal status by comparing it against the Federal Social Security database and passport databases. The first deadline for compliance is December 31, 2009, by which time states must verify the lawful status of all applicants "to ensure that illegal aliens cannot obtain REAL ID licenses." Residents of those states which do not comply with this and other regulations will be unable to enter federal facilities or board commercial aircraft.

What was not included in the new regulations was a controversial provision to implant a computer chip which would store personal information in each driver's license.

Readers of this column know that I vigorously defend federalism. Federalism is the principle that the United States Constitution enumerates specific powers for the Federal Government and those which are not enumerated are left to the states or individuals. Accordingly, I am relieved that the requirement for the computer chip has been removed. Nowhere does the Constitution authorize the Federal Government to collect and store personal information about U.S. citizens in such an excessive and unnecessary manner as this. Nor do I agree with a national identification card, which many fear the REAL ID may become.

With regard to the driver's license requirements, the issue is slightly more difficult to parse. States such as Maryland, Oregon and Michigan are considering or have implemented verification of legal presence. Others, such as New York, have tried to give drivers' licenses to illegal immigrants. Fortunately, the outcry against the idea was so great in New York that the proposal was rejected. That some elected officials would even consider giving illegal immigrants a driver's license is troubling.

Another problem is voter fraud, reports of which have been increasing in recent years. If the Supreme Court upholds Indiana's law requiring voters to show photo identification at the polls, then there should be standards for what types of photo identification can be used and rules that guarantee the reliability of those standards. In spite of the outcry from some corners, requiring a photo ID to vote is a good idea. Otherwise there is a tendency for dead people and illegal immigrants to vote as well as some people voting multiple times in multiple districts.

What bothers me about the DHS requirements is that the Federal Government is mandating that states verify legal status using Federal information collections. The Federal Government itself has proven unwilling to pursue or remove illegal aliens from amongst the general public and information in the Social Security database is notoriously unreliable. How many times in recent years have we heard about identity theft? How many times are we warned that our Social Security numbers can be stolen easily? How many times have we heard that illegal immigrants are applying for jobs and receiving benefits using falsified or stolen Social Security numbers? And yet this is the database that DHS wants states to use to verify legal residence so that government-issued identification cards are reliable? The repercussions of this could result in a high number of illegitimate cards issued yet DHS appears untroubled by this fact.

Ensuring that states issue proper, legitimate identification is important because Americans use their drivers' licenses as proof of ID in many facets of daily life. But the states are doing a relatively good job on their own. When there is a breach of the public trust, as was the attempt in New York, the public outcry has been sufficient to check the power of the state government and assure proper verification of legal residence. DHS needs to put its own house in order before it begins mandating what the states can and cannot do and which sources should be used to verify residency. Otherwise we will end up with more unproductive government "action" intended to appear as though the Federal Government is actively ensuring our security and protecting our borders. The smoke and mirrors must stop.

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

**E-mail the
Editor**

Anti-Philanthropy "Times"

by Thomas E. Brewton

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

The *New York Times* is distressed that private philanthropists can give money to any charity they choose. Only an all-knowing Federal government is capable, says the Times, of making wise decisions about dispensing money to achieve social justice.



The flip side of American private largess is the stinginess of the public sector. Philanthropic contributions in the United States--about \$300 billion in 2006--probably exceed those of any other country. By contrast, America's tax take is nearly the lowest in the industrial world. Federal, state and local tax collections amount to just more than 25.5 percent of the nation's economic output. The Finnish government collects 48.8 percent. As a result, the United States spends less on social programs than virtually every other rich industrial country, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The reason critics of private spending oppose private charity is that they argue America's government sector does a better job making socially necessary investments. But it doesn't. Public spending is allocated democratically among competing demands, which rewards power rather than need. Rich benefactors can spend on anything they want, and they tend to spend on projects close to their hearts, which may or may not be "socially necessary," but are made on their judgment of what is needed.

The real point of the critics, of course, is not that private philanthropists misplace their donations. The point is to move the United States farther toward what Hilaire Belloc called The Servile State and Friedrich Hayek called The Road to Serfdom.

True socialism of the kind lovingly promoted by the *New York Times* requires that all economic resources of the nation be collectively controlled by government ownership or by regulation. Social justice being defined as equality of income, the Federal government must roughly double income taxes to bring the United States up to par with other socialist nations.

The Democratic Party's presidential candidates, all liberal-progressive-socialists, have not explicitly acknowledged that goal, but Senator Hillary Clinton's recent pronouncements make clear the direction in which she intends to head if elected.

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**E-mail the
Editor**

Atonement

by Spencer Warren

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Atonement is a wonderful, impassioned, often brilliantly directed movie. I consider needlessly giving away plot details a capital offense and instead will try to focus on the talent and imagination that make this film so beautifully realized on screen. It is adapted from the award-winning 2001 novel of the same title, by the acclaimed British author Ian McEwan. Reviewing the novel in Britain's *Guardian* newspaper in 2001, Geoff Dyer perceptively commented "that it is difficult to give an adequate sense of what is going on in the novel without preempting – and thereby diminishing – the reader's experience of it." The same applies to the film, which is meant as high praise for director Joe Wright and screenwriter Christopher Hampton.



Atonement is a love story with a lot more. The best part is what we may call the first of the film's three acts. It takes place on a hot summer's day in the gorgeous English countryside in 1935, at the grand country home (i.e. mansion) of the Tallis family. Briony (Saoirse Ronan) is the fanciful but ordered and disciplined (or so she appears) 13-year-old daughter who has precociously just completed her first play, an impetuous, idealistic romance titled *The Trials of Arabella*. Cecilia (Keira Knightley) is the big sister, a slender, intense (chain smoking), dark-haired beauty – like many English girls of her type, proper on the surface, but seething underneath. Robbie (James McAvoy) is the non-aristocrat outsider, a servant's son who was able to attend Cambridge with Cecilia thanks to her father's kind support. The older brother, Leon, is coming with a friend for a simple dinner party, formal, of course (Keira Knightley's flowing green evening gown, perfect, shall we say, for hot weather, is the epitome of swank thirties style and, seen on her, is alone worth the price of admission).

In the course of the day and evening, Briony observes, by chance, certain encounters between Cecilia and Robbie she should not see and which she does not understand, but which she thinks she does understand. She also commits a very grave sin. All this sets off an avalanche of events that drives the story and the lives of the three protagonists in the course of future years to an affecting climax.

From the first minute of this film, one knows it is special, a trait often found with accomplished directors. One's attention is immediately riveted by the intense realism of the acting (not least the young Briony); the natural feeling of time and place created by the soft cinematography, period costumes and Cecilia's short, thirties hair style; the rich, but unobtrusive, production design (lots of chintz); the unusually sophisticated, understated musical score that underlines the story; and the telling concentration and editing of each shot and scene. From the outset, we feel we know each character well. And the young director Joe Wright does this without the tacky close-up, "in your face" pounding manner of direction so typical today; he lets the characters live and breath in real space, allowing the action to develop naturally and subtly, without needless effect, from one scene to the next. And he is one contemporary director who is a master of the visual essence of filmmaking, avoiding endless, static head-to-head dialogue. Indeed, the entire first section of the film is a tribute to Wright's talent, whose second feature film this is (following *Pride and Prejudice* in 2005), and to screenwriter Hampton. It is a *tour de force* of outstanding filmmaking which should be seen in a movie theater, not in the confined space of a DVD.

The second part of *Atonement* brings us to the Second World War: It is 1940, Hitler's Panzers are thrusting across France, and Britain soon will be left standing alone. Cecilia and Robbie find themselves engulfed by the turbulent events. They are just where they are in the maelstrom (again,

I do not wish to give away anything) because of chance events five years before and because of what Briony did.

The battle sequence is a bit too long and not up to the intense, concentrated level of the film's first part (plus, as usual, the digital special effects of war look a bit cheesy compared to the painting and other artistic special effects of pre-computer Hollywood at its best). But Wright has a number of lovely shots in London that stay in one's memory. In one, Cecilia and Robbie briefly, desperately, silently touch hands in a crowded coffee shop. (This scene brings to mind the classic 1946 British romance, *Brief Encounter*, in which the separately married man (Trevor Howard) and woman (Celia Johnson) are compelled to steal their precious moments together in public places.) In another scene, we see the couple embracing, from a distance, looking up from the road through the window of their second-floor flat. Wright likes to use distance to make the emotion understated, which requires the audience to use its imagination and thus makes the emotional impact more powerful – this was standard in classic movies but is unusual in a director nowadays.

Atonement at times employs an unusual narrative technique involving flash-forwards, an example of non-linear narration found sometimes in modernist and post-modernist literature and film, which allows the author or director to examine the same "reality" from the perspectives of different characters. This technique allows the author or director to take us into the minds of the characters, seeing things from their subjective point of view. In contrast, classic literature and pre-sixties films tend to present one simple "objective" perspective. Further, faithful to the book, the film employs an astonishing plot twist which makes the finale quite simply overpowering.

In short, *Atonement* culminates in a traditional moral catharsis, although it is one that leaves us with ambiguity. We leave the film asking questions about whether the wrongdoer has atoned for her wrongdoing, what is atonement, whether one can atone through one's art, and whether we should forgive her. *Atonement* is a moral film for the new century, and the kind of film that fully deserves to win the Academy Award for best picture, for which it has been nominated (along with six other nominations).

Spencer Warren is ConservativeBattleline.com's media critic.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Rush and the Reagan Future

by Lisa Fabrizio

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

As [one](#) left-wing blogger put it, "Republicans are a collection of 'Lost Boys' right now, desperately looking for a national leader in the wake of the Bush disaster." Juan Williams on Fox News Sunday rejoiced that "there's not a re-assembling of the Reagan Coalition."

From the right, movie critic and radio talk-show host [Mike Medved](#) has concluded that, "The big loser in South Carolina was, in fact, talk radio: a medium that has unmistakably collapsed in terms of impact, influence and credibility because of its hysterical and one-dimensional involvement in the GOP nomination fight," going on to explain that, "[John] McCain and [Mike] Huckabee are both decent and principled conservatives."

I don't know about you, but a Republican who recently [called](#) the U.S. Constitution "a living breathing document" and another who is the icon of those who seek to curtail political free speech don't represent my idea of conservatism.

In a charming piece titled, [Ronald Reagan Is Still Dead](#), Frank Rich opines: "The G.O.P. presidential field's lack of demographic diversity by age, gender, ethnicity or even wardrobe, let alone race, is simply the leading indicator of how out of touch its brand has become."

So far we've heard that the Reagan Coalition is dead, conservatism is in tatters and the influence of talk radio giants like Rush Limbaugh has gone belly up. As to the first charge, it's true that none of the current roster of candidates is Ronald Reagan; but that's akin to saying that the GOP is no longer the party of Lincoln because there's no Honest Abe in the race. What has changed is that, just as we have let the opposition obscure the fact that it was Republicans, and not Democrats, who supported and passed the Civil Rights Act, we have also allowed them to define conservatism for us.

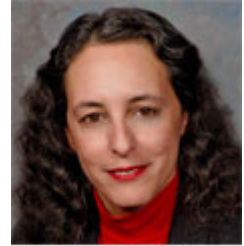
So why are McCain and Huckabee garnering all the ink and airwaves? The answer is simple: conservatism is not dead. If it was truly dying, its opponents would do more to attack its principles and tenets instead of propping up its false practitioners on the basis of their personal magnetism or populist allure.

If the Reagan Revolution is stalled in this election cycle, it is because those at the head of the movement have stopped emphasizing its personal appeal to the average American. This is not the fault of Limbaugh--who is rightly perturbed that he must constantly spell out a candidate's conservative bona fides or lack thereof--but of those who forget that conservative ideals can resonate with voters in a way that liberalism cannot.

While folks who listen to Limbaugh can proclaim their core beliefs from the rooftops, liberal 'values' must be slowly indoctrinated into the mainstream. This is why liberal talk radio is such a failure. Except for their radical base, not many people can take the left-wing mantra straight up. To succeed, they must cloak their message in pleasant euphemisms like 'choice' and 'equal rights'.

Whatever polls may say, the majority of the American people do not embrace higher taxes, the culture of perpetual victimhood, government intervention in their lives, the taking of innocent life and the defeat of our military at the hands of those who would see us all dead. The first candidate who speaks up for these liberal positions straight out rather than using euphemisms can prove that Reagan conservatism is dead. Otherwise, it is all media mush.

[Lisa Fabrizio](#) is a columnist who hails from Connecticut.



Lisa Fabrizio

**E-mail the
Editor**

Feds Out of Schools

by Alan Caruba

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One of President Bush's legacies that will be judged harshly in the future is his No Child Left Behind (NCLB) program that presumably was going to bring America's school systems up to a national standard of performance.

The first mistake, however, was made in 1979 when President Carter signed the Department of Education into existence. The Constitution recognizes that education is the business of the States and local communities. Not once is education ever mentioned as a responsibility of the federal government.



Alan Caruba

NCLB is one of those horrid monster federal programs that is always devoted to noble goals, spends tons of money, and achieves nothing of value.

EdWatch, a non-profit organization has been struggling for years to put the spotlight on a whole range of awful things being done to children in our schools, from encouraging the drugging of students deemed "over-active" to the introduction of a United Nations program teaching a one-world concept in conflict with the values of national sovereignty.

The Act is up for reauthorization and, as of this writing not much is happening. Chairman George Miller of the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee has been circulating changes designed to combat what he calls "the soft bigotry of low expectations." That is clever rhetoric, but all parents and all teachers have high expectations. NCLB is the great leveler of expectations.

Most certainly NCLB, for all its threats of retribution against any school that failed to improve, has proven "more shadow than substance" according to an article in U.S. News & World Report.

Equally damning is the revelation by the Cato Institute's Andrew J. Coulson, director of the Institute's Center for Educational Freedom, who recently wrote that, "While NCLB hasn't improved achievement or closed the gaps, it has succeeded in making public schools far more expensive to operate...we seem to have wasted almost \$100 billion since NCLB was enacted."

In effect since 2001, the nation's school administrators and teachers have long since learned how to game the NCLB system, but the losers are the students. Whether it is students for whom English is a second language and need extra help or whether it is exceptional students, both end up losing out because NCLB forces a single standard of proficiency on all students and schools.

Tom DeWeese of the American Policy Center points out that NCLB (1) forces teachers to 'teach to the test' rather than raise student achievement levels; (2) enforces accountability to federal agencies rather than to parents, voters, and the local community; (3) is a federal curriculum robbing local control of schools; (4) requires yearly progress demonstrating all students achieve at a certain level, thus insuring that certain levels will either be impossible for every student to achieve or so low as to be meaningless. Or both. And, finally, (5) NCLB insures compliance with international United Nations programs that have no place in U.S. classrooms.

Anyone who has ever taught will tell you that students learn at their own rates and, in urban schools, students face a wide range of obstacles beginning with broken families and dangerous neighborhoods. As U.S. News & World Report notes, "To be fair, most schools are not failing. But federal auditors recently found that the number of schools facing federal sanctions is growing. This affects more than two million children, about eight percent of all federally funded schools."

If a school is failing, that's the chief concern of the local board of education. It should not be subject to some federal program. The amount of money the federal government spends on education is low compared to the amount spent at the state and community level. Education is one of the prime elements of property taxes throughout the nation. These are local matters.

The intrusion of the federal government into the education of children is just one more example of how big government has a genius for making anything worse than before.

Accountability for education should be to parents, voters, and taxpayers. NCLB literally removes the power of those most concerned from being involved in the process of their children's education.

Finally, as noted, the goal by 2014 of having all students achieve a certain level is either going to be impossible or be set so low as to be meaningless, or both.

The best thing that Congress can do is to admit NCLB is a bad, flawed, failed program that should be discontinued. The worst prospect will be that more money will be thrown at it and the education of America's children will be laid waste when Congress reauthorizes it.

Alan Caruba writes a weekly column posted on the website of The National Anxiety Center, www.anxietycenter.com. He blogs at <http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com>.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Malpractice Solved

by John Goodman

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You are going to be a Good Samaritan. You are about to become a kidney donor so that someone else can live. The odds are in your favor. Only about 2 out of 10,000 fail to survive the operation.

Still, what if you were one of the two? What happens then? Under the current system, there are only two options. Neither is very attractive.

On one hand, your spouse, children, heirs, et al., could hire a lawyer, subpoena documents and take depositions to see if malpractice has occurred and compensation is due them. Or they could accept the financial and emotional loss stoically - forever wondering if your death was preventable.



John Goodman

Fortunately, your friends at the National Center for Policy Analysis have discovered a new and better alternative. Prior to your surgery, you are asked to sign a contract with these terms:

1. You agree to waive your right to pursue any malpractice claim.
2. If you fail to survive the operation, your family gets a check for \$1 million. No lawyers, no courtroom, no judges, no jurors - just a cool million, no questions asked.
3. For pennies on the dollar (out of your pocket), you can make the compensation even larger, say, \$2, \$3 or \$4 million.
4. The hospital pledges to make all safety records public; and to facilitate comparisons, they are available at a special Web site.

Voila! Problem solved. Can it get any better than that?...Well...as it turns out...it can.

You go to the Web site and compare. There you discover that other hospitals offer larger amounts of compensation in case of an adverse event. In fact, Hospital B offers \$2 million if you fail to survive. Upon further investigation, you learn why. Your chances of dying at Hospital A (your original choice) are twice as high as at B. So if Hospital B pays the same insurance premium as Hospital A, it can offer twice as much.

You have your procedure done at Hospital B. Fortunately, it's a success and another five months go by. Then out of mere curiosity you return to the Web site and make an amazing discovery. All the hospitals are now offering the same compensation for kidney transplant fatalities. The reason: they now all have the same safety record.

Think about that. In less than six months, market incentives have accomplished what all the RWJ demo projects, Commonwealth studies, Health Systems Change conferences, HHS press releases, Newt-Hillary political alliances, and hectoring, harping, bullying, shaming, niggling, nagging speeches, editorials and op-ed pieces have not been able to accomplish since the dawn of time. (Okay, it only seems that long.)

Here's the basic idea: hospitals and doctors can get out of the malpractice system completely (other than for gross negligence) by agreeing to compensate patients for rare, unexpected adverse health events. The legislature decides (or sets up a procedure for deciding) in advance what the minimum compensation must be. To pay off the claims, providers purchase episode-specific insurance. The insurers (not bureaucrats, not lawyers, not even patients) then become the true monitors of safety - charging premiums that accurately reflect expected outcomes.

In no time at all, bad doctors and bad medical practices will vanish. They will be priced out of the market by insurance premiums they cannot afford to pay. Malpractice becomes very rare; high quality and safety become the norm; patients and their families get compensated, regardless of the cause of their injuries; and trial lawyers can go earn an honest living.

John Goodman is President of the National Center for Policy Analysis in Dallas. For the NCPA study on malpractice reform, go to: <http://www.ncpa.org/pub/bg/bg163/bg163.pdf>

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Editor**

More Oil Than Arabia

by Dennis Avery

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

Scientists said recently in the journal *Nature* they can radically speed up the underground bacterial fermentation that turns Canada's tar-like Athabasca sands into natural gas at far less cost and with far less environmental pollution. This is huge global news because the world has about six trillion barrels of such heavy oil, more than 20 times the proven oil reserves in Saudi Arabia. They're focused in Canada's Athabasca, in Venezuela's Orinoco tar belt, and in the oil shale of the U.S. Rocky Mountains. All may be economically recoverable with bacterial refining.



Dennis T. Avery

Dr. Steve Larter of the University of Calgary says understanding how anaerobic bacteria ferment heavy oil into clean-burning methane underground opens the door to recovering the gas from deeply buried oil sands. "The main thing is you'd be recovering a much cleaner fuel," he says. "Methane is, per energy unit, a much lower carbon dioxide emitter than bitumen."

A separate family of microbes that produces CO₂ and hydrogen from partly-degraded oil offers a way to capture the CO₂ from the tar sands as methane, for burning in a closed-loop system would keep the CO₂ out of the atmosphere.

Larter's research team combined microbiological studies, lab experiments and oilfield case studies to demonstrate the anaerobic degradation of oil into methane. The findings offer the potential of "feeding" the microbes and rapidly accelerating the gas production process. Says Larter, "Instead of 10 million years, we want to do it in 10 years. We think it's possible. We can do it in the laboratory. The question is can we do it in a reservoir? "

No longer would huge diesel shovels have to dig up three tons of sand for each ton of heavy oil recovered. Nor would refiners inject expensive steam to liquefy the heavy oil so it can flow to the surface. With bacterial refining, the tar, and the contaminating sulfur, can be left deep underground—along with most of the sand.

The oil-eating bacteria have been used for some years to clean up contaminated soils and lagoons near oil refiners. Lab results have been encouraging, and the team expects to do field tests as early as 2009.

At almost the same moment, a Penn State professor said drilling newly-feasible horizontal gas wells across the Marcellus black shale in northern Appalachia could earn the U.S. a trillion dollars worth of additional clean-burning energy. The rock deposits run from southern New York westward through Pennsylvania into West Virginia and Ohio.

Dr. Terry Engelder says the vertical fractures in the Marcellus shale can't effectively be tapped with vertical wells. A horizontal well costs three times as much, but can collect gas from dozens of the fractures. He says the horizontal wells could bring in 50 trillion cubic feet of gas, the equivalent of a Super Giant gas field.

Eco-activists have been telling us we should renounce fossil fuels because "they're nearly gone anyway." However, the U.S. has centuries worth of coal that could be burned in "clean" high-tech systems. Bacterial refining and Dr. Engelder's horizontal drilling offer other examples of high-tech energy. Cambridge Energy Research Associates predicted in June that world oil production would rise another 30 percent by 2017, with nearly half of the increase from unconventional sources such as natural-gas liquids.

Man-made global warming alarmists have failed to offer any cost-effective substitute for coal, oil and nuclear in base-load energy production. Solar and wind power are costly and erratic. Biofuels take too much land away from Nature. The problem is to bridge the energy gap between today and some as-yet-unproven energy technology for humanity's future.

Dennis Avery is a senior fellow for the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC and is the Director for the Center for Global Food Issues. (www.cgfi.org) He was formerly a senior analyst for the Department of State. He is the co-author of Unstoppable Global Warming Every 1500 Hundred years

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Editor**

What Kind of U.S. Culture?

by S.T. Karnick

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

It is a truism that the right has been losing the culture for the past few decades. Since the end of World War II, the American culture has trended toward ever-greater promotion of narcissism, self-expression, antinomianism, identity politics, and questioning of all conventions and authority. It has become an instrument for the devaluation of all values.



What kind of culture we should want is actually an important question that has yet to be answered satisfactorily. Most conservatives simply want a conservative culture. That may sound very fine, but it is an impossibility, if only for practical reasons regarding the current situation, with liberals being embedded firmly in all of our cultural institutions.

Even more importantly, before we can change the political, moral, or social point of view of a culture we must understand the mechanisms by which a culture works. More than anything, a culture is a *place*. Like the economy, it's the market in which ideas and expressions of the human imagination are developed, fostered, and traded. A perceptive look at a particular culture will indeed reveal the moral and intellectual values of a society, and a culture fosters reform or decay of those values. It does so in the same way the economic marketplace indicates and creates a forum for people's creativity and diligence.

What we should want, then, is a free culture.

To see why this is so, we should start with a description of what a free culture looks like. The answer is that it's messy, vibrant, organic, ugly, beautiful, rich, and productive. A free culture looks like a free economy—it's by no means perfect, and it will not provide only what some particular group wants, but it will provide pretty much everybody with what they want if we allow it the freedom that such a flourishing requires. It's up to the culture, and the people of the society who constitute it, to provide a varied supply of products, and it's then up to social and spiritual leaders to encourage people to want the right things.

Two excellent examples of such cultures are Elizabethan and Augustan Britain, where a strong, relatively free culture widely reflected what is best in the human spirit through drama, music, prose, poetry, painting, and the like. Not everything in these cultures was salutary and beautiful, to be sure, but certainly they are impressive in their accomplishments, especially when compared to our current cultural miasma. These cultures, it should be noted, were relatively free, not perfectly free. Censorship of the theater was in place, for example, and public obscenity was illegal. Yet the freedom to trade ideas was paramount—in great contrast to our society today, where public obscenity is rampant but intellectual freedom is under continual assault.

Here the analogy to the economic market is useful. In the economic market, laws against usury, slavery, fraud, and other exploitative activities ensure that the freedom to pursue salutary activities is unimpeded by either government or private actions. In the culture, strictures against public obscenity, indecency, and the like serve the same function, for a culture that presents too many such temptations makes people slaves to their baser appetites. The question then becomes not whether these things can or should be regulated by society, but what is the proper amount of regulation. And the answer is, whatever gets us closest to being a truly free society.

Of course it's true that as many people in a free market will eat potato chips and buy blue jeans that are two sizes too tight, and in a free culture many will watch MTV, read romance novels, and listen to infantile music. But a free economic market gives people the variety and opportunity to make

good choices, and so it is with a free culture. A truly free culture will have much that we don't like, but it will have plenty of room for what we do like.

The most urgent question, then, in my view, is not whether we will have a good culture or a bad one, but is instead whether we shall have a free one or one controlled by a self-appointed class of our "betters." Even if the desire for a conservative culture is laudable, the forcible creation of a particular vision for the culture is the perpetual dream of statist who would control the population to fit their utopian schemes. We should not look upon the culture as perfectible. Just as statist and utopians hate and fear economic freedom, so also do they despise and dread cultural freedom. That is a leftist vision, not a conservative, liberal, or libertarian one.

A fundamental principle of the right is that people and society are not perfectible. Hence, we must bear in mind that the culture will always be ripe for improvement and will never be perfect, while we continually strive for its betterment.

While one danger is in viewing the culture from a statist perspective, many on the right (deep in the libertarian corner), actually revel in what is awful in the culture. They correctly celebrate variety, but they neglect to understand the need for a certain amount of order. Just as in the economy it is important for there to be protection from exploitation and damage to others' property, so too in the culture must some rules be in place, to prevent the innocent, particularly children, from being wantonly corrupted and exploited. And in our society, our Founders rightly placed that responsibility in the separate states and the local community, reflecting the thinking of the great Whig liberal Edmund Burke.

As the mention of Burke suggests, this is a vision that should make great sense to Christians, and although American Christianity has always had a strong strain of Puritanism, the similarity between cultural freedom and religious liberty should make the idea of a free culture strongly appealing to the Christian Right.

The idea of a free culture should appeal strongly to the fundamental values of the vast majority of Americans. The important question then becomes what kind of ideas we should seek to promote in such a culture. We certainly know what is wrong with our contemporary culture: the ever-greater promotion of narcissism, antinomianism, questioning of all conventions and authority, identity politics, and the devaluation of all values, as noted earlier. And all these things that seem so liberating actually tend to enslave people to their baser appetites. Far from either fostering real freedom or manifesting it, our current culture imposes a clear set of values on society, and they are not ideas that strengthen freedom but instead constrain it.

The answer to the current cultural regime is a *culture of liberty*. By fostering greater respect for personal liberty and encouraging a national conversation about it, a culture of liberty could work toward a long-lasting reversal of the deleterious social and political trends that have resulted from the intellectual and cultural ills of the past half-century. For example, a culture of liberty could promote community by allowing natural bonds to form among individuals as they recognize that the state is not the solution for their problems. It could strengthen marriage, family values, and personal responsibility by showing the terrible effects of government intervention in these areas and allowing people to see the disastrous consequences of dissolute personal behavior. It could increase the public's understanding of and respect for the social values that long underpinned American society, by allowing religious groups fair and open access to the public square.

In fact, many of these things are happening already and would benefit greatly from a concerted effort to foster a culture of liberty.

The press for a truly free culture would emancipate the right from popular accusations that we wish to control people through fear and force, which I have called the Theocracy Smear. Quite to the contrary, this vision does not need to be imposed by force, because it comports with reality and with human nature. It is Thomas Jefferson's political idea applied to culture: the understanding that the

truth has the best chance to thrive when ideas are allowed to be expressed freely. As the religious historian Philip Jenkins has noted, the United States is the most religious major nation in the entire world precisely because of our religious freedom—the imposition of a state church actually reduces attendance and belief. Just so with the culture: respect for both freedom and traditions will thrive in a truly free culture because they are both very good things.

The good news is that we are heading toward just such a culture, and there are ways we can encourage that transition and foster a culture of freedom. The development of [what I call the Omniculture](#) provides an opportunity to affect the culture as social and technological change break the bonds of the left-liberal establishment. An understanding of the Omniculture and how it works should prove valuable to those who want to foster a good, true, and attractive alternative to the anti-authority, antinomian, hyperindividualistic cultural products that currently flood our society. The pursuit of a culture of liberty is the critical first step in reclaiming the American culture.

S.T. Karnick is the editor of American Culture, where this first appeared. <http://stkarnick.com>

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Editor**

The Family Affiliation Culture

by Daniel Pipes

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Why is the Middle East so at odds with modern life, laggard in everything from literacy to standard of living, from military prowess to political development?

A profound new book by Philip Carl Salzman, professor at McGill University, with the deceptively plain title [Culture and Conflict in the Middle East](#) (Prometheus), offers a bold and original [interpretation of Middle Eastern problems](#).

An anthropologist, Salzman begins by sketching out the two patterns of rule that historically have dominated the Middle East: tribal autonomy and tyrannical centralism. The former pattern, he argues, is distinctive to the region and key to understanding it. Tribal self-rule is based on what Salzman calls *balanced opposition*, a mechanism whereby those Middle Easterners living in deserts, mountains, and steppes protect life and limb by relying on their extended families.

This immensely intricate and subtle system boils down to (1) each person counting on paternal relatives (called *agnates*) for protection and (2) equal-sized units of agnates confronting each other. Thus, a nuclear family faces off against another nuclear family, a clan faces a clan, and so on, up to the meta-tribal level. As the well-known Middle Eastern adage sums up these confrontations, "I against my brother, I and my brothers against my cousins, I and my brothers and my cousins against the world."

On the positive side, affiliation solidarity allows for a dignified independence from repressive states. Negatively, it implies unending conflict; each group has multiple sworn enemies and feuds often carry on for generations.

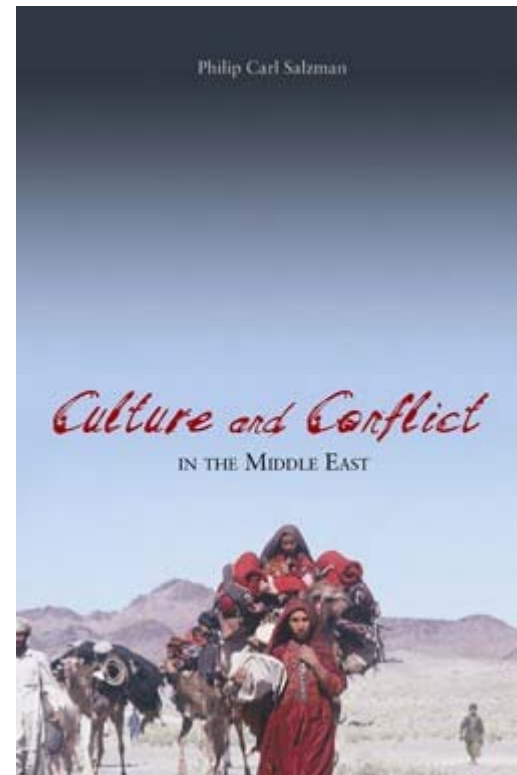
Tribal autonomy has driven Middle Eastern history, as the great historian [Ibn Khaldun](#) observed over six centuries ago. When a government faltered, large tribal confederations would form, leave their arid badlands and seize control of the cities and agricultural lands. Having seized the state, tribes exploited their power unabashedly to forward their own interests, cruelly exploiting their subject population, until they in turn faltered and the cycle started anew.

Salzman's tour de force lies in updating Ibn Khaldun, demonstrating how the dual pattern of tribal self-rule and tyrannical centralism continues to define life in the Middle East, and using it to explain the region's most characteristic features, such as autocracy, political mercilessness, and economic stagnancy. It accounts, likewise, for the war of annihilation against Israel and, more generally, Islam's "[bloody borders](#)" – the widespread hostility toward non-Muslims.

The dual pattern even explains key aspects of Middle Eastern family life. The imperative to aggregate more agnates than one's neighbors, Salzman argues, means developing tactics to outnumber their male progeny. This has several implications:

Marrying one's daughters to cousins, as a way for the family to benefit from their fertility.

Practicing polygyny, so as to benefit from the fertility of multiple women.



Scrutinizing other families' females, hoping to catch them in an immoral act, thereby compelling their men-folk to kill them and forfeit their fertility.

This last point suggests that balanced opposition largely accounts for the well-known Middle Eastern custom of "honor killing," whereby brothers murder sisters, cousins murder cousins, fathers murder daughters, and sons murder mothers. Significantly, the woman's indiscretions are tolerated within the family and lead to murders almost only when they become known outside the family.

More broadly, balanced opposition means the Middle East lacks abstract principles by which to measure actions "against general criteria, irrespective of the affiliation of particular actors." Instead, intense particularism requires a family member to support a closer relative against a farther one, regardless of who may be at fault. Tribesmen and subjects, not citizens, populate the region. That most Middle Easterners retain this us-versus-them mentality dooms universalism, the rule of law, and constitutionalism. Trapped by these ancient patterns, Salzman writes, Middle Eastern societies "perform poorly by most social, cultural, economic, and political criteria." As the region fails to modernize, it falls steadily further behind.

It can advance only by breaking the archaic system of affiliation solidarity. "This is possible not through the replacement of traditional groups by newly conceived groups [such as political parties], but by the replacement of groups by individuals." Individualism will make headway among Middle Easterners, however, only when "what they are for is more important than whom they are against."

That fundamental change may take decades or even centuries to accomplish. But Salzman's deep analysis makes it possible to understand the region's strange affliction and to identify its solution.

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

**E-mail the
Editor**

Serbian Lessons

by David Keene

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

The neoconservatives who have played so significant a role in shaping U.S. foreign policy in recent years tend to operate on the assumption that the peoples of various nations share our basic values and desires and will therefore react favorably to our magnanimous willingness to share or even impose those values on the world in which they live.

Indeed, they have managed at both the philosophical and policy levels to convince themselves that if we could just remake the world in our own image, people everywhere would be better off and we would see an end to the wars that have plagued us for as long as history has been written.

Indeed, they argue that the goal of creating a "democratic" world will lead to peace (because democracies don't make war on one another) and have in the process married an overreaching internationalism with our own nation's national interests. Thus, policies aren't analyzed with an eye to our own interests, but instead give priority to an abstract view of what might be "good" for all the peoples of the world.

The problem is that when a nation begins pursuing foreign policy goals based on interests other than its own, it is likely to begin meddling in the affairs of other nations in ways that stir animosity and lead to unforeseen consequences. That is precisely what's happening today not only in Iraq, but in the Balkans, where we've fought one war and may be providing the kindling that could lead to another.

During the course of the Balkan wars of the '90s, we decided that the Albanian majority in the Serbian province of Kosovo, having been mistreated by the Serbs who controlled the government in Belgrade, deserved not just protection, but independence. We have managed to convince ourselves not only that this would be good for them, but that the Serbs and others in the region will either come to share our support for independence or at least learn to live with it.

Kosovo is, of course, locationally disadvantaged in that it is surrounded by Serbia and has been a part of that nation since its formation. What's worse is the fact that the Serbs see Kosovo as the cradle of their civilization and religion. A Serbian Orthodox priest once tried to convey the importance of the troubled chunk of land to me by describing it as "Jerusalem cubed" and assuring me that any self-respecting Serb would die before allowing it to be taken from Serbia.

That sounds pretty unreasonable from an enlightened Western perspective, and it turns out that our policymakers have been pursuing a policy in the region based on the assumption that while the Serbs might not like to lose Kosovo, they'll eventually learn to live with whatever settlement is imposed on them because they'll want the economic gains the West can promise them.

That assumption, however, was proven wrong in recent legislative elections when more than 60 percent of Serbia's citizens went to the polls to defeat a "moderate" leadership friendly to Washington and turn their government over to a super-nationalist party that pledged to do whatever it has to do to protect the Serbian claim to Kosovo. Western media have publicized the more recent presidential election where the pro-Western incumbent president was re-elected but have underplayed the narrowness of the margin and have ignored that the presidency is weak compared to the legislature. More important, although he has said he will not use force, the new president also opposes Kosovo independence.



David Keene

The Serbs may not have many friends in the West, but Time magazine's Person of the Year is in their corner. Indeed, the controversy over Kosovo is seen by most observers here and abroad as one of the major reasons for the growing hostility between Washington and Moscow.

Kosovo, in the meantime, is today led by elected leaders of the paramilitary groups that have spent years fighting the Serbs and is prepared to declare independence within the next few months—which will precipitate a crisis in the region as great or greater than the one that led to so much bloodshed less than 20 years ago.

This might all have been avoided save for the tendency of United States policymakers to see the world as they would like it to be and to assume that other nations will act as we would like them to act.

Thus, less than a year ago, Time analyzed the situation in the Balkans for the benefit of interested Americans and concluded that while "Serbia's ultimate threat is that the secession of Kosovo would topple moderate nationalists in the government and replace them with ultra-nationalists from the Serbian Radical Party, thus ending democracy in Serbia and turning it, again, into a rogue state," that simply wouldn't happen.

Oops.

David Keene is the chairman of the [American Conservative Union](#).

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Editor**

Is the Problem Us?

by Thomas Lindaman

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

Is it just me, or have the media done a horrible job covering this election? Reading the online newspapers and magazines and watching the cable news coverage has been more painful than watching any of the recent "American Pie" sequels. I know journalistic standards have declined in recent years, but there's a big difference between declining and devolving. And from where I sit, the New York Times is only a couple steps up from the Weekly World News as far as journalistic quality is concerned.



Part of the reason is what the media do every national election. In order to generate interest in the coverage, the media love to set up a horse race mentality. Which candidate is ahead? Which candidate is starting to fall back? Which candidate will be turned into glue at the end of the election?

After coming in third in Iowa, reporters were wondering if Hillary would keep going. Likewise, after a first place finish in Wyoming and two second place finishes in Iowa and New Hampshire, these same reporters said Romney had to win Michigan or else he'd drop out. And in both cases, the talking heads and political experts nodded in complete agreement. One tiny problem: Both Clinton and Romney were leading in the delegate count when the "experts" were saying Clinton and Romney were done! That's like calling for a retreat when you outnumber the opposing army 1000 to 1.

Another reason for the poor election media coverage is the nature of the business itself. Being in the media, even as a special correspondent, can be highly competitive and bitter. It's like divorce court except that the people who don't get on camera don't have to give up half their stuff to the one who does. Once one gets "discovered" as a reliable source of information, it gets frightfully easy to create a psychological echo chamber where they stroke their egos.

But the most important reason for the declining media coverage might be us. Most Americans today don't want to take the time to stay on top of the political ins-and-outs because we have more important things to do, like being entertained. I'm surprised we haven't seen the following exchange on a cable news network:

ANCHOR: Welcome to CNN's coverage of Election 2008. I'm Antonio Cabrera, one of the top 16 finalists on the fourth season of "American Idol." Tonight, we'll be discussing the candidates' plans for illegal immigration, but first let's go over to Carmen Electra, who will give us the latest poll numbers. Carmen?

CARMEN: Thank you, Antonio. We talked to a bunch of people and of those people surveyed, Mitt Romney still leads the rest of the candidates in the "Candidate I'd Most Like To Make Love With."

The Founding Fathers intended for our government to be interactive, which means we have to do our homework. Relying on the media to do our homework for us is like cribbing off the dumbest kid in the class: you may get the occasional correct answer, but it will be completely by accident if you do.

Most likely, the media won't get any better at reporting and analysis because they have no desire to get better, so it's up to us to get smarter about the process. I know it can be boring, but it's what we need to do.

At least until the new season of "Survivor" starts. Then, all bets are off.

Thomas Lindaman is a Staff Writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. and NewsBull.com. The New Media Alliance is a non-profit (501c3) national coalition of writers, journalists and grass-roots media outlets. He is also Publisher of CommonConservative.com.

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Editor**

Stop Polar Bear Panic

by Chuck Cushman

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

Under intense pressure from radical environmentalists over the perceived threat of Global Warming, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne is dropping hints that under the Endangered Species Act, he will declare the Polar Bear a threatened species after the President's State of the Union Message announcing his concern, starting the regulatory ball rolling down the hill.



This decision would destroy jobs, undermine economic growth and destroy personal choice on the basis of conjecture and computer models. If the next President wants to trash the economy and our living standards and civil rights that is for him to decide. But President George W. Bush should not do it. No matter whether the next President is a Republican or Democrat, the voters will make whoever is elected pay if they make such a terrible decision.

This may seem unlikely to someone unfamiliar with the Endangered Species Act. But under the Act, any activity that is regulated by the Federal Government (because it affects air or water quality, for example) would be subject to further regulation on the grounds of greenhouse gases and potential effects on Polar Bears. That would mean facility emissions or modifications, expanded manufacturing capacity, increased shipping and a host of other activities would come under renewed scrutiny for new reasons. Remember: Virtually everything we do involves fossil fuels and greenhouse gases: 85% of our energy comes from fossil fuels. That means almost every heating, cooling, transportation and electricity generation decision will be affected. Utility and manufacturing companies will be required to slash their CO2 emissions – and be forced to raise their prices to cover those huge new costs.

But it won't stop there.

Every other source of carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases will also be regulated and restricted by environmental alarmists: bakeries, breweries, chicken and dairy farms, cattle ranches, dry cleaners, auto manufacturers and dealers, cement and other industrial facilities, and on and on. As their costs go up, so will your costs to heat and cool your home, drive your car, clothe your family and put food on the table. As companies seek ways to cut expenses, to cover GHG control outlays, they will trim their workforces or send jobs overseas.

Basic civil rights and individual freedoms will be hammered. Al Gore and John Travolta will still fly their private jets. But the rest of us will be told what and how much we can drive. How high or low we can set our thermostats. Where or whether we can go on vacation. What we can put on the dinner table. Blue collar, poor, fixed income and minority families will get hit hardest. But everyone's jobs, freedoms and cost of living will be affected.

And in the end it won't matter one whit. China and India will continue to emit more and more carbon dioxide. And our climate will continue to change, just as it has repeatedly over the ages – from natural causes.

The fact is, the entire notion of catastrophic climate change is based on nothing more than hypotheses, headlines, hype, hysteria, worst-case scenarios from climate change computer models – and the insatiable desire of bureaucrats and radical greens to eliminate fossil fuels and control our lives. Secretary Kempthorne has no legal, factual or scientific basis for declaring that Polar Bears are threatened or endangered. There is limited danger to arctic habitats, and very little evidence of

imminent threat to Polar Bears. Computer models, hype, headlines and pressure tactics are not evidence.

Average Alaskan temperatures are NOT climbing. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the January-June statewide average temperature for Alaska was 0.55 degrees Fahrenheit colder in 2006 than the 1971-2000 average. "Polar Bears are not going extinct," insists Dr. Mitchell Taylor, a biologist with the government of Nunavut, in Canada's Northwest Territory. According to Dr Taylor, Polar Bears do not even "appear to be affected" by climate change. They adapt well to changing conditions and prey opportunities.

Moreover, there are enough that the Nunavut government allows hunters to kill up to 500 Polar Bears a year, to preserve other wildlife species that the bears eat, and to generate revenue. This can cause temporary declines in bear populations, which has nothing to do with extinction. But even with this hunting, of the 13 Polar Bear populations in Canada, 11 are stable or increasing in number, according to Dr. Taylor. Overall, there are some 22,000 Polar Bears in the wild.

Weather and temperature swings are the norm - not something out of the ordinary. By selecting the 1975-2000 warming period, alarmists were able to project a trend that – if it continued – would lead to catastrophic Arctic warming. But this is junk science at its worst. It is a completely bogus foundation for public policies that will affect jobs, prices and lives all over the United States. If those scientists had selected a different time period, they would get a completely different result. Between 1938 and 1966, Arctic temperatures fell 6 degrees F. A trend-line based on that would have projected temperatures plummeting by 22 degrees in just one century! They would have reached the temperature of dry ice (minus 109 F) in just five centuries. That would really impact Polar Bears!

Using short-term trend lines as the basis for public policy is completely bogus.

Under the ESA, a species is "threatened" if it is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. That does not mean 40, 50 or 100 years from now. It does not mean based on worst-case scenarios conjured up by computer models that can't even provide accurate climate forecasts one year in advance – or even the weather two weeks from now. It does not mean for a small portion of a range that extends across most of the Arctic, from Alaska to Canada, Siberia and Finland.

The only factual basis for all this hysteria is a short-term warming trend, which many scientists say is due to air and ocean currents associated with the recurrent Pacific Decadal Oscillation. What we are seeing today is little different from the warming that occurred in the 1920s and early 1930s. The Polar Bears survived that warming – as well as four or more Ice Ages and warm interglacial periods between them. They will survive this warming ... and the next cooling period, too.

In fact, recently discovered fossils from Svaldard, Iceland show that Polar Bears survived at least one interglacial that was warmer than the current one. The 130,000-year-old fossil suggests that "maybe we don't have to be so worried about the Polar Bear," said Professor Olafur Ingolfsson.

Another recent study found that that the key to Polar Bear survival is restoring the fat they lose during winter hibernation. They do so by dining on young seals – a task that is made easier by lack of snow cover and ice. Moreover, warmer weather makes it easier for seals to find fish, and more CO2 in the atmosphere increases algae growth and biomass, which means there are more fish. So moderate warming is more likely to increase Polar Bear populations, than limit them.

That's why climate alarmists keep screaming about computer models and their supposed predictions of climate disaster, Arctic meltdown and Polar Bear extinction. But those models and scenarios are worthless and must not be allowed to justify government policies that will impact jobs, families and living standards, for no environmental benefit.

Chuck Cushman is Executive Director of the American Land Rights Association

**E-mail the
Editor**

A Heart For Men?

by Carey Roberts

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Ladies, when was the last time you visited a nursing home? Did you wonder why nearly all the residents were women? The reason is simple – men meet their maker 5 years sooner than the fairer sex.

It wasn't always that way. Back in 1920, men and women had almost identical life spans. But the looming threat of heart disease widened that gap. American men now have heart disease death rates that are 50% higher than women's. (The federal report *Health, United States, 2007*, Table 29 reveals the death rates are 268 in men, compared to only 177 in women).

Most persons have never heard of Lois Verbrugge, a researcher at the University of Michigan. A few years ago Dr. Verbrugge did a study on elderly women. She found that compared to their married counterparts, single elderly women are *four times more likely to end up in a nursing home*.

Which means after your husband dies of heart disease, you are four times more likely to be removed from your home and taken to an institutional setting to spend your last days in medicated bliss. That's what happened to several ladies I've known.

And what about men who keel over from heart disease in their 40s and 50s? What happens to their wives and children?

Last year my friend Bill died from a debilitating heart problem. His wife never wanted to be the family breadwinner. That's what she's doing now.

And Randy died suddenly while jogging one morning. His two sons, now in their 20s, will never again experience a father's love.

So men are at far greater risk of heart disease, and their premature deaths portend institutionalization and financial hardship for their wives.

You'd think the American Heart Association would have programs designed especially to help men. They don't.

But not to worry, the AHA does have a gender-specific program – "Go Red for Women."

That's right, the Heart Association designated February 1 as National Wear Red Day. Here's the latest fashion tip from the AHA:

"National Wear Red Day has its own dress code. Wear your favorite red clothes or accessory – a red blouse, a red dress pin, a fabulous red handbag."

That's not all: "Put on red lipstick, or sport a red tie and red socks. Go red in your own fashion show to show your support for women and the fight against heart disease."

[www.goredforwomen.com/national_wear_red_day.aspx]

Really folks, I'm not making this up!

So when you pay a visit to grandma at the nursing home, she's gonna feel a whole lot better if you're sporting red socks and red shoes. And that widow who lives down the street – be sure to remind her to pull out that fabulous red handbag she stowed away after the funeral.

To complete the irony of Go Red for Women, show her a tribute card, courtesy of the AHA: "Go Red for Women – American Heart Association – A donation has been made in honor of [fill in name of former husband, father, brother, or son]."

Seriously, when it comes to the real needs of real women, it's obvious the pointy-headed execs at the AHA don't have a clue. So it's up to women bring the Heart Association to its senses.

Carey Roberts is a staff writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. The New Media Alliance is a non-profit (501c3) national coalition of writers, journalists and grass-roots media outlets.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Debating Future Conservatism

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

Editor: Regarding "Echoes of Future Conservatism," Peggy Noonan appears to have been more or less correct when she noted (in the Wall Street Journal--late Jan 2008) that the Bush presidency has destroyed the Republican Party and that one must know the cause before one can fix the problem. The voting on 'Super Tuesday' 2008 confirms that the GOP is nothing but followers of George Bush: a rump-party whose entire candidate field received fewer votes in several states than did the Democratic winner alone. John McCain's electoral chances will fall to zero if he fails to impress conservatives with his key advisor selections. Selecting lousy advisers and cabinet people in 2001 was the critical point of failure for the Bush presidency. Brian Lynch



Young Americans for Freedom Board of Directors, 1964

Editor: 'Is the conservative movement dead?' The answer is no, the movement is alive and well. What we may be witnessing however is the beginning of the death of a political party. I don't make that statement lightly or out of a sense of disloyalty. I simply see the handwriting on the wall. Strange how our political leaders are so oblivious to what is really going on! If this crop of candidates isn't a bombproof argument for small, strict-constructionist, constitutional government, I don't know what is. When we allow the federal government to go out of its defined bounds in order to defend some "implicit understanding" of "where America stands on the matter," we have historically gotten the "implicit understanding" of Earl Warren, William Brennan, and Ted Kennedy, and not of Barry Goldwater, the Founders, or Thomas Aquinas. As for the flag, I see no impediment to any state outlawing flag burning (of the U.S. flag), or requiring that the Confederate Battle Flag be flown above government buildings, for that matter. In that case, if we don't like it, we can leave. Eight years ago, the Democrat Party was comatose, on its deathbed. To use General Walters's term. Somehow George W. Bush and the "new" GOP have resuscitated the Democratic cadaver. And they've ruined our own party, and movement, and issues, to boot. Chris Manion.

Editor: Regarding "Echoes of Future Conservatism," I am a young conservative. I believe the IRS should be abolished today. It shouldn't be replaced with anything because there's no such thing as a "fair" tax. I believe in the abolition of nearly every federal agency, except Justice, State, War and Treasury. Four years ago, I was still in high school. I saw the mess that is our public school system. Read John Taylor Gatto; it is a mess because the government runs the school. There are no solutions except for wholesale and complete privatization. I am a Christian; I believe in Christian values. I am so dedicated to the tenets of Christianity that Pat Robertson's moral relativism makes me cringe. I am against abortion, and I do not believe that marriage ought to be a state institution. I believe the 2nd Amendment is the most important. I am tired of fake conservatives telling me that George Bush keeps me safe: the only thing that keeps me safe is my AR-15 in the case under my bed. I believe in a free economy, strong families, and a strong national defense. I do not fear Islamic-fascists. If the abolition of the Patriot Act means we have to fight the terrorists on our soil (though I can think of no reason why it should), I say bring it on. The only thing that scares me more than death is slavery. For these reasons, I support Ron Paul. A country that does not care

about the savings of its young, up and coming entrepreneurs like myself, who will print and borrow money until repayment becomes impractical has lost its way. A country that cedes power to Washington in order to achieve "safety" has lost its place as the safe harbor of freedom. And a party that treats our greatest living politician – the only man who agrees with me on all of the issues – like a second class citizen has lost its soul. You know exactly who I am talking about. I am a conservative, and I am having a great deal of difficulty finding any of those people on television and radio that claim to support conservative principles. So I ask those of you who do not support Ron Paul the same question that Paul is so often undeservedly asked: When did you become a liberal, and why won't you admit it, fix it and get on with it? Allan Juraneck

Editor: "Echoes of Future Conservatism" is a very well done piece. And good commentary by the editor as well. Roger Ream

Editor: After reading your excellent on-line website magazine's "Echoes of Future Conservatism" and many of the responses, I wanted to make a comment or two. I was never really engaged in political activities or even cared much about them before the mid 1980s. I was too busy earning a living and had learned to "trust my government" at a very early age. As I accumulated some wealth I noticed that the folks in government seemed to want more and more of that wealth and did not appear to care if it was wasted or whether I even approved of how it was spent. Furthermore, they were actually making it harder and harder to function in my small business. Needless to say, I became much more interested in political activities. I have read somewhere that you can ignore politics, but politics will not ignore you. After reading some of the replies to your piece on conservatism I was struck by the intellectual blather that is constantly used in an attempt to label people. Every person has a mixture of conservative, liberal, libertarian etc. leanings depending on the subject at hand. Everything considered, there is not a dime's worth of difference between a Democrat or Republican politician today. They are all statist. Reagan did help with economic recovery through the eighties, but he also raised taxes several times, grew the size of government and showed himself to be a gun-grabber. If that is conservative then you've lost me. Oh yeah, the Soviet Union? It collapsed under its own weight as all empires have. You say that Ron Paul has the enthusiasm but not the whole message. What part is he missing? More government force? More intervention in the affairs of other countries? Too much trust in private citizens to run their own lives? Not enough invasion of individuals' privacy? Not spending ourselves into ruin fast enough? Does this mean that he is not conservative enough? Or do you mean Neo-Conservative message? What really got to me was reading criticism of Ron Paul concerning earmarks. Apparently some folks do not understand how an appropriation bill works. A bill can be voted against, but if it is passed there is nothing hypocritical about a representative attaching an earmark to return some of the money to his own district. It increases spending not one bit. I wonder where that money came from in the first place. Support for Ron Paul is growing and the so-called conservatives can argue about the fine points, but as Dr. Paul said to Sean Hannity, "You'll come around". I just hope it's not too late or we will have another Clinton in the White House. Only this time it will be with the new powers accumulated by our last king. God help us. Respectfully, William J. Frerking

Editor: In regard to your editorial "Echoes of Future Conservatism," at the present time the Republican Party is dead. It has lost its SOUL!!!! Many of the elected Representatives and Senators have gotten a bad case of Potomac Fever. The Fever is a common disease in Washington D.C. Our loss of Congress is greatly due to the Republican party and elected officials forgetting why they were elected and sent to Washington. And the present Republican candidates for the highest office in the world sound and act like Democrats. It is no surprise that interest in the presidential race is less than exciting for Republicans. If the Republican party is to grow and win and stay in office; they are going to have to build grass root organizations on the local levels from coast to coast. We cannot

wait every four years and try to find someone to run for office. We cannot rest on our victories. We have to persist in telling our story of conservatism on a daily basis. And constantly challenge the Democrats' policies. People must truly know the difference in conservative principles and liberal policy. There is a big difference, but much of John-Q Public does not know the difference and they have to be continuously educated on domestic and foreign issues. In other words we have to tell them over and over how and why conservative policy works the best for America. It is a huge undertaking, but it is worth all the time and effort for the good of our nation. Thank you for your time. Jim Allen, Bremen, Ga.

Editor: Kudos. Excellent article "Echoes of Future Conservatism ." I was saddened by Fred Thompson's late as well as ineffective campaign for he most represented the ideals I support. Ron Paul has some positive stands going for him but his foreign policy and support for legalization of drugs scare me. I believe we will be entering a liberal swing, much like when Jimmy Carter came to power. My only hope is that it will be short lived. Elizabeth Palazzolo

Editor: Re your "Echoes of Future Conservatism," the only "depressing" issue I see is that once again, we've been offered a so-called conservative candidate and we're swallowing hook, line and sinker the one "whose time has come". He's owed the highest office in the land because he spent time in a POW camp? Mitt Romney towers over John McCain and Mike Huckabee. The fact that people who call themselves Republicans are even considering a man who has annihilated the first amendment during the election period, who has pushed for amnesty for criminal immigrants, who talks a good game about cutting spending but votes for bigger more intrusive government whenever he can, who believes in gay marriage, affirmative action and race quotas, who's so afraid of being tough on terrorists he won't drip water down their noses for information that might save us from being blown up, and who has the temperament of an angry squirrel, is about as depressing as it gets. He may win the nomination thanks to traitors to the conservative movement, but I can tell you he won't win the presidency because the conservatives won't whore themselves again for another candidate who lacks the credentials of honest conservatism. McCain's the nominee? ... the Party's dead. RIP. Linda, Massachusetts

Editor: The OAF (old Americans for freedom) was a good read. It was nice to see in "Echoes of Future Conservatism," some thoughts of those who also served in the YAF vineyards. As a disappointed Thompson backer, I did want to let you know that I share your observations on the energy and commitment of the new people Ron Paul has been energizing. He's particularly energizing some here in Microsoft land -- we actually see Ron Paul for Pres signs along the roads and in a few yards! Nobody else has any -- though I would have been pounding in Thompson signs right after South Carolina if the vote had gone better. Their energy reminds me of my YAF days. And we matured behind Reagan, so hopefully we can keep their energy to boost the future of the limited government cause. We still have a challenge and a mission ahead. Eric Rohrbach

Editor: Regarding your views on Dr. Ron Paul's ideas on foreign policy in "Echoes of Future Conservatism," you obviously want to maintain the empire, with hundreds of bases and the massive number of American troops overseas thousands of miles away from our shores. And you want to spend like crazy, money we don't have, to maintain that empire facade, while we at home are horribly vulnerable to invasions, illegal, hostile, and not telling what else, and an economy that is under severe stress, to say the very least, and the huge unbearable expense of both. How much more can we sustain? I'm 60 years old, and I've seen and heard many people who call themselves "conservatives" and Dr. Ron Paul is the only TRUE, constitutional conservative who will look after the

best interests of us, working and middle class Americans; a people who have been brutally betrayed by the controlled leaders in both political parties--liberals and alleged 'conservatives' altogether. Disgusted, Madeline K. Carter

Editor: I am sickened by the way this election is playing out. I feel that voting for John McCain is like voting for a moderate Democrat and Hillary and Obama are like radical liberals. I no longer have a dog in this fight unless Mitt Romney can somehow pull an upset. I will probably decide to vote Right to Life or some other third party. J. Lucignano

Editor: I enjoyed reading the musings of many of the old Goldwater supporters from the Young Americans for Freedom. While attending school at the University of Southern California in the early 1970's, I became acquainted with several of them, including now Congressman Dana Rohrbacher. John McCarthy

[E-mail the Editor](#)

Tribute To Lev Dobriansky

by Chris Robling

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

Lev Dobriansky was a professor of mine at Georgetown. An economist and banking expert, he was – in Heilbroner's phrase, a "worldly philosopher." He never forgot that his point was to change the world. He set out to change the world Karl Marx helped create. One way he did so was by his two semester, eight hour course, "Soviet Economics." Throughout two-and-a-half decades of the Cold War, it was a mainstay of the foreign service school economics program.

One could begin to assay this particular source of Lev's influence by describing the students he attracted. Military officers in uniform, Soviet desk state department officers, CIA analysts and congressional aides all came.

As an economics major in Georgetown's college, I took it with graduates and undergraduates, as well as the "special students" from downtown.

All of us hung on his every word. It might as well have been titled, "Lev's history of economic activity in Russia and the Soviet Union." As a bald, muscular, 5' 5" Ukrainian with a deeply and sonorously New York-accented baritone that he used to merciless effect, Lev embodied a certain foreign bearing, which may best be described as "early Dniester Cossack hetman." "Taras Bulba of the economics department" comes to mind.

The voice was unmistakable. He accentuated vowels. For instance, my name, "Robling," pretty simple, on his tongue became a seven syllable bonanza:

"R-o-o-o-o-obbbllaaaaaeiiiiiiinggg...." He would trail off, giving me time to focus.

The course proceeded – as I recall – without a text. Lev would distribute photocopied articles, or sometimes "reports," the week before a lecture. Sometimes we had readings on reserve at the library. He was not forthcoming about the sources of his "reports," but he vouched for their accuracy.

Lev found no detail of Russian production, no insight into the productivity and ingenuity of the peoples of the Russian empire (prior to the Soviet period), no understanding of the failure of the Soviet policies too small, too obscure or too inconsequential for inclusion in his emerging depiction of a Potemkin façade, adorned with references to space-race achievement, fronting for a corrupt quagmire of indolence and waste, laced with innumerable instances of party-member privilege.

Even his contrasts were drawn in great relief. While the state- and community-farm systems were starving their own members for lack of crops, the plots – tiny arable parcels assigned to individuals for their private cultivation -- were feeding Russia.

His main thesis was that the Soviets put everything they had into defense and show-piece projects, but that in general, the incentive deficits, lack of capital formation and absence of foreign investment meant that as an economy, they were, in essence, an unsustainable third-world backwater.

We emerged from his final lecture, in which he concluded that any economy based on the denial of its citizens' natural rights will only achieve slave-labor outputs, and that's just what the Soviets have to show for theirs, having stood and applauded and known that we had witnessed a symphonic summary to two semesters of themes.

But Lev was horribly out of fashion. The smart set said the Soviets were doing well, better, in fact, than the west in certain standout areas, typically high-tech.

Conventional opinion said the Soviets' access to natural resources, from home and their then-successful adventurism, ensured an unstoppable economic machine producing sophisticated guns and passable butter.

This resources argument built its way into some analysts' recommendations to expect being overtaken by the Soviets economically, and to prepare for the ensuing U.S. and western decline.

Received wisdom said the Soviets' freedom from consumerism's demands was an undeniable strength – they needn't worry about making different types of shoes, so all those resources can be put into blitzing Western Europe through the Fulda gap! Or building a Bear Bomber, or defeating our MIRVed warheads! It's inevitable!

Not surprisingly, by the mid 1970s, adherents of such views saw Lev and some of his Georgetown colleagues as hopelessly out-of-date former scholars hanging on to their jobs because of tenure. They were considered rabid hack cold-warriors capable only of regurgitating old data that fit their preconceived and, frankly, quaint notions of human freedom's importance in the world.

"We know that all U.S. foreign policy emanates from Wall Street," the thinking went, "so we are simply as determinist as we say they are. We should drop the business basis of U.S. interventionism and support people's liberation movements now, before we are left behind . . ."

That passed for enlightened opinion at the foreign service school, c. 1976.

With students who had not taken Lev.

They did not know about his "reports." Or his reliance on current, if obscure, scholarship. They had no idea that on his near daily swims at the University Club Lev was speaking with congressmen, bureaucrats, think tankers and other scholars. His interlocutors had one overriding policy belief in common: That for western civilization to perdure, the Soviet Union must be vanquished.

But Lev, you see, knew how to do this and who could get it done.

Lev was one of the earliest supporters of Ronald Reagan I met. He knew Reagan personally. They had been acquainted for years, because Reagan cared deeply about one of Lev's creations: "Captive Nations Week."

Talk about a Cold War relic. Captive Nations Week, even by 1970s standards, sounded like a "duck and cover" filmstrip or a bomb shelter supply list. Hopelessly out of date, it was group whining after the colt had left the barn, completely futile.

Captive Nations Week in the mid 1970s was also embarrassing. Every year, there were new captive nations! The list only grew. We are losing! It all seems . . . inevitable. And dispiriting. Hopelessly un-smart set.

But not for Lev.

Year after year the faithful, the refugees, the dispossessed, the former-finance- minister-turned-restaurant owners, the dead-enders and the down-and-outers from the wildest assortment of far off, poorly known places, such as Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, Mongolia, Namibia, Rumania, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Cambodia, Laos, the Ukraine and many more. . . would gather one more time.

They would hear a speech, raise a flag, sing an anthem and cry for a homeland overrun, a hometown occupied and a home lost. They would weep. And then they would wander off -- back to their new homes, and their new jobs, and their new surroundings, wondering if anything they loved would ever again be visible and free.

The foreign policy establishment considered the Captive Nations to be "lost causes." With the possible exception of Cuba, there were no plans anywhere to win any of them back. We had not helped the Czechs in 1967. The Bay of Pigs was a disgrace. We did not help the Hungarians in 1957. The Berlin airlift was more than 25 years past. Congressional Democrats told President Ford he must abandon our allies in South Viet Nam. And Jimmy Carter told us our fear of communism was "inordinate." It was all very sad, yes, but what exactly was the point?

Lev knew the point. He started Captive Nations to keep memories alive. To keep faith with the enslaved. To show that the blandishments of freedom had not blinded us to the suffering of innocents abroad. To change the world.

And Ronald Reagan understood. He attended. He spoke and sang, cried and comforted. He remembered, and he would never forget. And in time, he would do something about it.

I do not know if what we heard in class, Reagan heard at the University Club. I do not know if Lev's "reports" came from unofficial official sources. I do not know that Reagan's knowledge of the rot within the Soviet economy was based on – or expanded by -- his friendship with Lev Dobriansky.

But I do know that Reagan's policy of building our arms to a point that the Soviets would collapse if they tried to equal us, and then doing it, and then watching the Soviets implode peacefully for the lack of goods, was the A+ answer to Lev Dobriansky's ultimate final exam.

What Reagan thought was every bit as out-of-step as what Lev taught. What Reagan did amazed the experts and, frankly, upended their quaint notions of inevitable decline.

What happened in the world was a reversal of the Captive Nations list in a period near delirious in its witnessing of humanity's sprint from the shadow of communism.

And I recall the commentary – the talking heads – and the op-eds, all amazed that the Soviets would deflate that way. How could it have happened? They were . . . inevitable!

Not if you had taken Lev Dobriansky's Soviet Econ, Mr. Expert. The rot Reagan used as his fulcrum from which to move our world had been vividly described as the exquisite corpse of communist dreams by Lev in 1977, 76, 75, 74 . . . Perhaps you had been distracted by supporting a liberation movement that created another Captive Nation? Lev, on the other hand, was simply upholding the dignity of communism's enslaved millions.

Reagan also remembered Lev. Had Reagan been elected twenty years earlier, who knows? Lev might have been his Vernon Walters, his Bill Casey, his Jack Matlock or perhaps his Jeanne Kirkpatrick. But by the 1980s, Lev was near retirement. In one of the greatest plum-book postings of all time, President Reagan named Lev ambassador to . . . the Bahamas.

In his later years Lev again busily remembered – and called on us to do the same. He became a leading advocate for a Victims of Communism Memorial, now installed near the U.S. Capitol.

He died on the last day of January 2008. His daughter Larissa, who inherited the female version of that voice, is an attorney in Washington. His second daughter, Paula, is undersecretary of state for global affairs and democracy. A Harvard Ph.D., Paula was trained in Soviet affairs, served at the National Security Council for two presidents and has tirelessly aided the march to freedom, respect for natural rights and democracy in almost every nation her dad once identified as "Captive."

Lev showed us -- in his days out of fashion – how remembering can be revolutionary.

He remembered what the peoples of the Soviet Empire could do – before Commissars told them what they had to do. He remembered that economic systems must be judged in contexts that go beyond land, labor and capital to include natural rights, freedom and the rule of law. He

remembered the Captive Nations. He remembered the Victims of Communism. And he showed us that living in the "now," with the smart set, is living without memory, and is its own form of debilitating captivity.

For a course in Soviet Econ, not a bad set of lessons. As a guide to the history of the world for the 25 years that followed my taking his class, it was one of the greatest blessings of my life.

Lev Dobriansky, hetman, thank you. God bless you.

Chris Robling is a principal at Jayne Thompson & Associates in Chicago.

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Editor**

Reader Comments

Issue 101 - February 13, 2008

**CONSERVATIVE
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Editor's Note: Reader responses to last week's editorial

"Echoes of Future Conservatism" may be found in this issue as the first item in the Readers' Backfire section at: [Debating Future Conservatism](#)

Editor: The article "Care of the Wounded Warrior" by Patt Maney is excellent. We need to use this information to push our Government to action. Keep up your good work. Bob Ayers

Editor: Patt Maney's "Care of the Wounded Warrior" makes me realize, having served my country in the Army for four years and having completed 28 years working for a utility company and raising two wonderful sons who have gone beyond college and are in the working world (one of which is playing professional baseball), that I have been blessed by not having to endure the agony and suffering that our wounded warriors are now experiencing. I am fully prepared to "move on" into a new career path, if such an opportunity exists, that would enable me to assist in the effort to stabilize the lives of our wounded warriors in any way. Being fully vested in my utility company's retirement plan, it is now apparent to me that I can be of use in another capacity - that being involved in the proper treatment and compassion that needs to be shown to our nation's heroes. Please advise if any such possibilities exist. I have come to know a wounded warrior at Fort Riley, Kansas recently who was awarded the Silver Star for heroism in battle but has suffered traumatic injury to his left hand and arm, yet he perseveres and is still serving on active duty assisting the Warrior Transition Unit, newly formed at Fort Riley. He has served as an inspiration to me that I can do the same thing - become involved in helping our soldiers most in need. I would like nothing better than to become involved in that effort. Sincerely, LD

Editor: DITTO. Patt Maney could not have said it better in "Care of the Wounded Warrior". I have seen these problems first hand for over six years. John Miska

Editor: Thanks to Lisa Fabrizio for writing such an on-point article, "'TV Commercials Attack.'" I, too, loathe the NY State Lottery commercial which glamorizes both rap and the mafia-type Italian. There was one which featured a member of the Soprano's cast whose real first name is Vincent. He makes a crack saying: you don't know what I had to do to make that kind of scratch. I don't watch MTV or VHI but even so, I am appalled that Planned Parenthood would have such commercials on TV. And I totally agree with her assessment that if some group tried to push for nuclear energy, the suits at the networks would go "nuclear" and make sure such commercials would never see the light of day. Emilia Bellofatto

Editor: In regard to Lisa Fabrizio's "'TV Commercials Attack,'" I took TV out of my home over two years ago. The reasons were: #1--profanity, and filth, # 2--no choice of channels, have to accept a

"package," #3--I will not pay to watch almost continuous commercials trying to sell me stuff I do not want and never have wanted. The actual programming is so little, not much is missed! I have found that life without TV does exist and with better quality! Carl Markmiller

Editor: Regarding Warren Huston's article, "AP Study Funded by Soros," the reason the AP and NYT report lies about Iraq, WMDs or anything else, is because it is an election year and their hatred for George Bush and the Republican party. They do not care if it is true or not. They can be caught in their lies, but it does not get a retraction or stop them from lying repeatedly. They even continue defending their lies. The sad thing is that so many people believe this garbage. However, I appreciate the challenge of the article and hope he continues challenging these lies. Jim Allen, Bremen, Ga.

Editor: For Daniel Pipes in his "Foreign Policy Failure" to say that George Bush "squandered his 90% approval rating" ignores 5 years of relentless Democrat and Media efforts to destroy the man, his policies and his presidency. Lincoln only succeeded after replacing his military leadership many times. FDR presided over many battle losses before the tide finally turned and Kennedy/LBJ seriously underestimated the tenacity of North Vietnam. No terrorist attacks on American soil since 9/11, no interruption of Middle East oil flow to Western economies, the defeat of Al Qaeda in Iraq, the beginning of Shiite/Sunni political reconciliation, Libya's nuclear surrender, Pakistan surviving Bhutto's assassination and all the while, Israel survives and thrives. As far as global anti-Americanism, even if its true, I'm surprised you even care. Dennis Goldman, Denver, CO

Editor: As one who also approved of President George W. Bush's first term intentions, I wholeheartedly agree with the assessment from Daniel Pipes in his "Foreign Policy Failure." I think the entire administration could have done a much better job of "selling" their arguments, which were good I think, to the public. Richard Brown, Disappointed in Michigan

Editor: Regarding Paul Driessen's "Adopting To Climate," I am in Maryland planning my move to Florida. My simple view is that one can survive in heat with a fan and liquids. One cannot survive in cold weather without paying very high utility bills. I am 67 and with the liberal policy of not exploring in our own country the cost of keeping one's home warm and healthy is likely to get worse. My Republican friends have missed the boat (again) by not pointing out that a major reason for high gasoline and cooling and heating costs is because of liberal attitudes on the environment which harm the poor, working poor, and the elderly, the very people they say they care about. Stephen Boyd

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