



Randal O'Toole

CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

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Faddish Planning Fantasies

by Donald Devine

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

Once upon a time, a young idealist was moved Earth Day to devote his life to saving America's to forestry school and joined the U.S. Forest to serve. The young man soon learned the supposed to be its protector - was in fact a despoiler of the nation's environment.

Randal O'Toole saw the Service was cutting timber than was prudent according to private management practice. The incentives set by 1930 law allowed receipts from such sales to go FS administrative costs rather than be through the appropriations process. So, to waste, in 1976 Congress required each of 120 forests to create timber management, land-use spray and wilderness plans that had to be into regional and finally a national program rationally allocate timber and other resources the environment.

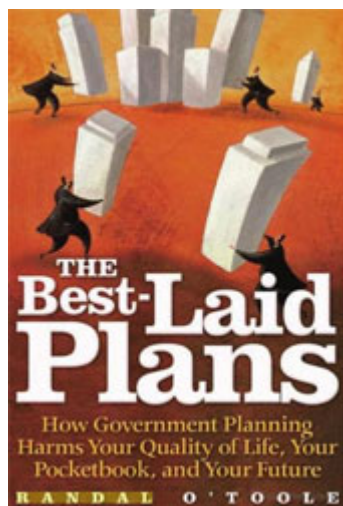


Randal O'Toole

by the first land. He went Service ready government – major

vastly more forest Congress in a directly to pay approved control this national and herbicide-integrated supposedly to and protect

The problem, as O'Toole explains in his wonderful new book *The Best Laid Plans*, is the plans took 18 years to complete, cost one billion dollars, and made no sense. One FS planner explained the delay: "There is never enough time to do it right but always enough time to do it twice." The size and composition of the forests were so large and complex only guesses could be made. Many plans calculated timber at values 50 to 100 times what private companies were actually paying for it, and/or estimated tree growth at faster rates than possible, and/or planned for trees as tall as 650 feet – nearly twice the height of the world's tallest. The plans did lower timber harvests since many forests held only three-quarters or even two-thirds of the plan's fantastic yields but now most of it was sold well below cost.



Intrigued by the results at his own agency, O'Toole expanded his study to all government land-planning. He found the same results in parks, transportation, energy, urban renewal and land-use generally.

Government bureaucrats do what they are given incentives to do. If the real incentives are to cut trees, they will cut and cut until there is nothing left. If after that abuse, Congress gives them incentives to conserve they will let trees grow and grow until fires break out everywhere and Congress turns these bureaucrats into firemen uninterested in timber cutting or conservation. Then politics will push them back to selling trees and the cycle starts again.

If the politicians try to force the bureaucrats to balance two, three or more goals, the bureaucrats become immobilized by the complexity so they plan and plan and plan – until nothing happens at all. It is the same for overbuilding highways and then trying to get rid of the automobile, increasing costs of energy to reduce use and then increasing use to reduce consumer costs, or planning for whatever the land-use flavor of the day might be. O'Toole came to the conclusion that national planning is impossible - no one can deal with such vast complexity. Like the Forest Service, the government planners have to make up the data – and garbage in, garbage out, as the computer guys put it.

The only planning possible is localized – and optimally is private. Only economic markets (where the planner loses his money rather than ours) or a market of localized governments (where adjoining units or neighbors are able to guard their interests) keep the complexity manageable. The world learned this from the collapse of the Soviet Union's sophisticated national planning but many in the U.S. now miss the message.

A recent newspaper headline tells the tale: "Unraveling Reagan: Amid Turmoil, U.S. Turns Away From Decades of Deregulation." The recent mortgage crisis and economic slowdown are said to have led to loss of confidence in the market and decentralized decision-making and to a sharp turn to national economic planning.

For the first time in ages a new economic regulatory body has been created. A new Federal Housing Finance Agency will regulate mortgage lenders Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Federal Home Loan banks. The Federal Reserve and the Securities and Exchange Commission will gain vast new powers over investment banks, the heart of capitalism. Moreover, the news story correctly reported that much of this came at the instigation of "Republican heirs to the legacy of President Reagan." The chairman of the SEC who testified before Congress requesting more power was none other than Christopher Cox, a former White House advisor to Mr. Reagan!



Christopher Cox

Somehow, no one notices that it is the Fed, the SEC, Fannie and Freddie and the rest who have been in charge during the whole crisis, indeed leading the charge. Fannie and Freddie are government-sponsored lenders long criticized by Reagan's true heirs because they had an implied government guarantee not to fail. Their overly liberal lending policies backed with inadequate reserves initiated the crisis. Fed-created inflation and the SEC's heavy hand fed it and Congressional panic guaranteed the slowdown would deepen. Rather than letting the market adjust bank-by-bank, locality-by-locality, and bottom out to end the panic, the politicians fueled it and turned the implied guarantee into an actual one, creating new laws that will assure additional inflexibility in some future crisis.

O'Toole not only points to the real problem, he presents real solutions.

- Give government agencies only a single, precisely defined mission
- Design incentives to complement the mission, not conflict with it
- Set performance criteria to evaluate agency progress
- Open agencies to competition - government, local and private
- Fund revenue-producing agencies only from user fees
- Create a competitive setting for bureaus that do not produce revenue

All of these criteria recognize the reality of how government really works. Government lacks the risk-reward signals of the price system that allow the market to sort out complex phenomena and respond to it. Government decision-making must be kept simple and create market proxies if they are to perform even reasonably well. Soviet or even New Deal planning expects far more than government can deliver. That is why it keeps breaking down.

O'Toole is at his best on land use planning, especially as we now face a "housing crisis." Yet, the first housing crisis was declared way back in the 1930's. The initial fashion was to create perfect cities, starting with Greenbelt Maryland, and to construct quality public housing for the poor. After giving up on greenbelts and becoming dissatisfied with "slum creation" housing, in the 1950-60's the next fashion was to perform "urban renewal" of devastated central city areas. After destroying four times as many homes as it built and evicting a million people, 90 percent of whom paid higher rents in substandard housing, in 1991 federal planners turned to regional planning bodies for a larger focus – ultimately deciding on a policy of "smart growth" – i.e., concentrating people in urban areas of higher density rather than open suburbs – in some respects back to the original ideal.

As O'Toole emphasizes, planning is by its nature faddish. Without market signals, it is all guesswork. The great critic of city planning Jane Jacobs had so successfully undermined urban renewal planners for destroying city neighborhoods that were poor but socially vibrant, some new direction was required. Rather than letting city social life build spontaneously as Jacobs implied, the next set of planners tried to force Jacobs' high-density vibrancy on the suburbs, only allowing development along urban transit lines. The only problem is that people did not want to give up their cars and would not live or shop there. They wanted private housing, grass and parking space. O'Toole lives near trendy Portland Oregon where smart growth has developed the furthest and he provides all the evidence anyone interested in the facts could desire that people choose suburban openness even when the government places all the incentives on living in higher urban density.

Zoning, O'Toole notes, was devised in 1910 to protect single family homes from conflicting uses of property but planners later turned it upside-down to restrict the number of private homes that could be built and to promote apartments and town houses instead, to force "smart growth." To some extent planners have been successful - U.S. homeownership is at about 60 percent, compared to 80 percent in much of Europe, with much less space. Before zoning, property owners successfully used covenants to protect residential land use and it is still enormously popular today, once racial abuses were outlawed. Zoning also greatly increases the cost of living for the poor, as the late Bernard Siegan proved conclusively in his several superb books on zoning.

Today, 50 million Americans rely on private covenants enforceable through the courts - mostly governed by themselves through homeowners associations that can modify provisions when a consensus exists that change is needed. Towns and cities of course could continue to have building codes involving safety and so on. People become their own planners, able to know precisely what is expected before they buy. All national, state and local "planners" need do is remove rules that restrict their broader usage and people will more rationally plan for themselves. Creative local governments could allow urban areas now under zoning to petition to come under covenant and associational governance to allow the flexibility and local control now mostly only available in the suburbs and rural areas.

Despite the recent trends, it is apparent that things are very different today than in the 1950's heyday of U.S. planning. The Fannie/Freddie news story did report that current pro-regulatory activism "doesn't mean a rollback of decades of deregulation of business, ranging from airlines to telecommunication." Moreover, they wrote that many of the new regulations are designated as temporary.

The long-term movement away from socialist-style central planning will endure. Why? The reporters themselves recognized that it was the Kennedy era "best and brightest" planning that produced the debilitating Vietnam defeat and that today's planners "still haven't rebuilt New Orleans and the surrounding area three years after the hurricane struck." The failures of government planning are so obvious today even the media cannot miss them.

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Jane Jacobs

Taking Back the Constitution

by Paul Weyrich

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

I am neither an attorney nor an expert in Constitutional law. Others have been good enough to say I am a good strategist. If so, then I would like to share my perspective of the current state of the judiciary. I have listened as a debate is occurring over the proper powers of the courts and the tendency of some Americans to cede to the advocates of unrestrained judicial power victories to which they are not entitled.



Paul M. Weyrich

I am occasionally referred to as a "founder of the modern conservative movement." Such an honor places upon me and others to whom such a description applies a special duty to warn our fellow citizens. Americans today are witnesses to the realization of the great fear of our Founding Fathers: the passing away of government "of the people, by the people, for the people," as President Abraham Lincoln stated, in the United States of America. With respect to the courts, we need a revival of the rule of law based upon the constitutional principles laid down by those who founded this nation.

Our forefathers gave their lives to liberate us from the rule of a British Parliament unelected by the American colonists:

Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.... But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute [Despotism](#) , it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government.... (Emphasis added.)

The grand formalities of American election rituals hide a glaring fact: Americans can no longer claim that we are our own rulers in every circumstance in which we are empowered to be. Regardless of our votes, the defining judgments in our collective and personal destinies often are made by persons whom the American people have not elected to rule.

We gave judges their robes and gavels so that they might resolve specific disputes between specific plaintiffs and defendants. We never gave them authority to issue commands to our elected lawmakers, forcing us down roads which we have not chosen to travel. Judges have no constitutional authority to make laws or to amend our national and state constitutions. They have no authority to redefine words and concepts in our laws to mean what they and their ideological partisans wish for them to mean.

To Americans of previous generations this was obvious and fundamental. But for many in America today, this is meaningless, a mere technicality: judges are supreme because, well, because they just are.

When several judges opined that there ought to be no more prayer in American schools, lawyers, politicians and journalists told us that after three centuries of prayer in our schools, judges had suddenly "outlawed" it. Court opinions interpreting law and social custom magically became the law itself.

After three centuries of Americans exercising their right to control their communities as citizens and to keep pornography out of public view, several judges opined that the Founding Fathers had given pornographers a right to pollute us and our children, a right that does not exist in the United States Constitution. They put us on a course that has almost obliterated the ideal of fidelity of body, mind, imagination and the heart, upon which marriage, family and child-rearing are built.

Nevertheless, lawyers, journalists and politicians announced that this opinion was to be the new law though it had no basis in the Constitution or in any law authorized by the American people via their chosen lawmakers.

Likewise, judges – acting on behalf of a tiny, anti-constitutional, self-styled cultural "elite" dedicated to turning America into an ideological utopia – opined that the American people may neither protect children from violent murder in their mother's womb, nor outlaw sodomy, nor restrict their civic blessing upon marriage to nature's definition of it, nor ensure that parentless children are placed with parents as nature defines them: one father and one mother.

Nor should I forget to mention judicial disregard for centuries of customary, legal and constitutional protection of private property in order to provide legal sanction for powerful, corrupt politicians lusting after other men's land or buildings. "Take what you please," they said in essence. And this was now the law. One hand washes the other.



Many of us received in shock and sadness the Goodridge v. the Department of Public Health of Massachusetts opinion on homosexual marriage. Why do self-styled "conservatives," lawyers, politician and pundits among them, spread the assertion that judges have powers that the American people have never given them?

The truth is that the ruthlessly enforced illusion of judicial supremacy did not merely empower judges and disenfranchise the American people. It made journalists, lawyers and clever politicians more influential culturally. Most, after all, are of the same ideological bent as many judges. And those who were not, the "conservatives," played within the new rules: judges' opinions are the law in the United States of America.

If Americans paid attention, understood what is at stake and agreed upon the solution, their long-term strategy would require:

- an string of primary victories by candidates who fully grasp the fact that judges have no authority to change our laws and who aggressively will oppose all claims to the contrary;
- an unbroken series of triumphs by such constitutionalist candidates in general elections, year after year;
- an unbroken series of nominations of judges who will interpret the law and will reject the noxious and absurd myth that previous court opinions are "the law of the land"; (Presidents Ronald W. Reagan and George H. W. Bush gave us activists such as Sandra Day O'Connor, Anthony Kennedy and David Souter!);
- an unbroken series of Senate confirmations of originalist judges;
- unwavering constitutionalism by originalist judges in their years on the bench, withstanding daily assault by infuriated cultural "elites" who grew accustomed to using legally void and impotent court opinions as bulldozers to deceive and enslave Americans via a-moral, anti-constitutional and increasingly tyrannical judicial delusions.

Not a single signer of the Constitution (or of the Declaration of Independence) would have taken seriously the purportedly "conservative" view today that to restrain judges we need to replace them through attrition over decades. That view, in my opinion, guarantees a victory of the far left because it implies that the judicial branch is the final authority on the law.

In his book and British Broadcasting Corporation series Civilization , historian Sir Kenneth Clarke noted that after the dissolution of the Roman Empire, scattered pockets of normalcy continued for a surprisingly long time. How will we know, living in such "pockets of normalcy," when our republic has collapsed? Has it already? Are we prisoners who still think themselves free?

For the sake of this republic I urge my friends, fellow leaders and Americans emphatically to repudiate the devastating myth that judges have the power to make and redefine our laws. We should do so rapidly and forcefully before our republic is replaced by the irresistible tyranny of men and women who believe that nihilist elites should make the rules and pass them to judges for formal announcement when the time is ripe for the latest step into the post-rule of law, post-moral abyss. Otherwise our "conservatism" will continue to be merely the rearguard for subtle left-wing revolution.

The tragedy of how we have reached this point: in our desire for social acceptance and respectability among the anti-constitutional, anti-rule of law, anti-Christian, anti-family nihilist left, "conservative" elites have abandoned the core principles of our Constitution. We have flouted the warnings of the likes of Thomas Jefferson, who wrote:

To consider the judges as the ultimate arbiters of all constitutional questions [is] a very dangerous doctrine indeed, and one which would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy. ...The Constitution has erected no such single tribunal, knowing that to whatever hands confided, with the corruptions of time and party, its members would become despots.



Alexander Hamilton was perhaps the strongest advocate of "judicial review" – the right of judges to opine on our Constitution. But an opinion on the meaning of the Constitution is merely an advisory opinion to the legislative and executive branches of government. Not even Hamilton imagined that the right to opine is a power to rule. Courts, he pointed out, intentionally have been given no means of enforcing their opinions, noting that the executive and legislative branches are not compelled to obey false or dubious opinions. Therefore, he wrote:

...The judiciary, from the nature of its functions, will always be the least dangerous to the political rights of the Constitution. ... [T]he judiciary...has no influence over either the sword or purse; no direction either of the strength or of the wealth of the society; and can take no active resolution whatever. It may truly be said to have neither force nor will....

Abraham Lincoln acknowledged that court opinions were binding upon the specific parties involved and "entitled to very high respect and consideration...by all other departments of the government." But like the Founding Fathers, he utterly rejected the myth that judges' opinions are the law of the land:

...If the policy of the government, upon vital questions, affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made, in ordinary litigation between parties, in personal actions, the people will have ceased, to be their own rulers, having, to that extent, practically resigned their government, into the hands of that eminent tribunal.

In the last century cultural elites created an illusion of judicial power that would be unrecognizable to earlier Americans, lawyers and laymen. After the American Revolution, the framers of the Constitution rejected any judicial authority over the other branches of government.

I fear the conservative elites are putting the final nail in our coffin. I know these men. They mean well. They are not pursuing their view out of malice. They believe what they are doing is right. Nor do I associate myself with some of their critics who often are accusatory, judgmental and angry. I look at results, and it seems to me that proponents of the status quo are allowing the legal profession and the courts to impose moral and civil codes which cannot pass federal and state legislatures. They foolishly are handing absolute power to anti-Judeo-Christian, anti-family ideologues.

This is where the trajectory of the post-constitutional pragmatism undergirding the "conservative revolution" has taken us. The story is not yet complete, but if we continue on this trajectory we may reach the point of tyranny and persecution. History reveals this to be true.

Many of those with whom I have worked for years unwittingly are aiding the far left in the destruction of America. It is time for our presidents, governors, legislatures and prominent citizens to call the bluff of impotent judges as Jefferson did and to ask them, as President Andrew Jackson did, how they will enforce their impotent opinions. The myth of judicial supremacy cannot justify governors violating state and federal constitutions, their oaths of office and the sovereignty of the American people. Look at the way so-called gay marriage has been imposed by judicial fiat, running ruthlessly over elected legislatures and the will of the people.

The Massachusetts Constitution contains the quintessential statement of the American form of government: "The power of suspending the laws, or the execution of the laws, ought never to be exercised but by the legislature...." (Part the First, Article XX.) "[T]he people...are not controllable by any other laws than those to which their constitutional representative body have given their consent." (Part the First, Article X.) "The judicial shall never exercise the legislative and executive powers, or either of them: to the end it may be a government of laws and not of men." (Part the First, Article XXX.) "All the laws which have heretofore been adopted, used and approved...shall still remain and be in full force, until altered or repealed by the legislature...." (Part the Second, Article VI.)

Americans must debunk the Orwellian lie that has obliterated self-government in the United States and acknowledge Lincoln's words at Gettysburg in 1863:



Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.... It is for us the living...to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

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

**E-mail the
Editor**

McCain and Obama Warming

by Dennis Avery

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On most U.S. political issues, Barack Obama and John McCain take sharply different positions and represent real choice for the voters. On the biggest issue of all, however—\$4 gas and global warming strategy—Obama and McCain seem to agree. They both think energy prices need to triple yet again to prevent man-made global warming.

Since the presidential primaries finished, however, we've found that global temperatures have turned downward. Global temperatures have dropped sharply—0.7 degree since the beginning of 2006. This puts our thermometers back about where they were a century ago. This has happened despite a continuing increase in global greenhouse gas emissions.

In Europe and Australia, blue-collar truckers, fishermen, miners, and power-industry workers are in open rebellion over high fuel prices in a time of global cooling. They clearly see the prospects of their own economic ruin in Europe's \$11-per-gallon diesel. The alarmist prime ministers of Britain and Australia may well be forced from office by the lack of warming.

NASA recently admitted "the oceans stopped warming 4-5 years ago," based on highly accurate data from 3,000 new Argo high-tech buoys recently spread around the oceans. In recent weeks, NASA's Jason satellite confirmed that the northern Pacific Ocean has entered a cooling phase that is likely to last 25–30 years.

This is crucial because Pacific Rim tree rings confirm that whole earth's temperatures have mirrored the shifts in the 60-year Pacific Decadal Oscillation since 1600. None of the computer models predicted this, but the sunspots have been predicting it since 2000. The sunspots have had a strong 79-percent correlation with earth's thermometers since 1860 (with a ten-year lag). There is virtually no correlation between our thermometer record and CO₂—which by itself is strong enough evidence to discredit the Greenhouse Theory.

It's unlikely Barack Obama can escape the liberal left's nearly religious commitment to eliminating fossil fuels. The Left's goal is to get anti-fossil legislation on the books before any more cooling can unsettle the faithful. Even Obama's recent modest attempts to move to the center have met with threats of "alternative choices" by the far Left.

Almost any Republican except McCain could say, "We hadn't seen convincing proof of man-made global warming, and the earth's temperatures have been cycling up and down for millions of years. There's time to do the science before we discard 88 percent of America's energy system." Gasoline prices would begin to drop immediately, as expectations based on drilling bans and coal-burning cutbacks were put on hold.

Both McCain and his daughter, however, say he believes deeply in the Greenhouse warming threat—even though our net warming over the 70 years between 1940 and 1998 totaled a miniscule 0.2 degree C. Can McCain be believable if he pointed to the temperature decline and the failure of the computer models? It would certainly take some fancy footwork.

Fortunately, what man has done can mostly be undone. The momentum built up by the Left, the UN, and the columnists will probably give us hugely expensive cap-and-trade legislation, and perhaps a whole series of punitive fossil energy taxes. However, if global temperatures continue to trend down over the next President's four-year term most such anti-fossil laws would quickly be repealed. Embarrassed federal judges would revisit their recent anti-fossil decisions.



Dennis T. Avery

In the meantime, unfortunately, the First World risks rolling blackouts that could shut down every hospital, school, and business that relies on electric lights and computers. Our electrical demand is rising and our generating capacity is declining. When those curves intersect, people will lose control over their lives. Some will die needlessly. That cannot be undone.

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**E-mail the
Editor**

Hollywood Good News

by Brent Bozell III.

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In the groves of academe, studying popular culture is often the preserve of nutty left-wing professors performing exotic Marxist autopsies on the imperialist dynamics of Donald Duck comic books. Academic conservatives are teaching and writing about Homer the Greek poet, not the cartoon, which is important but oftentimes leaves their audience without a learned guide to analyze the themes of our modern culture.

Fortunately, there is Thomas Hibbs, a professor of ethics and culture at Baylor University – and a film critic for National Review Online. Earlier this year, the Spence Publishing folks in Dallas published a valuable and fascinating book by the professor called "Arts of Darkness: American Noir and the Quest for Redemption."



Brent Bozell

The book's primary theme is that while the casual filmgoer may look at film noir and see only dark films mired in hopelessness, there is a strain in many noir films of a quest to arrive at a moral sense of the world. Even characters that are destroyed by their own selfish desires can be found searching for a moral order.

In films from the golden era of Hollywood (like "Double Indemnity") to the modern era (from "The Usual Suspects" to the films of M. Night Shyamalan), Hibbs teases out themes beneath the film's machinations of evil that suggest themes of redemption, of a search for God and a discovery of the devil's handiwork.

This is not only deep thinking, it is hopeful thinking. Cultural conservatives looking at the grip of a secular and hedonistic (and often nihilistic) cultural Left on Hollywood's machinery tend to feel a hopelessness of their own. These conservatives have often felt overwhelmed when offering a counterpoint in the cultural debate against Hollywood's tendency to sensationalize and degrade the human quest for love, justice, honor, and meaning. Ultimately they surrender.

But theorists like Hibbs have found hope in the deeper meanings of some of what Hollywood is producing. Finding the positive in film noir shows an interpretive talent, and not a ludicrous optimism. More strikingly, Hibbs sees a positive trend emerging in Hollywood: Tinseltown has discovered there is treasure in the making of epic films. Hollywood may be veering away somewhat from nihilism.

Hibbs quotes a screenwriter from the HBO war series "Band of Brothers" proclaiming "They're about men and women of unusual vision, individuals who stand for something greater than themselves. Right now Hollywood might have detected a need for stories like that." Hibbs does find it interesting that Hollywood looks to places other than contemporary America for its epic heroes, from "Braveheart" to "Gladiator."

Add to that trend the popularity of quest films with religious undertones. Hibbs cites everything from the Harry Potter series to The Lord of the Rings and Narnia to comic-book superhero films like the Spider-Man movies. He also adds the real epic surprise of the decade, Mel Gibson's spectacular "The Passion of the Christ."

Hibbs may veer off from noir on this point, but again he makes a very interesting set of points. One deals with the most grueling scene for the viewer, Jesus being scourged by Roman torturers with demonic smiles on their faces. Hibbs notes that the Romans saw their Jewish subjects as subhuman, an inferior race devoid of humanity.

"The film's dramatic opposition of the order of politics to the order of the creator renders inconceivable the deployment of this story as an instrument in a national cultural war," he writes, as much as it may have been missed by the Right and Left. "Indeed, the scenes of the Roman soldiers cackling with glee as they scourge Christ and rip hunks of skin from his body is most reminiscent of the depiction of the Nazi soldiers in 'Schindler's List.'"

Hibbs posits that it is in the divine response of Jesus to his persecutors, putting the bloodletting into a scriptural account of sacrifice for all men, that rebuts those critics of Mel Gibson who insisted his film indulged in a "pornography" of violence. Unlike so many blood-spurting films where the viewer is encouraged to laugh or be dazzled at the mechanics of death, "The Passion" compels the viewer to feel the need for repentance, that this bloody sacrifice was both his fault (through his sins) and yet his hope for eternal life.

Gibson's film may not have spurred another explicitly Christian blockbuster. But the idea that a massive audience turnout can turn the wheels of the Hollywood machine, the suggestion that moviegoers can use their own quest for redemption to drag some fraction of Hollywood out of the dark swamp of despair is enlightening – and encouraging.

Mr. Bozell is president of the Media Research Institute

**E-mail the
Editor**

Modern Moral Romance?

S.T. Karnick

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On one night recently, two episodes of TV drama series presented the same, mature, laudable point of view on moral way to deal with romantic relationships. In fact, could say that each, in its own way, shows a certain tragic sensibility.

In recent episodes of the USA network show *In Plain Sight*, lead character Mary Shannon's black-ewe sister, Brandi, has been hovering around Mary's boyfriend, Rafael, while Mary is hard at work dealing with her duties as a federal marshal working in the witness-protection program. While Rafael recovers from an injury, Brandi helps him out by buying him groceries, driving him to therapy sessions, and the like.

Although she was initially somewhat hostile toward him, Brandi has warmed greatly toward Rafael as she has come to know him better, and in the recent night's episode ("Don of the Dead") she pushed the relationship to become physical.

That's when it became really interesting. Rafael does his best to deter Brandi's advances, but it doesn't work, and she persists and increases her efforts. Finally, Rafael tells her that they can't see each other at all any more, because it's just a bad idea.

His loyalty to Mary is impressive, as is his wisdom in not allowing this to go any further. One point for Rafael.

Brandi, furious, storms away and later asks her mother, Jinx (no paragon of virtue herself, but a basically kindhearted person trying to muddle through life as best she can), why a man and a woman can't simply be friends. Jinx points out that Rafael is right: there are always those issues in the background in male-female relationships, and in a situation where one person is pledged to another, there's no way a third party can become close to one of them without starting trouble. That's just the way the world works.

That's a wisely nuanced and morally astute look at a common real-life situation, and what's even more impressive about it is that it's a subplot of the episode, not the main story line. The main plotline also has to do with male-female relationships and beautifully deals with the kinds of sacrifices we sometimes have to make when we truly love another person.

It is a must-see episode.

The interesting coincidence is that on that same Sunday night in the United States, the excellent BBC-PBS coproduced series *Foyle's War* included a situation very similar to the nascent and barely averted *In Plain Sight* triangle.

In the *Foyle's War* episode, "Broken Souls," a young English woman whose husband has just come home after escaping from a German prison camp finds herself troubled in trying to resume her relationship with her now disturbed, angry, injured husband. Complicating the situation is the fact that in her husband's absence, the local POW camp has assigned a German prisoner of war to help her maintain the family's small farm.

The German soldier, a quite pleasant, likeable fellow, inspires fierce jealousy and suspicion in the newly arrived husband. The husband is certain that his wife has been having an affair with the



**Foyle's War:
Broken Souls**

by

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POW—although the narrative makes it clear (indeed, it makes it as certain as we can ever be about such things) that this is not true. After an angry confrontation between husband and wife, the woman tells the German soldier that she won't be able to allow him to help out at the farm anymore.

He is disappointed, of course, and she is clearly both saddened and somewhat humiliated by the entire matter. Yet she recognizes—as Brandi Shannon did not and Rafael did in the same night's In Plain Sight episode—that placing undue strain on a romantic relationship is a very stupid thing to do.

The Foyle's War episode makes it clear that the decision is a very difficult one for the wife and brings her great anguish, but it also is obvious that it's the right choice.

Thus two TV series on the same night depicted praiseworthy instances of self-sacrifice in romantic relationships. That certainly goes against the grain of much of what we've been taught by both the schools and the culture in the past three decades or so, and it's just another small indicator of what I believe to be a true cultural tide change.

S.T. Karnick edits The American Culture at <http://stkarnick.com/>

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Editor**

Media Help Obama

by Brent Baker

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

More than three times as many Americans see a media in favor of Democrat Barack Obama than toward Republican John McCain.

A Rasmussen Reports telephone survey released recently, 1,000 likely voters, "found that 49 percent of voters believe most reporters will try to help Obama with their coverage, up from 44 percent a month ago," compared to piddling 14 percent who "believe most reporters will try help John McCain win" while "just one voter in four (24%) believes that most reporters will try to offer unbiased coverage."



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Exactly half, 50 percent, "believe the media makes economic conditions appear worse than they really are," a separate Rasmussen Reports telephone survey determined. That poll discovered "a plurality of Americans (41%) similarly believe that the media has tried to make the war in Iraq appear worse than it really is, while 26 percent say reporters have made it look better than reality and 25 percent think they've portrayed it accurately."

Meanwhile, the "[Scapbook](#)" section of the latest ([July 28](#)) edition of the [Weekly Standard](#) magazine dubbed Newsweek "Obamaweek" and illustrated the media's infatuation with Obama by displaying images of six Newsweek covers featuring Obama, five of them just this year.

Five covers devoted to one candidate in one year undoubtedly qualify as "help."

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Editor**

My Stimulus Bribe

by Alan Caruba

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

I received my stimulus check yesterday. It was \$600 and I put it into my checking account and immediately paid a bill that accounted for half of it. I have serious doubts that it did anything to stimulate an economy that is undergoing a crisis of confidence in its financial and government institutions.

There is a serious crisis of trust in Congress. Polls indicate that most Americans think it is the worst in modern memory. They have good reason as they watch two horribly polarized political parties ignore some of the nation's most pressing problems. These are the morons who banned the future sale of incandescent light bulbs. Meanwhile, Democrats and Republicans concentrate on seizing enough control to decide who gets to spend and waste our money.



Alan Caruba

It is, of course, *our* money. Or more precisely, it's the money the U.S. government borrows from other nations in our name. Giving everyone who paid taxes a pittance in return suggests that Congress thinks we are so stupid that we will actually be grateful.

Why should we be grateful to a government that, as it grows larger and larger, seems increasingly less competent to address common sense solutions to our energy needs, refusing to permit the exploration, drilling and mining of our own national resources?

Why should we be grateful to be told that we need to drive slower, purchase cars the size of golf carts, or use mass transit when we have ample, known reserves of oil?

Why should we be grateful for government mandates for ethanol that do nothing other than drive up the price of food and drive down mileage per gallon?

Why should we be grateful for the push to impose a bogus "cap and trade" system that will do nothing to reduce carbon dioxide emissions? Why create a market for "credits" that will make those trading in them immensely wealthy? Why do this when, in addition to oxygen, CO² is the most essential gas to the maintenance of all life on Earth, vital to the growth of all vegetation?

Why should we be grateful for the privilege of being the world's policeman when Europe thinks we're a chump for defending it long after they should have taken on that responsibility? Or when a prolonged occupation in Iraq is greeted with the perfectly natural request that we leave? There are 566,000 Iraqis in police or military uniform these days.

Why should we be grateful when we might be taken into a war with Iran over its demand to be a nuclear power when it is *surrounded* by nuclear powers in Pakistan, India, Russia, and China to name just four? Isn't a nuclear Iran *their* problem too? Why do we assume that the prospect of having its cities obliterated and millions of its citizens killed would not have a sobering affect on Iran's leaders?

Why should we be grateful to a government that, during the Bush administration, spent \$45 billion on "climate change" research at a time when the Earth is a decade into a natural cooling cycle that any freshman in Meteorology 101 could understand? Could the billions spent on the mission to Mars been spent more wisely on repairs to our nation's infrastructure of roads and bridges?

Why should we be grateful to a government that is inattentive to millions of illegal aliens crossing our southern border, taking up residence while taking jobs that might otherwise be available to

native-born and naturalized Americans, and draining the financial resources of states and cities that must educate their children and pay for their medical care?

Why *wouldn't* a wall along the southern border have some effect on illegal immigration and the huge flow of drugs into the nation? Surely that has a greater priority than Mars?

Why should we be grateful to a government that adopted an idiotic policy to *not* manage our nation's forests, leading to California's catastrophic fires and the previous loss of countless forested acres in Yellowstone? Removing aging and dead trees and underbrush protects forests. Instead of a thriving timber industry, we have Smokey the Bear.

And why should I believe that my \$600 is going to make *any* difference in the resolution of an economic mess created by banking and investment institutions that gave away billions in mortgage loans to people who could not afford them and now want to be bailed out...with our money? Right now, some of these same institutions are driving up the cost of a barrel of oil by gambling in the world's mercantile exchanges.

The nation is being run by people who are clearly delusional over a non-existent "global warming" or committed to a failed "No Child Left Behind" law that transfers control over the nation's schools to a central government. There is *no* Constitutional authorization for federal involvement in education.

We need a stimulus in rational solutions to real problems. We need something that a government must earn, not confiscate, and not secure through a bribe. It's called trust. It's called confidence.

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

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Editor**

More Obama Uninsured

by John Goodman

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

Barack Obama rarely gives a speech these days without mentioning "universal coverage." Yet, in contrast to Hillary Clinton, Obama has no mandates (other than for children). Instead, he would rely on incentives. Yet the incentives in the Obama plan are perverse. Based on reasonable assumptions, the number of uninsured would rise, not fall, under the Obama plan—even as taxes rise, regulations proliferate and the bureaucracy expands.

Senator Barack Obama has released only sketchy details about his plan for health reform. The Commonwealth Fund has produced a very detailed plan, however, and encourages its readers to view the two plans as very similar. For this reason, we assume the Commonwealth plan details apply where Obama has been unclear or unspecified.



John Goodman

Taxing Labor. The Obama plan would subject all employers to a "pay-or-play" mandate - imposing a tax on those who do not provide health insurance for their employees. Following Commonwealth, we assume this would be a payroll tax of 7% of earnings up to \$1.25 per hour on employers who fail to pay at least 75% of the premium for a minimum package of benefits.

Were this provision enacted today, it would immediately affect the 40% of small employers who do not offer coverage, the 30 million people in families who have workforce participation, but no health insurance, and millions of Medicaid enrollees who have a workforce connection - to say nothing of all the employers who currently pay less than 75% and/or have plans that are insufficiently generous.

As the economics literature affirms, a payroll tax is almost completely born by workers themselves. During the Democratic party primary, Senator Obama criticized Senator Clinton's proposal to mandate coverage by asserting she would try to force people to buy something they cannot afford and then tax them when they don't buy it - leaving them worse off than they were. Exactly the same criticism applies to Obama's pay-or-play mandate.

Destroying Jobs. As the economics literature has firmly established, a tax on labor (or mandated labor benefits) makes employment more expensive and encourages employers to hire fewer workers, adopt labor-saving technology, employ part-time workers, and outsource labor to independent contractors and other entities.

Encouraging Employers to Drop Health Insurance Coverage. Along with the pay-or-play mandate is an offer to the otherwise uninsured to buy insurance through a National Health Insurance Exchange with an income-related subsidy. Following Commonwealth, we assume that the premium would be limited to 5% of income for low-income families and 10% of income for everyone else. It will not take people long to discover that many (perhaps a majority) will be better off if their employers drop their current health plan, pay higher wages instead of premiums, pay Obama's pay-or-play tax along with income and payroll taxes, and let workers use their additional after-tax income to buy their own insurance in the Exchange.

Consider employees enrolled in an average family package costing, say, \$12,000 (about the average for employer-based coverage), with the employer paying 75% of the premium and employees facing a 33% marginal tax rate. If employees can obtain a plan as generous from the Exchange, they are better off if they earn less than about \$63,000. The incentives for employers to drop coverage are higher for lower-income employees and those with above-average health care costs.

Encouraging the Healthy to be Uninsured. Why pay expensive premiums for health insurance if you do not have any health problems? Under the Obama plan, there would be no reason to do so. Insurance sold in the Exchange would be guaranteed issue and community rated. This means people would be able to wait until after they get sick to insure and they would be able to do so without any

financial penalty.

Encouraging Others to Overinsure. For those who do insure (especially those with health problems) and who reach the maximum premium limit, there is a different perverse incentive: They can buy more generous coverage at no personal expense. Although Obama would impose a minimum benefits package, there apparently would be no maximum. Theoretically, the sky would be the limit - with the marginal coverage all paid for by taxpayers.

Creating Perverse Incentives for Health Plans. In the Exchange, health plans would be free to set their own premiums, but they would be required to charge the same premium to all comers. This means the plans would make a profit on healthy enrollees and suffer a loss on less healthy enrollees. Consequently, the plans would have strong financial incentives to attract the healthy and avoid the sick. After enrollment, their incentives would be to over-provide to the healthy (to retain their membership and attract more of them) and under-provide to the sick (to discourage their continued membership and repel others just like them). In the federal employee system, health plan advertisements during open enrollment period picture young, healthy families - never people with costly illnesses. And some plans are now discriminating against sicker enrollees to keep costs down for healthier ones. (See The New York Times article.)

Adverse Selection and Death Spirals. A number of voluntary health insurance exchanges have been established in the past. Yet they invariably fail. The reason: healthier groups can usually find cheaper premiums outside the exchange. Yet when the healthier groups leave, the average cost for those who remain goes up - encouraging another round of departures. As the pool becomes sicker and costs rise, the arrangement collapses. Insurance exchanges only work where membership is compulsory (e.g. federal employees cannot take their employers contributions to outside plans). But Obama has specifically ruled out compulsory participation.

Encouraging Special Interests. Although there are very few mandated health insurance benefits at the federal level, state regulations require insurers to cover all manner of procedures, ranging from acupuncture to in vitro fertilization, and providers, ranging from naturepaths to marriage counselors. These mandates reflect the lobbying power of special interests, and the resulting higher price of insurance causes as many as one-in-every-four uninsured people to be priced out of the market. By having the federal government impose a mandated benefit package, Obama would elevate this special interest feeding frenzy to the national level.

Substituting Government Insurance for Private Insurance. Obama would expand enrollment in Medicaid and S-Chip. (The Commonwealth Fund projects 12 million new enrollees.) Yet Obama's own health advisor (David Cutler) estimates that every extra \$1 spent on Medicaid leads to a 50¢ to 75¢ reduction in private health insurance. For S-Chip, the Congressional Budget Office projects a crowd-out rate of 25% to 50% and private estimates peg it at 60%. In substituting public insurance for private insurance, the taxpayer burden increases substantially and health care doesn't get better in return. It gets worse. An American Cancer Society study found that being in Medicaid is only slightly better than being uninsured as far as delays in diagnosis and treatment are concerned.

[Note: In the Commonwealth plan, Medicaid reimbursement rates would be increased to Medicare levels, but would still be below private plan fees.]

Encouraging a Two Tier Health System. Obama would allow people to join a public plan (presumably modeled after Medicare) as part of the Exchange. If it really looks like Medicare, it will not be very attractive. Most Medicare enrollees pay three premiums to three plans (basic Medicare, Medigap, and prescription drug insurance) and still have less coverage (e.g. the "donut hole") than the rest of the population typically has.

In the Commonwealth plan, Medicare for the young is reconfigured to look like normal insurance, but it will still pay Medicare rates. Many doctors today will not accept new Medicare patients and in some specialties Medicare patients face much longer waits for treatment than younger patients. If a large number of people are added to plans that pay well below private fees, there will be inexorable pressure to respond to a two-tier payment system with two-tier quality of care.

Taxing Children. Although Obama would allow adults to remain uninsured, he proposes to force parents to insure their children - undoubtedly through a pay-or-play mandate. The problems here are: (1) mandates usually don't work if people have to pay any portion of the premium out of their own pockets, (2) the end result (health care for children) can usually be obtained less expensively through means other than mandated insurance, and (3) Obama's criticism of Hillary applies here as well: He would try to force people to buy something they cannot afford, then tax them when they don't buy it - leaving them worse off than before.

Taxing Capital. Obama intends to pay for his plan by repealing the "Bush tax cuts for the rich." But there have been no tax cuts for the rich. Lower rates on capital gains and dividends have induced wealthy investors to realize more income than ever - leading to record high tax revenues. Reversing these rate cuts is unlikely to produce any extra revenue. In the process, higher tax rates on capital will lead to a lower capital stock and a smaller national income in the future.

[Note: It's always bad to tax capital to pay for current consumption. To tax capital to pay for wasteful health care spending that promises miniscule health benefits at the margin is especially bad.]

Relying on Phantom Savings. Senator Obama plans to pay for the remaining costs by eliminating waste and inefficiency. His ideas include: electronic medical records systems, better disease management, pay-for-performance, and evidence-based medicine. Yet there is very little hard evidence that a demand-side approach to these reforms (with buyers of care essentially telling their doctors how to practice medicine) will save money.

Becoming a Moving Target. Senator Obama's critics have accused him of flip flip-flopping on such issues as campaign finance, wire-tapping, gun control, faith-based initiatives and the terms of withdrawal from Iraq. The Obama health plan is also in danger of becoming a work in progress. One week he eyes the Wyden-Bennett bill in the Senate favorably. The next week he praises Massachusetts' new health care plan. (Note: both have the very kind of mandates he found so objectionable in Hillary Clinton's health plan.)

More recently he has endorsed federal subsidies for half of the premiums paid by small employers. Yet the amount of money he would dedicate to this effort (\$6 billion a year) is too meager to overcome the dissolution of the employer based system in the manner described above.

John Goodman is President of the National Center for Policy Analysis

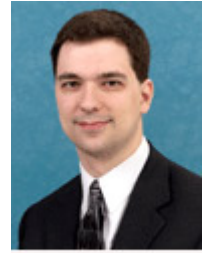
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Editor**

Budget-Busting Education

by Brian Riedl

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

Congress's current reauthorization of federal higher-education programs provides a case study in persistently expanding government. Over the past few years, lawmakers fought a furious battle to shave \$8 billion a year off the growth of entitlements, President George W. Bush and Congress spent all of 2007 arguing over a \$22 billion difference in discretionary spending targets, and lawmakers (armed with mountains of studies) formed numerous working groups trying to eliminate even five to 10 outdated federal programs.



Brian Riedl

Then, virtually unnoticed, the House of Representatives voted 354 to 58 on February 7 to add \$169 billion in new higher-education spending and create at least 50 new federal programs. In other words, one step forward, 10 steps back.

The College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2008 (COAA, H.R. 4137) is the latest budget-busting bill from a Democratic Congress that has found few parts of government undeserving of massive new deficit spending. What makes this bill unique is the overwhelming House Republican complicity in making this bill—among the largest authorized discretionary spending hikes in American history—bipartisan, non-controversial, and generally unnoticed. Nor has the Senate, which takes up the bill next, expressed much concern over COAA's price tag and new programs.

Although federal outlays for higher education have nearly tripled since 2001, COAA would authorize extensive new spending, dozens of new programs, and more Washington control of the daily operation of America's colleges and universities. It would expand grants even though student loans can increase college access with less taxpayer burden. And it would boost federal student aid without addressing the link between increased student aid and tuition hikes.

Lawmakers should take this massive government expansion off the fast track and address the bill's costs and underlying policies.

COAA represents one of the largest authorized discretionary spending hikes in American history. While lawmakers would not be required to fully fund this \$34 billion annual hike, this bill is clearly intended to lay the groundwork for—and create the political expectation that there will be—a staggering increase in federal higher-education spending. By shifting more money and power to Washington, the bill would leave taxpayers on the hook for higher taxes, and colleges and universities would find themselves increasingly micromanaged by Washington.

Rather than rubber-stamping this legislation, the Senate should strongly question its cost, its creation of 50 new programs, and its attempt to tell states how much to spend on higher education. Above all, lawmakers must accept the budgetary reality that taxpayers cannot afford these persistent, large budget increases across the federal government.

[Brian M. Riedl](#) is Grover M. Hermann Fellow in Federal Budgetary Affairs in the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation. Heritage Foundation intern Maren Gardiner contributed to the research for this report.

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Editor**

Has Israel Changed?

by Daniel Pipes

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

Israel has lived the past sixty years more intensively than any other country.

Its highs – the resurrection of a two-thousand year old state in 1948, history's most lopsided military victory in 1967, and the astonishing Entebbe hostage rescue in 1976 – have been triumphs of will and spirit that inspire the civilized world. Its lows have been self-imposed humiliations: unilateral retreat from Lebanon and evacuation of Joseph's Tomb, both in 2000; retreat from Gaza in 2005; defeat by Hizbullah in 2006; and the corpses-for-prisoners exchange with Hizbullah recently.



Daniel Pipes

An outsider can only wonder at the contrast. How can the authors of exhilarating victories repeatedly bring such disgrace upon themselves, seemingly oblivious to the import of their actions?

One clue has to do with the dates. The highs took place during the state's first three decades, the lows occurred since 2000. Something profound has changed. The strategically brilliant but economically deficient early state has been replaced by the reverse. Yesteryear's spy masterminds, military geniuses, and political heavyweights have seemingly gone into high tech, leaving the state in the hands of corrupt, short-sighted mental midgets.

How else can one account for the [cabinet meeting on June 29](#), when 22 out of 25 ministers voted in favor of releasing five live Arab terrorists, including [Samir al-Kuntar](#), 45, a psychopath and the most notorious prisoner in Israel's jails, plus 200 corpses? In return, Israel got the [bodies of two Israeli soldiers](#) murdered by Hizbullah. Even [The Washington Post](#) wondered at this decision.

Israeli prime minister [Ehud Olmert](#)'s endorsed the deal on the grounds that it "will bring an end to this painful episode," a reference to retrieving the bodies of war dead and appeasing the hostages' families demand for closure. In themselves, both are honorable goals, but at what price? This distortion of priorities shows how a once-formidably strategic country has degenerated into a supremely sentimental country, a rudderless polity where self-absorbed egoism trumps *raison d'être*. Israelis, fed up with [deterrence and appeasement](#) alike, have lost their way.

Appalling as the cabinet decision was, worse yet is that neither the Likud opposition party nor other leading public Israeli institutions responded with rage, but generally (with some notable [exceptions](#)) sat quietly aside. Their absence reflects a [Tami Steinmetz Center poll](#) showing that the Israeli population approves the swap by a nearly 2-1 ratio. In short, the problem extends far beyond the official class to implicate the population at large.

On the other side, the disgraceful celebration of baby-murderer Kuntar as a national hero in [Lebanon](#), where the government shut down to celebrate his arrival, and by the [Palestinian Authority](#), which called him a "[heroic fighter](#)," reveals the depths of Lebanese [enmity to Israel](#) and immorality, disturbing anyone concerned with the Arab soul.

The deal has many adverse consequences. It encourages Arab terrorists to [seize more Israeli soldiers, then kill them](#). It boosts Hizbullah's stature in Lebanon and legitimates Hizbullah internationally. It [emboldens Hamas](#) and makes a deal for [its Israeli hostage](#) more problematic. Finally, while this incident appears small compared to the Iranian nuclear issue, the two are related.

International headlines along the lines of "[Israel Mourns, Hezbollah Exults](#)" confirm the widely held but erroneous Middle Eastern view of Israel as a "[spider's web](#)" that can be destroyed. The recent exchange may give the already apocalyptic Iranian leadership further reason to brandish its weapons. Worse, as [Steven Plaut](#) notes, by equating "mass murderers of Jewish children to combat

soldiers," the exchange effectively justifies the "mass extermination of Jews in the name of Jewish racial inferiority."

For those concerned with the welfare and security of Israel, I propose two consolations. First, Israel remains a powerful country that can afford mistakes; one [estimate](#) even predicts it would survive an exchange of nuclear weapons with Iran, while Iran would not.

Second, the Kuntar affair could have a surprise happy ending. A [senior Israeli official](#) told David Bedein that, now out of jail, Israel's obligation to protect Kuntar is terminated; on arrival in Lebanon, he became "a target for killing. Israel will get him, and he will be killed ... accounts will be settled." Another senior official added "we cannot let this man think that he can go unpunished for his murder of a 4-year-old girl."

Who will laugh last, Hizbullah or Israel?

Mr. Pipes (www.DanielPipes.org) is director of the Middle East Forum and Taube distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University.

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Editor**

Jim Crow Energy Policies

by Roy Innis

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

The US civil rights revolution of the 1950s and '60s was one of the greatest social and political liberations in history. It gave African Americans and other minorities new opportunities and new levels of success in virtually every walk of life.

But today we face unprecedented new challenges to indispensable, but often neglected rights enunciated in our Declaration of Independence: "That all men ... are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*"



Roy Innis

These fundamental rights are under assault in subtle, often insidious ways. Sometimes it is with the best of intentions, by good people who don't realize they are impairing other people's rights, hopes and dreams. At other times, it is by people who are willing, even determined, to sacrifice individual rights in the name of a proclaimed threat or greater common good.

One critical challenge involves restrictions on access to energy and economic opportunity – and thus on liberties and rights – in the name of protecting the environment.

Energy is the master resource of modern society. It transforms constitutionally protected civil rights into rights we actually enjoy: jobs, homes, transportation, healthcare, and other earmarks of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

With abundant, reliable, affordable energy, much is possible. Without it, hope, opportunity, progress, job creation and civil rights are hobbled.

Laws that restrict access to America's abundant energy drive up the price of fuel and electricity. They cause widespread layoffs and leave families struggling to survive, as the cost of everything they eat, drive, wear and do spirals ever higher. They roll back the progress for which civil rights revolutionaries like Dr. Martin Luther King struggled and died.

Regressive, energy-killing policies create unnecessary obstacles to the natural, justifiable desire of minority Americans to share in the American Dream. They prevent us from resolving conflicts through compromise, impose needless and unfair burdens on our poorest families, and send minority and other poor families to the back of the economic bus.

The Congress of Racial Equality and I care deeply about our environment. But we also care about having jobs, and affordable food, heat and transportation. We care about impoverished Third World families achieving their dreams.

We want proof that the environmental values we cherish really are threatened the way politicians and activists say they are. That the "solutions" they advocate really will safeguard those values, at reasonable cost, without creating enormous new problems, like global grain shortages.

Today, unfortunately, these common-sense requests are under assault by activists who want to eliminate fossil fuels, base public policies on unfounded ecological scare stories, and stifle debate by attacking anyone who challenges their assertions.

Fully 85% of all the energy Americans use comes from hydrocarbons. Nuclear and hydroelectric power bring the total to 96% ... and biomass (3%) is mostly paper and saw mill waste.

Just 0.5% is wind power – and merely generating sufficient electricity to meet New York City's needs would require blanketing Connecticut with huge wind turbines that generate power just eight hours a day, on average. Large scale wind power is neither economically nor ecologically sustainable.

Geologists say America's onshore and offshore public lands could contain enough oil to run 80 million cars for 60 years; enough natural gas to heat 60 million homes for 160 years; enough coal, uranium and shale oil for centuries of power.

These energy resources belong to *all* Americans. They are not the private property of activists who insist they never be touched, or citizens who've been bamboozled into thinking they cannot be developed without destroying ecological values.

We could produce almost twenty billion gallons of gasoline annually by drilling safely and carefully in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge – from an area one-twentieth the size of Washington, DC. We could get vast quantities of oil and natural gas just as safely from the Outer Continental Shelf.

But politicians have locked this energy up and told us to rely on 7 billion gallons of ethanol, from corn grown on an area the size of Indiana. Precious water is used up, food prices soar, and millions starve.

When we outlaw, restrict or price these fuels out of reach, Americans are forced to pay more for energy that is artificially scarce. Job creation and economic progress are stifled. Our nation loses billions of dollars in royalties and taxes. Energy saved through painstaking conservation and alternative energy efforts is offset by further declines in US production, forcing America to import more foreign oil and send more jobs overseas. Civil rights are trampled underfoot.

The same is happening with climate change. Climate change is real, and has been throughout Earth's history. But there is a huge difference between acknowledging this – and claiming: our use of fossil fuels is the primary cause of climate change; future changes will be catastrophic; slashing carbon dioxide emissions will stabilize our always-changing climate; and we can slash emissions without impairing energy use and living standards.

Nevertheless, climate bills pending in Congress and state legislatures would require that our nation slash carbon dioxide by as much as 80% below 2005 emissions by 2050. In other words, to levels not seen in America since 1910, when our population was a quarter of what it is projected to be in 42 years!

Every one of these bills would curtail energy use and economic opportunity – while giving activists, courts and bureaucrats control over virtually any activity that produces CO₂.

Every one would impose massive, punitive, deceptive, regressive taxes on American businesses and families – through energy taxes, carbon offsets taxes, cap-and-trade taxes, carbon sequestration mandate taxes, and intrusive bureaucracy taxes. Every one would further hobble civil rights.

Not one would make a noticeable dent in global CO₂ levels or temperatures.

In this election season, every thoughtful, caring citizen in our great nation must join me in challenging the modern-day Jim Crow laws that prevent poor people from having the energy they need to achieve Dr. King's dream of civil rights, equal opportunity and true environmental justice.

Together, we can make that dream come true.

Roy Innis is chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality and author of Energy Keepers - Energy Killers: The new civil rights battle.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Production Increasing?

by Brian Wesbury and Robert Stein
Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

Industrial production increased 0.5% in June versus a consensus expected increase of 0.1%. Production is up 0.3% versus a year ago.

Manufacturing output was up 0.2% in June, with all of the gain attributable to a 5.4% increase in motor vehicles and parts due to the end of the American Axle strike. Manufacturing production outside the auto sector fell 0.1%. The production of high-tech equipment grew 1.8% in June and is up 23.6% versus last year.

Overall capacity utilization rose to 79.9% in June, a full rebound from the decline in May. Manufacturing capacity utilization was unchanged from an upwardly revised 77.6% in May.



Due to the end of the American Axle strike, the production of motor vehicles and parts rebounded steeply in June, with the second largest one-month gain since 1999. This caused an increase of 0.2% in overall manufacturing output, the first gain in three months. Meanwhile output increased 1.1% at mines and 2.1% at utilities, pushing total industrial output up 0.5%, the largest gain in eleven months.

Industrial production had been weak in recent months but the slowdown resembled the period of sluggish growth we experienced in early 2003, not a full blown recession. Most likely we have already seen the worst of the slowdown for industrial production and output will be upward in the months ahead.

If the Federal Reserve were to start raising rates to fight inflation we would also become more bullish on economic growth in the near term, as businesses would have an incentive to accelerate activity to avoid even higher rates down the road.

Brian S. Wesbury is Chief Economist and Robert Stein, CFA is Senior Economist at First Trust Economics

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Editor**

Big O Losing Big Mo?

by Lisa Fabrizio

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

Poor Barack Obama. In the space of a few short weeks, he has gone from liberal savior with a 15 point lead over John McCain, to a mere mortal in a [dead heat](#) in the polls. He has alienated some of his base by flip-flopping on issues like the FISA vote, partial-birth abortion and most importantly, stating that he will continue to "refine" his Iraq War policy.



Lisa Fabrizio

In addition to his change of position on issues, he's been [slapped down](#) by German Chancellor Angela Merkel on his plans to conduct a photo-op at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, had his call for bilingualism [rejected](#) by 83% of voters polled and been vocally castrated by his predecessor as the so-called voice of American blacks.

Even worse for him, a CNN poll [showed](#) that support for Obama among *Democrats* has dropped five points in the last month. And the number of Clinton backers who say they will not vote for Obama has risen to nearly one third over the same period; so much for the healing of old wounds and repairing party unity.

How could this have happened in such a short time? What went wrong? The problem for Obama is that of any far left candidate; he must run to the center during the general election season in order to attract blue collar Democrats and Independents. Whether or not the candidate is actually sincere during this period is often of no consequence; everyone expects it as a part of the electoral process.

What's different this time is Obama's portrayal by the media as a transcendent figure, one who is expected to float high above the dirty business of common politics. The first warning signal should have been his decision to forgo public campaign financing after solemnly pledging that he wouldn't. His explanation that "the system is broken" sounded suspiciously like an old McCain campaign slogan.

To those for whom Obama is an almost religious icon, the thought of him soiling himself by compromising his stances and breaking his promises, is a letdown of almost Biblical proportions. But such are the consequences when a candidacy is based on a cult of personality rather than practical experience or a concrete platform of ideas.

It is indicative of the liberal mood of late, that they can sense that some of Obama's 'power' has gone out of him. A case in point is the Democratic response to the [cover](#) of the *New Yorker* magazine, where his wife was portrayed as a black power chick with a machine gun while he is attired in Middle Eastern garb. The cartoon--set in the Oval Office and intended to ridicule far-right "distortions"--also features a portrait of Osama bin Laden on the wall and an American flag burning in the fireplace.

A few short months ago, the left would have applauded such a grand exposé of the fear and loathing tactics of the knuckle-dragging opposition, but times have changed. And indeed, had liberals not gone off the deep end over this, the vast majority of Americans who never read the *New Yorker* would never have seen it. But now the fear is that the Obama phenomenon is not big enough to overtake the ignorance of the great unwashed in Middle America who might take the images in the cartoon to heart. Andrea Mitchell summed this up by haughtily [suggesting](#) that the cover "is too sophisticated to actually be perceived the way it is intended." That liberals can dish it out but can't take it--even from their own--is nothing new. What is new is the way in which their base is in a great sate of unease and grumbling, even though they have such a godlike figure as their head.

So can Obama get his mojo back? Is he a reliable liberal or not? Should his backers still believe in him? Oddly, the most sensible answer comes from his former pastor, Jeremiah Wright who [told us](#)

that, "He does what politicians do...He goes out as a politician and says what he has to say as a politician." If liberals can only accept that image of Obama they might yet salvage the election; if not, their Denver convention might just be the site of a mile-high fall from grace.

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

**E-mail the
Editor**

Business Without a PAC?

by Tim Carney

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

Follow the divergent treatment recently of four different financial companies suffering from the mortgage crisis, and you begin to detect a pattern: The well-connected — with big lobbying budgets and generous campaign contributions — get special favors from [Washington](#), while the others get special abuse.

Government-backed mortgage companies [Fannie Mae](#) and [Freddie Mac](#) are collapsing, and so Congress and the Bush administration are rushing to save them, insisting to the investing public that everything is OK.

[Lehman Brothers](#) is upset about negative rumors hurting its stock prices, and so Uncle Sam is investigating who is badmouthing the firm. But [IndyMac](#), a commercial bank and mortgage lender, was pushed over the edge by a [U.S.](#) senator, [Charles Schumer, D-N.Y.](#)



Tim Carney

The difference: Fannie, Freddie and Lehman are all famously well-connected to Washington, with high-priced lobbyists and burgeoning political action committees; IndyMac, meanwhile, had no PAC at all and only a tiny lobbying budget.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were so tight with government that it was hard to tell if they were government agencies or private corporations. Officially “government-sponsored entities,” they were chartered by Congress to boost the mortgage industry, but they were still private companies, owned by shareholders who bought their stock ([FNMA](#) and [FMAC](#)) as you might buy [General Motors](#) or [Microsoft](#) stock.

Fannie’s closeness to federal power has been well covered by the press recently. [Jim Johnson](#) — a longtime top aide to [Walter Mondale](#) and more recently an adviser to [Barack Obama](#)’s campaign — headed Fannie Mae throughout most of the Clinton administration, Johnson’s ties to Democrats in power being invaluable. Clintonistas on Fannie’s payroll included [Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick](#) and [Office of Management and Budget Director Franklin Raines](#), the [New York Times](#) reported. Former and current Bush administration officials have worked for Fannie, too, including former [U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick](#). Fannie Mae spent \$1.39 million on lobbying in this year’s first quarter alone — more than \$15,000 per day, counting Saturdays and Sundays. Fannie and Freddie combined spent nearly \$200 million since 1998 on lobbying and campaign contributions.

Their preferential treatment at the hands of Congress and the administration is unsurprising. [Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee Chairman Christopher Dodd](#), who has received \$25,000 from Fannie’s and Freddie’s PACs over the past three cycles, took the extraordinary measure of publicly talking up these corporations last week.

“These institutions are fundamentally sound and strong,” Dodd told reporters as their stock dropped last Friday. “There is no reason for the kind of reaction we’re getting.” Sounding a lot like an [Enron](#) executive in late 2001, Dodd added, “This is not a time to be panicking about this. These are viable, strong institutions.”

Over the weekend, [Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson](#) proposed, in broad terms, some sort of federal bailout of the two companies.

While Dodd was talking up Fannie Mae, somebody was talking down Lehman Brothers, an investment bank suffering from its exposure to subprime mortgages. In response, the government sprang into action, starting an investigation into who is spreading “rumors” that hurt Lehman and

the stock of other companies. One federal official told Reuters that the government was working “to prevent rumors that threaten commercial banks, investment banks and government-sponsored enterprises.”

Lehman has spent about \$2 million lobbying since 2004, while its PAC has spent about \$350,000. That money has helped Lehman turn the power of the already overburdened [Securities and Exchange Commission](#) against anyone who talks down Lehman’s stock.

IndyMac got the opposite treatment. Schumer, a longtime Fannie Mae defender, wrote a gratuitous public letter warning of IndyMac’s impending collapse. This led to a run on the bank and the stock’s price plummeting — and thus IndyMac’s actual collapse.

IndyMac had no lobbying presence at all before last spring, and has spent less than \$50,000 on lobbying ever — less than half of what Fannie Mae averaged in one week in this year’s first quarter. Even worse, they don’t even have a political action committee. Trying to do business in finance without a PAC and a big lobbying outfit is like trying to haul trash in northern [New Jersey](#) without permission from the likes of [Tony Soprano](#).

Timothy Carney is a columnist with the Washington Examiner, where this first appeared.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Friends and Politics

by David Keene

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

The news that Republican presidential wannabe John McCain took only a second or two to throw one of his closest friends under the bus recently should remind us of just why politics can be such a lonely business.

The truly ambitious politician is more often than not willing to sacrifice anything and anyone to the hunger for higher office, and this hunger is nowhere greater than among those who aspire to the presidency. If anyone out there doubts this, this cycle should dispel those doubts.



David Keene

Both Sens. Barack Obama (D-III.) and McCain (R-Ariz.) have demonstrated a willingness bordering on eagerness to abandon anyone who might somehow embarrass them or be used by their opponents to criticize them. Sen. Obama's opportunity came, of course, when he discovered just what his minister was saying during all those sermons we have to assume he slept through over the years. Oh, he stood by the Rev. Jeremiah Wright for a minute or two, but then announced that he wasn't nearly as close to his minister, personal friend and spiritual adviser as he'd claimed over the years and consigned the man to the outer darkness.

Later, he separated himself as quickly as he could from Tony Rezko, one of his chief fundraisers for years and a man who had helped him personally acquire property that significantly enhanced the value of his home in Chicago and announced that he was henceforth having nothing to do with shady characters like Rezko and the Washington lobbying community or with foreign policy advisers who were too critical of his opponents.

Now, I'm not arguing here that any of these decisions lacked merit. The Rev. Wright was and presumably still is a nut, for example, and Rezko is cooling his heels in jail. These, however, were his friends, and he abandoned them as other politicians have abandoned theirs as he marched on toward bigger and better things.

Lest he be outdone, McCain preached his own jihad against lobbyists and fired a few who had supported him when no one else would just to show how serious he is about his image. Tossing them under the bus was easy enough, though there was no evidence whatsoever that any of them had done anything wrong.

And now there's the case of former Texas Sen. Phil Gramm. When Gramm retired from the Senate eight years ago, West Virginia's Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), an unlikely Gramm friend, spoke at the reception put together by his friends to bid the senator adieu. Byrd told those assembled to honor the retiring senator that Phil Gramm was the single brightest man he'd met since his own arrival in the nation's capital back in the '50s.

As a senator, Gramm had left his mark on the body in which he served and was regarded by all who knew him as a stand-up conservative who knew of what he spoke. He'd been a professor of economics before running for the House as a Democrat in 1978, voted for Ronald Reagan in 1980 and quit the Democratic Party to run for the Senate as a Republican in 1984. He won that race in a landslide and in the years he served, he emerged as the most thoughtful conservative in the Senate and a man who earned the respect of those who disagreed with him as well as of those beside whom he fought.

In 1996, he ran for president and selected his good friend John McCain as his campaign chairman. The two men crisscrossed the country together, and when McCain decided it was his turn to run this time, he asked Gramm to return the favor, which he did without hesitation. He accompanied McCain

to Iowa, New Hampshire and everywhere else, helped take apart and revamp his campaign when it collapsed and proved himself the good friend McCain knew him to be.

In February, Fortune described Gramm as "McCain's chief economic adviser — and perhaps his closest political friend." His presence gave comfort to conservatives uneasy about the Arizona senator, as it was rumored that he would play a major role in a McCain administration and most conservatives would trust Gramm implicitly.

All that ended quickly. Gramm had made some substantively defensible, but arguably politically boneheaded remarks about the economy and, well, his longtime friend John McCain authorized his spokesmen to let the world know that Gramm was henceforth to be regarded as a non-person from whom they would neither solicit nor accept advice or even phone calls.

So much for friendship. No wonder politicians lead such lonely lives.

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

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Editor**

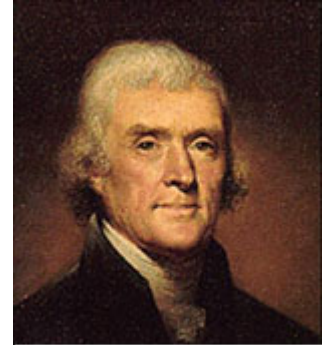
Educating the Founders

by Robert Curry

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

"At age sixteen Jefferson *and* Madison *and* Hamilton were all being schooled by Scots who had come to America as adults." Garry Wills

This was no mere coincidence. Scholars from Scotland were held in the highest esteem in colonial America because of the preeminence of Scottish thinkers and Scottish universities at that time. The Scottish Enlightenment (1730-1790) was an explosion of creative intellectual energy in science, political theory, economics, and technological innovation. It arrived just in time to have a decisive influence on the Founders.



Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson, Madison and Hamilton are the architects of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and *The Federalist*. If we want to understand their thinking and their writings, we need to start with the fact that the Scottish Enlightenment provided their teachers.

Madison 's tutor, Donald Robertson, was a product of the Scottish Enlightenment at its peak, but the great intellectual influence on Madison was John Witherspoon, also a Scot. When Madison entered Princeton in 1769, under the leadership of Witherspoon it had become the American university where the great thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment—Hume, Smith, Hutcheson, Reid, Ferguson and Kames—were studied most intensely.

Jefferson's tutor, William Douglas, had studied at Glasgow and Edinburgh, but the great intellectual influence on Jefferson was William Small. Like Witherspoon, Small was a member in good standing of the Scottish Enlightenment. He came to America to teach at William and Mary only from 1758 to 1764—just in time to guide Jefferson's studies there during the most intellectually influential years of his life.

Hamilton 's tutor at King's College (today's Columbia), Robert Harpur, was also a product of the Scottish Enlightenment, having studied at Glasgow before coming to America.

In fact, the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment were studied and hotly debated just about everywhere in colonial America. In the words of Douglass Adair, "At Princeton, at William and Mary, at Pennsylvania, at Yale, at King's, and at Harvard, the young men who rode off to war in 1776 had been trained in the texts of Scottish social science."

Witherspoon is perhaps the most important example of the influence of Scottish educators. In addition to Madison, his students included twenty-one U.S. senators, twenty-nine members of the House, twelve governors, and three Supreme Court Justices. Probably the most important of the lesser known Founders, he was a signer of the Declaration and an early and strong champion of American independence.

Witherspoon's own education can help us see just how close the Founders were to the Scottish Enlightenment. Before coming to America, he studied with David Hume, Adam Smith and Thomas Reid. Is it any wonder that their ideas and arguments, and the ideas and arguments of their Scottish colleagues, are everywhere in the writings of the Founders?

**E-mail the
Editor**

Obama Campaign Finance

by Matt Varvaro

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

There are legitimate philosophical arguments against the system of public financing of presidential campaigns - the most obvious being that the campaigns should not be funded by the public, but instead by each candidate's voting constituency, so that the candidate with more supporters willing to donate will have more money than his opponent. This seems logical. If two businesses are competing for a group of prospective customers, the government has no place devising a tax system that raises funds to be evenly distributed to each business in order to "even out the playing field" and prevent any sort of financial advantage of one over the other. This is the obvious flaw of the public finance and regulation of any entity, including presidential politics, and this argument has been made countless times over the years. But never by Senator Barack Obama of Illinois.



In fact, Senator Obama has consistently been an outspoken advocate of public financing. Moreover, he reminded the voters time and again that, once the general election rolled along, he would "aggressively pursue an agreement with the Republican nominee to preserve a publicly financed general election." In a televised debate with Senator Hillary Clinton earlier this year, Obama pledged to "sit down with John McCain and make sure that we have a system that works for everybody." Well, the general election is finally here; no such agreement has been aggressively pursued, no such meeting with Senator McCain has occurred, and Senator Obama has announced that his campaign will completely forgo public funds, the first candidate of either party to do so in the general election in the thirty-plus years the system has been in place.

For a candidate who has already raised over \$250 million since he officially announced his candidacy early last year, including more than \$58 million in the month of February 2008 alone, it should come as no surprise that Senator Obama would rather count on the virtually unrestricted donations by his own supporters than a public financing system that would only permit him about \$84 million for his general election campaign. This alone is not unreasonable, nor is it as morally offensive as some are making it out to be. The system is in place to give candidates a fair shot at securing advertising funds.

If Senator Obama doesn't need it, which clearly he doesn't, there's no reason that he should participate, of course, aside from the fact that he had clearly indicated that he would accept public funds, or at least make an effort to work something out with his opponent.

The question is, why couldn't he just say that? Even though he went back on his word, at least the voters would understand his reasoning if he just explained that, due to his unprecedented fundraising success, he would prefer to opt out of public financing in order to raise more money. It would be pretty hard to hold that against him.

Instead, in his official statement regarding this decision, the senator offered this convoluted explanation: "We've made the decision not to participate in the public-financing system for the general election. This means we'll be forgoing more than \$80 million in public funds during the final months of this election. It's not an easy decision, and especially because I support a robust system of public financing of elections. But the public financing of presidential elections as it exists today is broken, and we face opponents who've become masters at gaming this broken system."

So, according to Senator Obama, he is not opting out of public financing because it's useless to him, but rather because the system is "broken" and needs to be reformed. This, of course, raises the obvious question of why Senator Obama did not try to work out some sort of compromise with

Senator McCain (as he had promised), who is known for his openness to compromise and reform, especially with members of the opposing party. It's amazing how a candidate who supports such a "robust" system can actually find it in himself to completely abandon it.

Clearly, Obama has no interest in reform or negotiations when it comes to his fundraising; he just wants to be left alone to do what seems inevitable at this point: vastly outspend his opponent in every conceivable fashion.

But once again, the problem is not that Senator Obama rejected public financing, or even that he went back on his earlier promise to participate. The problem is his laughable explanation for it: that the system is "broken," so he will not partake in it on moral grounds - this is a glaringly obvious lie. He is rejecting public funds because he knows that he can raise more money without them, which is a good reason.

But that's not the reason he gave to the American people, so not only did he go back on his word, but also directly lied to the voters. By making this pledge to reform the system without actually doing so in this election, Senator Obama will make sure that he is not bogged down by public financing, but that the Democratic candidates after him will be.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Reader Comments

Issue 113 - August 6, 2008

**CONSERVATIVE
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Editor: I'm with your editorial "Old Right War Lessons" regarding the significance of World War I. What a blunder our entry was (indeed, the war itself). Yet, I do think that point has been sufficiently emphasized in conservative (maybe even liberal) circles. My guess is that Pat Buchanan takes on WWII given the current "debate" with the Neoconservatives (think Podhoretz) who hold up Churchill and tend to describe the present world situation in terms of Munich, appeasement, Hitler, etc. My take on interventionism is that we (Republicans, those who call themselves conservative) got accustomed to meddling in the world during the Cold War period. Justifiably so -- perhaps we went too far on occasion, but who can argue that we were faced with a real threat? When that threat ended, the habit of meddling with the world didn't. And that's what I see as the problem. This is an intriguing area from any number of angles. One of the things that scares the hell out of me is that relatively small group can steer us into a disaster like Iraq; that there was no real difficulty in selling something which on its face was absurd -- remember those small drones that would likely appear off the East coast to spray us all with poisons? Your piece is excellent. I not only enjoyed it, I learned from it. Thanks. George Carey, Georgetown University

Editor: "Old Right War Lessons" is a very interesting and fun ride, not totally "fused" with my own views but I'm always learning, or trying to, in my old age. Did we "first" depart from limited government with Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson? How about Lincoln? You asked why many who were opposed to Franklin Roosevelt were not opposed to Wilson. My father opposed U.S. entry into the Great War, and supported Wilson in 1916 because of Wilson's stated opposition. Ditto WW II, where dad was counsel to General Wood at America First (not blasphemous, btw, and hardly Kennedy-esque -- even though Jack was a supporter!). But you're on to something when you say: "If nonintervention is the issue, World War I should be the focus since without the U.S. in the first war, there would have been a stalemate and no World War II, no Hitler and perhaps no Lenin." Why did Sen. Robert Taft later support World War II and NATO? Maybe that's because they were **constitutional,** with a Declaration of War and a debate followed by a vote of 2/3 of senators present and voting. I think you give the Constitution, and thus true pre-Woodstock conservatives, short shrift and that might well account for a good bit of it. Christopher Manion

Editor: Thank you for a thoughtful and illuminating essay, "Old Right War Lessons." Yes, you have uncovered a strange inconsistency among members of the Paleo-Right (either paleo-conservatives or paleo-libertarians): their heroes were opponents of FDR's statist (interventionist) policies, but why those heroes had been almost completely absent in opposition to earlier statist Progressives' policies. Why? Because almost all Paleos' favorite opponents of FDR's interventionist foreign policy were domestic progressives, e.g. defenders of big government at home. So, in paleo-writings, you can read praise of Robert LaFollette (father and son), Charles Beard, John Flynn, William Borah, Burton Wheeler, George Norris, even of Gore Vidal--all progressives, or liberals, or New Dealers in domestic policy, all isolationists in foreign policy. Domestic sins are forgiven by Paleo-Right, because of (alleged) foreign policy virtues. On the other hand, real limited government conservatives, anti-Progressives and anti-New Dealers, who, however, from prudential reasons supported aid to Great Britain against Nazi Germany, or even advocated a war against Nazism, are missing from the Paleos' pantheon of heroes. So, Henry Stimson, Henry Luce, and his glamorous, thoughtful wife Clare Boothe Luce, are never admired by Paleos. Statists at home cum isolationists abroad are preferred to anti-statists at home cum (prudential or occasional) interventionists abroad. Hence, anti-statism

isn't the main factor for Paleos, really. Isolationism is. Of course, from the American point of view, there was no reason or compelling interest, whatsoever, for the U.S. to enter WW I. On the other hand, American intervention into WW II could and should be judged prudentially. The position opposing the U.S.' entry into the 2nd European war was defensible, as well as a position advocating a defeat of Nazi Germany before a Nazi Germany conquering the whole of Euro-Asia and would become an unconquerable World-Monster. (In my view, America First Committee's opposition against American entry into the WW II was morally defensible, even though I, for prudential reasons, disagree with it. What was morally, politically and strategically indefensible, was America First's opposition to any military aid to Great Britain, which was fighting the Nazis alone at the time.) However, Paleos, at least paleo-libertarians, are completely wrong on the Cold War; on the other hand, the post-war American conservative movement, led by William F. Buckley Jr., Frank Meyer, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan, was completely right. American isolationism during the Cold War was a recipe for disaster, at least if your love of freedom was genuine and honest. What is maddening, however, is Paleos' silence on Barry Goldwater. Imagine, there was, in 1964, domestically the most Jeffersonian, anti-statist, anti-big government, pro-decentralization presidential candidate of the 20th Century, and what did Murray Rothbard do? Why, he voted for LBJ!!! Anti-statism, anyone? Very well, why was Barry Goldwater unacceptable to paleo-libertarians, allegedly defenders of freedom? Because of his foreign policy views, of course! But why is the strict, dogmatic isolationism so important to paleo-libertarians, that it trumps anything – and everything - else? Because they are ideological anarchists, which is the most anti-conservative position ever! You know, if you honestly believe that no government or state are legitimate at all, then you conclude that no government's or state's active foreign policy is legitimate at all. As a default position, the only acceptable foreign policy is no foreign policy at all, e.g. isolationism, always and everywhere, for ideological reasons only. So Murray Rothbard was very consistent (even though very foolish and perverse) to write in the 70's of the 20th Century that "...the real enemy was not in Moscow or Havana, but in Washington, D.C." I would strictly distinguish between a paleo like Pat Buchanan and a paleo like Murray Rothbard. The former is an American patriot, the latter was an anarchist ideologue. Pat Buchanan is, in my view, mistaken in his post-Cold War foreign policy views (especially in his post-Cold War love-affair with Russia, which is keen on post-Communist, KGB-style, neo-imperialism), but there is no doubt that he advocates American interests as he sees them (however mistaken he might be). On the other hand, Murray Rothbard did not give a damn about American interests; he, from a blind ideological passion, always advocated dogmatic isolationism, whatever its consequences for freedom in the World and in America. You see, his greatest enemy had always been the American state. I agree that the foreign policy of a free republic should be judged and evaluated prudentially. A position advocating isolationism always, in all cases and in all circumstances, is as foolish as a position, which always, in all cases and circumstances, advocates interventionism. The proper key to a proper foreign policy of a free nation is prudence, which would sometimes recommend isolationism, sometimes interventionism and in other times anything – or everything – in between. Decisions should all be made according to prudential judgment: which course would serve best in defense of freedom at home primarily, and of freedom abroad secondarily. Roman Joch, Director, Civic Institute, Prague, Czech Republic

Editor: Very good professor in your "Old Right War Lessons." Like it, I like William F. Buckley Jr. Like him, I travel with my jar of Peanut Butter. This is outstanding; now get out there and vote for John McCain. Tim Sullivan

Editor: Congratulations on "Old Right War Lessons." I thought I had an ample understanding of the showcased "progressive era" but your essay opened my eyes further than ever to the politics of that calamitous time. You have done a wonderful service by translating into contemporary terms the now obscure era's movements and themes. Your writing about the period when the Old Right collapsed in the 30s reminded me of a conversation I once had with our late colleague, Dr. Eliseo Vivas - the great ethics teacher and philosopher of Northwestern University during the 1970s. Dr. Vivas was

discussing his days in the student far-left in the 1930s when I asked him what the campuses had been like when conservative academics dominated those precincts. I asked him why the conservatives had seemingly allowed the Marxists (with their quack theories of history and economics) to populate the groves of academe. Initially he was stunned and remarked that no one had ever asked him about those conservative professors and academics. He said that the conservative professors and academics had simply lost all energy and never resisted the Marxist infestation as far as he could recall. He said that the conservatives had no heart for struggle and had simply faded away into the mists. My own reading of the times is that the rising media of the pre-WWII society was so overwhelming infected with ideological hysteria that thoughtful public debate and discussion was virtually nonexistent. In the 20s and 30s there was a tidal wave of irrationality: Psychoanalysis, Quantum theory, Bauhaus, Modernism, Darwinism, Managerial Science, Fascism and Marxism et. cet. Wisdom was reduced to a cultural cul-de-sac. Gnosticisms were pounded relentlessly into the mass mind swamping the influence of quieter and better thinkers rendering them, except for some Christians, lapsed into a kind of despair and exhaustion. (The stalwarts in those times received no amplification or were seen as vestiges of a past consumed.) Tim Hunter

Editor: I certainly don't disagree with your thesis in "Old Right War Lessons" regarding the evolution of "Progressivism/Populism/Socialism" in the 20th century. Teddy Roosevelt was indeed the first "RINO." However, you did not mention another powerful force that came on the scene during the same time frame, that being Female Suffrage. In my view, the Nineteenth Amendment had an enormous part to play in the creation and shaping of the "Nanny State" that we have today. Given the desire for many if not most females for economic security over economic freedom, the Federal, State and local governments that we have today reflect in large measure that underlying philosophy, and the alphabet-soup of programs and agencies created since 1920 to further those largely female objectives. I do not consider myself a misogynist, only a realist and student of history. I just read the "tea leaves," I don't arrange them. Sincerely, Richard M. Ludwig, Williamsburg, VA

Editor: Thank you for the excellent article on Woodrow Wilson and the Constitution by Robert Curry. I agree with you that Wilson was a pioneer in the attacks on our Constitution. The progressive (liberal) elements in our legislature are now attacking our founding document with real fervor. In a relatively short span of time, the liberal wing of the Supreme Court has shown utter disdain of the Fifth Amendment in the Kelo decision and the recent Second Amendment decision. Thank you for an interesting, educational article. Robert Wolfe

Editor: Hats off to Spencer Warren in his article "PBS's Distorted War" for being able to sit through this entire "show"! I happened across this "War of the World" about the time Niall Ferguson stated WW II was between "evil" and "lesser evil" forces, so I boiled for a few minutes then changed stations. And Warren is right: why must I continue to have PBS shoved down my throat (and pay for the privilege)? If it went away, the spin-doctor backlash would be hilarious to watch. Keep up the good work. James Hale

Editor: Thank you for Spencer Warren's article on Ferguson, the British author, and PBS. If Ferguson wants to do yet another analysis on WW2, so be it. It won't be the first, maybe not the last. Appearing on PBS means I won't bother seeing it. Perhaps a small cut of my taxes go to support PBS, but I can't stand Moyers or PBS. If the leftists care about fairness in the media, they should start with an overhaul of PBS. And, I'll believe that when I hear about it from you. Sincerely, Stan Stein, Philadelphia, PA

Editor: Regarding Spencer Warren's "PBS's Distorted War," I would not give PBS a dime. Everything they do is propaganda, Too bad they can't just do the TRUTH. Retta Weatherhead

Editor: Regarding Larry Hunter's "A Conservative For Obama," odd, is it not, that a sometime economist for the US Chamber of Commerce believes so evidently in the unimportance, even apparent irrelevance, of economics? To say nothing of the muddiness of his thoughts (best word?) on how the international political system works? Forgive my asking, but in what sense is this person a Conservative? He might, of course, be a former Conservative, in some pre-Kirkian sense. Jared Lobdel

Editor: I hope there aren't too many Republicans like Larry Hunter! Obama will be ruinous for America! Ethel Begley

Editor: I clearly do not understand Larry Hunter's thinking. He is willing to let someone who tells you one thing you do not agree with, YET hoping he is lying and will do another? Please He obviously does not care about the second amendment, or religious freedom or abortion , right of the unborn but insist on rights for the women instead. You think Obama will be able to fix foreign affairs without experience or what experience is he counting on ??????? He certainty has the right to think as he wishes about what the military has done for our country. I hope Obama respects them more than I have seen him or heard him speak of them. Respectfully, Jan Van Wagner

Editor: As a New York State registered Conservative, although I agree that the GOP has abandoned Ronald Reagan's philosophy of limited government and low taxes, to support Sen. Obama for president would be like the proverbial "cutting off your nose to spite your face. Any conservative who thinks that America will be able to return to a free enterprise system that has made America great after socialist democrats like Obama, Pelosi and Reid take control of our government, only has to look at New York City where socialist-Marxist have had controlled city government since the 1930's. If the Obama, Pelosi, Reid big government socialist democrats take over the federal government this November, in my opinion, we will have one party socialist rule in Washington, D.C. until America collapses into bankruptcy as the Soviet Union did. Jack Coughlin, Chairman, Deer Park Conservative Committee

Editor: I hope this "conservative," Larry Hunter, isn't serious about voting for Obama for President. I know a lot of conservative Republicans are frustrated with their parties, but to vote for Obama is ridiculous. John McCain isn't who I really want either, but he is a lot better then Obama. Obama scares me. Corleen Stephan

Editor: I just finished reading Mr. Hunters piece. I have one question to ask him.....Are you that crazy? Just because the present RNC and its' leaders have gone RINO doesn't mean that every conservative should give in. RD Gatchell

Editor: If Larry Hunter (who must be a closet Democrat intent on some fame and political propaganda) is worried about his personal freedoms, he can really kiss his freedoms goodbye when Mr. Obama and his Senate and House appoint Supreme Court far left-leaning justices. Again, I do not really think Mr. Hunter is a conservative. I think Conservative Battleline was sadly duped. Larry Hunter is a Democrat plant or an insider wannabe. Ann

Editor: I read Larry Hunter's feeble attempt to justify his support for a leftist government interventionist who wishes to increase the power of the federal bureaucracy and has no intentions of allowing the economic and free market forces of our economy work out the corrections that occur when various sections of our economy blow hot and cold over the course of a decade. Indeed the problems we currently have are as a direct result of the short term thinking of fellows like Hunter and the failure to invest in our future. Obama reflects the same selfish greed for power and control that took over in the 1990s, a self-serving attitude that admits to no authority other than the sound of his own voice. Until the people in this country and those who win control of government, business and media realize that people not "stuff" is what is important, until we are a people simplify our lives and return to the ideals of a deity which are found in faith, family and relationships, the polarity and divisiveness which marks the selfish mentality will continue, and those incongruities will continue to allow the destruction of our most precious natural resource - our children. John J. Jakubczyk, Attorney at Law, Phoenix, AZ

Editor: What are Mr. Hunter's thoughts about the type of judges we would get under a liberal President and a liberal Senate? Jack Buzbee

Editor: I hope that since Larry Hunter wrote his article he has now heard the intentions of the illustrious Obama and reevaluated his obvious fascination with his call for change. I hope you can see that the change for America now has become the change, whatever that means, for the World and that is his ambition. He says he is a citizen of the World and this is his destiny. Obama is frightening in that his charisma is seducing many to think that he is the Savior. You are not a conservative you are naive misguided journalist who has fallen into the same trap as the biggest majority of journalists.. Perhaps you will change your mind since the speech in Germany, which is part of his campaign, is a farce and he is the most inept candidate that has ever run for President of our great country. I have been around long enough to know one when I see one. Jeanne M Carr

Editor: Larry Hunter asks some vitally important questions in his article. But he never mentioned the numbers of human lives that are sure to be lost to abortion (50 million and counting to date) if this man secure the Oval Office. Can all those deaths (and more) be justified in the name of anything? Margaret Stephens

Editor: I am appalled about Larry Hunter's perspective. I finally heard the best explanation I've heard about why a conservative should vote for John Mc Cain. There is no possibility that John Mc Cain could convince me to vote for John Mc Cain. However, Barak Obama has completely convinced me to vote for John Mc Cain. I am completely befuddled about how any person who calls him a committed American can possibly fall for a guy who would make a great president on "The West

Wing", but is truly an empty suit with no accomplishments, no apparent moral compass, and no other beliefs than those that come out of the Democrat Chicago machine. For shame on Larry Hunter. Sherry Tourino, Nipomo, CA

Editor: Larry Hunter's article is the most wrong-headed reasoning imaginable. It's clear that Mr. Hunter is an isolationist and believes we can cling to some mythical past where we sit at home unmolested and pretend the rest of the world doesn't exist. After all, if we don't acknowledge its existence, it can't possibly be. Exactly what are the freedoms taken from us in the name of National Security? Air travel is certainly the most disagreeable method of travel – there's one. If Mr. Hunter's whining about surveillance of communications between Americans and known or suspected enemy agents during time of war, that's nothing new. No others readily come to mind. It seems that we should vote for a neo-Marxist Obama because he will inflict the temporary pain we deserve for past hubris. What nonsense! Such a presidency would make us an easy target for any crackpot terrorist as well as introducing more socialism into our society that's nearly impossible to reverse once enacted. We're still paying for the calculated evils inflicted upon us by FDR that were engineered to turn Americans away from being self-sufficient to being big government-dependent. Showing no moral principles, Mr. Hunter is no conservative, he's a libertarian and his opinions should hold no sway with true conservatives who believe that yes, we can judge right from wrong based on our inherent moral precepts. I wish him luck in getting straight answers to his questions to Obama. He'll hear lots of hemming and hawing. James C. McAlister, Tampa, FL

Editor: Mr. Hunter is a fool, or worse. The next president will choose probably at least two Supreme Court Justices and Obama will pick the liberals of liberals which will exert governmental control over free press, public discourse, the economy, etc., etc. For this reason alone, not to mention the disaster that the 'cut and run' mentality in Iraq will cause, is sufficient to fight to the very last breath to keep this man out of office! Wm. Mark Smith

Editor: Of course Larry Hunter is wrong. He didn't list the policies Obama would implement if he were in office. He didn't list the policies foreign or domestic that he doesn't like. He doesn't know that Obama would remove the policies he doesn't like. Matter of fact he doesn't say much at all. I guess he just doesn't like McCain or Bush so he is going to take his ball and go home. Boo hoo boo hoo. What a sorry explanation for his voting decisions. In answer to his questions to Obama yes he does think they are the right choices. If Hunter were paying attention he wouldn't have to ask those questions. Robert E. Solum

Editor: Larry Hunter offers as much gobbledygook as Obama. Yours Truly, Valerie Rhodes

Editor: "A Conservative For Obama?" by Larry Hunter? Was that a joke? Debbie DeCillis, Seaford, NY

**E-mail the
Editor**