



CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington

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Small Government Failure?

by Donald Devine

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Our progressive friends are at it again, helping us poor old time conservatives solve our problems. The books and articles seem endless, from the leftist Century Foundation's *The Conservatives Have No Clothes: Why Right-Wing Ideas Keep Failing* by Gary Anrig to the neo right-leaning *Grand New Party* by Ross Douthat and Rehan Salam, with leading op-eds from the New York Times and Washington Post to the Weekly Standard – from E.J. Dionne to David Brooks, all the progressives want to help, especially in writing the new Republican Platform.

Whether from left or right, the progressive diagnosis of our troubles is simple--the very subtitle of Anrig's book tell us. America has adopted conservative ideas and they have failed. As Douthat and Salam put it, we must "move beyond the [Ronald] Reagan mindset" and his outdated ideas of limited government. Anrig, the liberal progressive, praises Douthat/Salam's more "positive" conservatism, saying "They suggest plenty of proposals that many progressives would support." No kidding – they are progressive proposals. Anrig gives away the game, however, saying Douthat/Salam's reformist "conservatism" "would shift political battles to a playing field on which progressives would have a much stronger footing." Of course, conceding an opponent's principles is always a good way to lose.

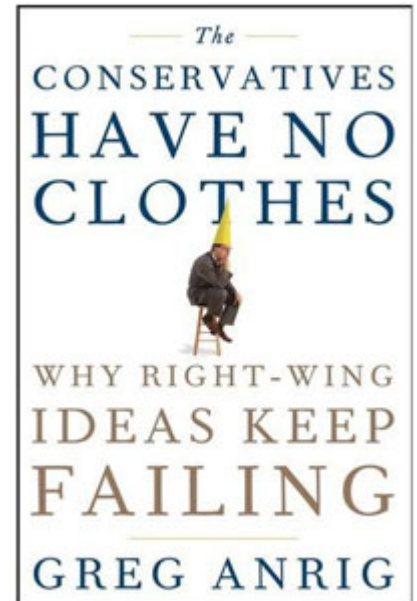
Thanks for the "help" but "no thanks."

Proposing liberal solutions under the guise of helping conservatives is fair game. Anyone who falls for it deserves it. But even progressives cannot create their own facts. What is their evidence Reagan's ideas have failed? Because, as Anrig put it, "President [George W.] Bush "has followed this playbook more closely than any previous president, including Reagan" and "in practice these ideas have failed to deliver." How has Mr. Bush pushed limited government even more than Reagan? Anrig gives two proofs, tax cuts and hostility to government activism. Bush's tax cuts "have weakened the country's fiscal health without significantly improving the lot of the vast majority of citizens" and the "right's hostility toward government has produced only inefficient government."



President Bush has "hostility toward government"? As the Budget data clearly show, this president increased nondefense discretionary government spending by more than any other recent president, Democratic or Republican in his first term – in fact by 25 percent or at a rate of 6.2 percent per year. For nondiscretionary spending his Medicare prescription drug program was the first major new entitlement since Lyndon Johnson, with liabilities one-and-a-half times gigantic Social Security's. Some hostility to active government! Did the tax cuts offset all of this? That is a strange argument from progressives who claim government spending is what helps people. They were the original cheerleaders for deficit spending under their patron Franklin Roosevelt.

President Bush's domestic spending moderated somewhat over the following two years for which we have data but the total for the six years ending in 2008 is still reported as an increase of 3.2 percent per year, still way higher than Bill Clinton's 2.5 percent or Jimmy Carter's 2.0 percent annual increases. Even this understates Mr. Bush's largess since the government's figures do not include the stimulus tax refund (which OMB estimates as larger than the total six year increase), the housing bill, and the Medicare "doctor fix" that will increase the Bush numbers substantially – their



best guess so far is 8.3 percent increase, rivaling the first term highs. How anyone could call this massive spending increase hostility to government help for the majority of citizens defies comprehension.

Well, the progressives say, Bush might spend but he does not regulate.

Anrig claims the Bush Administration exceeded even the Reagan years in deregulation especially in response to the Katrina hurricane and in its lax oversight of food, toys, the environment and the mortgage industry. Yet, it was the Bush Administration who created, with Congress of course, a whole new regulatory Department of Homeland Security to deal with Katrina-like disasters. It failed but hardly because there was not sufficient regulation. Indeed, all the evidence is that the new security regulations blocked voluntary assistance from outside that was the most effective assistance in prior emergencies. The president's own brother's attempts to ship aid to New Orleans were blocked by security regulations.

Indeed, Anrig's is a very strange list. Food, drugs, toys and the environment are among the most highly regulated of all activities. For the mortgage industry, Fannie Mae, Freddy Mac, the Federal Housing Administration, the Treasury Department, the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Federal Reserve bank all did act. There was plenty of regulation. It just did not work. Indeed, it was the government regulatory policy of lending to people with poor credit to encourage home ownership that caused the crisis.

Of course, Anrig would still blame it on Bush's "hostility" to government. The title of Thomas Franks' new book is *The Wrecking Crew: How Conservatives Rule*. He is upset with a statement President Bush made that "government should be market based." But the president certainly does not sound hostile – his most famous statement on the matter is "when someone hurts, government must act" – and his appointees all stress their interest and willingness to intervene to "help" consumers. Indeed, the Bush administration has increased regulation of all of these fields. Certainly, President Bush has not had a deregulation agenda like Reagan did and most of his appointees have a highly regulatory mindset as documented by the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the CATO Institute, the Heritage Foundation and many others.

The most precise over-time measure is by CEI's Clyde Wayne Crews, measuring the number of pages of regulations published by each presidency in the official Federal Register. The last year of the Carter Administration produced 73,258 pages of regulation. By the end of the Reagan term, regulations were down substantially to 50,616 pages. By the end of the Clinton years, the number of pages was back up to 64,438. But the Bush Administration ended 2007 with 72,090 pages – almost back to where Reagan began. The total number of pages under President Bush was 200,000 more than the 1980's – some hostility to regulation!



The "helpful" progressives just cannot afford to see the deeper problem. It is progressivism itself. Their "experts" sitting in their big government offices just cannot deliver. Much of the world, has come to the conclusion that 1930's soviet-style big-government regulation has failed. It is big government that has failed, not the puny GOP efforts of recent years. Who says so? The very people the progressives claim to help. A recent Pew Center poll, part of its on-going study of government favorability, shows that national government is now supported in a positive manner by a mere 37 percent of the public while small local government is supported favorably by 63 percent (and state government by 59 percent) of Americans.

Other than a short-lived improvement in national government favorability following 9/11, this has been the pattern for decades. Even among the poor who are the main justification for progressive policies, a massive study of low income workers by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and The Washington Post found that they just do not believe that government works. The survey found 53 percent said government programs that "try to improve the condition of working families" do not have "much impact" and 20 percent said they actually "make things worse." They did not believe any change in administration would help either. Big government is a perceived failure by the very people it aims to help – and this has been true long before Mr. Bush.



John McCain

The simple fact is that since Reagan no one has even tried the alternative - to reduce spending and regulation and to return programs to the more popular and effective local and state governments or the private sector. It is not small government conservatism but big government Republicanism that has failed. The only hopeful sign is that John McCain recognizes this. When the Office of Management and Budget released its updated deficit numbers last month, he was typically blunt: these new, higher budget figures demonstrate that "There is no more striking reminder of the need to reverse the profligate spending that has characterized this administration's fiscal policy." Perhaps the Republicans will be smart enough to once again move these sentiments into their platform next week.

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

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Editor**

Americans Killed God?

by Richard Rolwing

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

When they quoted, "The Americans have killed God and they want the Muslims to bury him," both the Ayatollah Khomeini and Osama Bin Laden were quoting Qtub, Al Queda's main mentor.

To both of them America was just like other modern democracies, formally godless. That made them Satanic. Actually all human governments are Satanic, Qtub taught. To legislate is a Divine prerogative. To obey a law is to submit. Submission is worship. Submission to men is idolatry. Satan loves that. Islam has its Koran. It needs no human governments. Sola Scriptura. Man cannot cooperate with God, even under God. Only God can make a law requiring submission.



But Qtub did not understand America. All of its state constitution preambles acknowledge God. He ignored the Declaration of Independence which began with God the Creator, ended with God, and built its entire case on God, whom it acknowledged as the Supreme Legislator, the Supreme Judge, and the Supreme Governor, of the world, two of which expressions were prayerful.

In the Declaration's view, men can cooperate with God, share or participate in His authority (and power) to legislate, execute, and judge. Submission is viewed as a duty owed to God as well as man simultaneously as long as men act under God. The Declaration never contested King George's authority over the rest of the British Empire. It was his authority over America he had forfeited. Non-submission had become a duty and not just a right. God no longer backed up the King's might with right.

Whatever his short studies in the U.S., Qtub had every reason to ignore the Declaration. Few are its American students and fewer still any college courses. The Niagara of books on the Founding era over the last 50 years almost completely ignore it. The vast majority of legal scholars, historians, political scientists, and political philosophers dismiss it completely as originally and enduringly irrelevant. Even Scalia called it fluff.

Dershowitz says the Declaration's rights are useful fictions just like its God was for Moses, Jesus, the Vatican, and Deists. The National Institute for the Study of the Declaration of Independence has published ten volumes defending it against both past and present critics, and establishing its significance for the Constitution.

Most American critics, however, never directly confront its natural theology. They mostly like to say that it is obvious that if anything is self-evident it need not be said, so that, with its feet cut off, the Declaration just floats away into the mist, dismissed. They never notice they themselves do what they say the Declaration should never have done, spell out something obvious. Of course, its natural law philosophy only recalls alchemy or witchcraft. Only a foolish attorney brings it up in Court.

Neither the Second Continental Congress nor the 13 new states tried to impose the Declaration's philosophy on citizens, although they did require acceptance of its act of separation. It was this new nation's birth certificate. Without it the Constitution would have been contrary to British law, the the law of nations, and the natural law. Scholars have claimed it was forgotten for 50 years, but they simply ignore the Supreme Court's frequent recourse to it and ample reliance upon it during that time.

Uncle Sam began based upon a religious philosophy of natural law, natural rights, natural religion, and natural theology. He neither embraced nor repudiated any historical religion or faith. Only a

monotheistic religion is compatible with his philosophy, but regardless of one's theoretical convictions, obedience to his Constitution and laws suffice for good American citizenship.

While Uncle Sam never contested that the authority to rule comes from God and shares in His Divine Right, he insisted that who rules, and by what rules, comes from the consent of the governed. The Declaration never replaced Divine right, God, with man, a human majority, though even the Declaration's few defenders say otherwise. The Declaration never declared independence from God.

By reason of the Declaration of Independence, America is a God-based regime, though not dependent formally upon any historical faith. The American experiment is a moral project as every nation is, but it is also religious and monotheistic. It is a philosophical project, reason-based, not faith-based.

Why is America not a theocracy? It is convinced that God leaves it to the people governed to mediate His authority to rulers, to 1) designate who will share in the Divine authority to rule, the right to command submission, and to 2) determine the form of that rule, and to make the rules -- under God, cooperating with God thereby. Those who designate and determine their human government worship God in doing so and also by their obedience to those human rules.

Neither Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, or Calvin have a problem with that, incidentally. Qtub had no clue, like Dershowitz.

Richard J. Rolwing is the author of a [series of works](#) entitled "Was Frankenstein Really Uncle Sam? Notes on the State of the Declaration of Independence"

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Editor**

Tribute to Solzhenitsyn

by Paul Weyrich

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

This year will go down in history as one in which great fighters for freedom have been called home by the good Lord. And so we bid farewell to the most important freedom fighter of the 20th Century, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who passed away recently at the age of 89.



Paul M. Weyrich

Solzhenitsyn told the world the story of the Soviet gulags. He was in the gulag for having "criticized" Josef Stalin in a letter to a friend from the front in World War II. While in the gulag system as a political prisoner he felt he had no hope. So he determined to make a run for it, figuring that the Soviets would kill him. Just as he was about to make a break someone came along and stopped him. That someone, he said, had a warmth he had never experienced before. This man who Solzhenitsyn said he had never seen at the gulag took a stick and drew a cross in the dirt. And he left, never to be seen again. Solzhenitsyn later came to believe that that kindly figure was Christ himself. He had no idea that as he was thinking of escaping there was a worldwide effort to set him free. Shortly after that kindly gentleman prevented him from escaping, he was expelled by the Soviets, eventually to make his way to the United States.

In what was one of the most disgraceful episodes in American history President Gerald R. Ford refused to invite Solzhenitsyn to the White House. It was one of the factors which led Ronald W. Reagan to challenge Ford later that year.

One of the first people Solzhenitsyn asked to see in the United States was Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC). He said he learned when he got to the West that it was Helms and George Meany of the AFL-CIO who played the most important role in the effort to free him. He and Helms visited many times over the years. It is a remarkable coincidence that both died within a month of each other.

Solzhenitsyn settled in Vermont because it reminded him of Russia. He remained there until the Soviet Union fell, whereupon he returned to Russia, where he remained an important symbol in the fight for freedom. He had documented the repression of the Soviets based upon the information available to him in Russia. When he gained access to the records at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, he was horrified to find that he had based his writing upon false information. So he spent all of his days in the United States feverishly rewriting his work. He completed that task shortly before he returned to his native land.

He stayed out of American politics except for one very important speech at Harvard University in which he warned the West that it was in mortal danger of disintegration if it did not maintain its principles. That speech disappointed some conservatives who accused Solzhenitsyn of defeatism. But a careful reading of that remarkable address demonstrates that it is anything but defeatist. It was prophetic.

This Nobel Peace Prize winner was perhaps the most important symbol of the struggle for freedom. In recent days he had a Russian TV show in which he propounded strange economic theories. An economist he was not. A fervent Orthodox Christian he was, and from that Church he was commended to the Lord. Memory Eternal!

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

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Editor**

Mamma Mia!

by S.T. Karnick

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The movie musical *Mamma Mia!*, which is based on a stage play featuring the music of the pop-rock group [Abba](#), set a record for the strongest opening weekend ever for a movie musical, besting the \$27.5 million of last year's *Hairspray* by approximately \$100,000.



That's a very impressive performance given the record number of people who flocked to see *The Dark Knight*. The *Mamma Mia!* success represents a triumph of what might be seen as a theatrical version of counterprogramming, a common strategy employed in television.

In counterprogramming, a TV network responds to a popular show on another network by trying to appeal to a different audience demographic, as when a network counters a series popular with young males by running in the same time slot a program geared toward young females.

Certainly *The Dark Knight* appealed to a very wide audience, but its weakest segment was probably women over thirty. That was the group *Mamma Mia!* grabbed most effectively. As [USA Today reported](#), "According to distributor Universal Pictures, 75% of the *Mamma Mia!* audience was female, 64% of them 30 and older."

According to the *USA Today* story, the weekend's movie slate shattered the previous audience record: "more than \$258 million poured into the box office, Nielsen EDI reported. The old record was \$218 million over the weekend of July 2, 2006."

The studio's choice to open *Mamma Mia!* on a weekend when multitudes of people would be going to the movies to see others among this year's strong slate of summer release clearly was a smart one, but I think a good deal of the credit for the film's opening-weekend success must go to [Abba](#). Upon first seeing the trailer for *Mamma Mia!*, I was fairly certain it was not something I'd enjoy seeing, as it looked appallingly hokey, pseudo-earthly, cute, and estrogen-laced.

Seeing Meryl Streep dancing around in the trailer was a huge turnoff for me.

If you ever want to draw me to a Meryl Streep movie, show her jumping a brand-new Jaguar off a crumbling wooden ramp over a flaming river and crashing through a window of a burning warehouse while firing a shotgun at al Qaeda drug runners, and I'm there. Otherwise, no.

That is what I thought until I found out that *Mamma Mia!* was based on and used the music of [Abba](#).

The fact is, [Abba](#) was a terrific pop group that made quite a few classic songs. My favorites include "Take a Chance on Me," "SOS," "Knowing Me, Knowing You," "Super Trouper," "Dancing Queen," and "Waterloo." If your favorites list differs, that only shows how many superb songs this band released.

Hence, I will see *Mamma Mia!* despite the distinct lack of explosions and delightful mayhem. Apparently wonders will never cease in the American culture.

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

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Editor**

Obama MSNBC Rap

by Pete Sasso

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

If a tree falls in the forest and nobody sees it fall, did it really fall? If a supporter of a campaign scores a vitriolic tune and nobody reports the lyrics, does the song matter? MSNBC hopes not.

On the July 31st "Morning Joe" during the "News You Can't Use" segment, co-host Willie Geist brought attention to a recent rap song penned by platinum selling rapper and Barack Obama supporter, Ludacris. The song calls for Senator John McCain to be paralyzed. Geist first attempted to down play the hate-filled nature of the song by saying "I think it's an actual controversy. Isn't it? Some are saying it is."

Geist proceeded to play only a short non-offensive part of the song. Guest-host David Shuster agreed that the tame lyrics MSNBC selectively showcased were "pretty good."

After Geist agreed with Shuster that the harmless lyrics "Morning Joe" aired were pretty good, Geist promised to shield the audience from "nasty stuff about the other candidates" and then read an Obama campaign press release condemning the song without ever referring to the exact part of the tune that was so offensive.

Had a musician supporting Senator McCain recorded a similar song, MSNBC likely would not have been so "protective" of the audience.

Never in the segment did the hosts mention that the melody called for John McCain to be paralyzed or that Ludacris ridiculed President Bush for being mentally handicap. While pretending to protect viewers from harmful lyrics, MSNBC was actually guarding Barack Obama from the fallout that follows a supporter like Ludacris saying such atrocious things.

Fortunately the mainstream media are not the only ones in the forest.

Full song lyrics as well as a full transcript is below:

Willie Geist: I think she's a fine young lady. Let's talk about this Ludacris controversy.

Joe Scarborough: Oh please

Geist: I think it's an actual controversy. Isn't it.

Some are saying it is. Here's the deal, Ludacris, the rapper, Atlanta-based guy. Obama has said he's a fan, he's appeared with him a couple times. Says he likes the guy. Calls him a great talent, great businessman. So Ludacris puts out this mixed tape with an Atlanta group, with a song called politics, Obama is here. We're going to play part of it for you. The part we leave out is the part that's stirring the controversy where he goes after Hillary Clinton, John McCain and George Bush in what some might consider an inappropriate fashion. But here is the part we can show you.

All you other politicians trying to hate on my man, watch us win a majority vote in every state on my man. You can't stop what's bout to happen. We bout to make history. The first black President is destined and it's meant to be. Get out and vote or the end will be near. The world is ready for change because Obama is here!

David Shuster: I think those lines are pretty good.



Geist: Ok, those lines are pretty good. I am not going to repeat what he said, some nasty stuff about the other candidates. So Barack Obama's campaign said he should be ashamed, Ludacris. Barack Obama said many times in the past rap lyrics today too often perpetuate misogynistic, materializing, degrading, images, exc exc so -- they are not down with Luda apparently.

Song Lyrics [via RushLimbaugh.com]:

*Hillary hated on you, so that bi*** is irrelevant Jesse talking slick and apologizing for what?*

if you said it then you meant it how you want it have a gut!

and all you other politicians trying to hate on my man, watch us win a majority vote in every state on my man you can't stop what's bout to happen, we bout to make history the first black president is destined and it's meant to be the threats ain't fazing us, the nooses or the jokes so get off your ass, black people, it's time to get out and vote!

paint the White House black and I'm sure that's got 'em terrified McCain don't belong in ANY chair unless he's paralyzed Yeah, I said it cause Bush is mentally handicapped Ball up all of his speeches and I throw 'em like candy wrap cause what you talking I hear nothing even relevant and you the worst of all 43 presidents get out and vote or the end will be near the world is ready for change because Obama is here!

'cause Obama is here!

The world is ready for change because Obama is here!

**E-mail the
Editor**

NBC's Hidden Olympics

by Spencer Warren

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

NBC's television coverage of the Beijing Olympics naturally highlights the extraganza, the contests, the winners - even the losers. It is great fun and millions of Americans enjoy it greatly.

But amidst the ocean of sporting images and flashing medals flooding a large portion of the living rooms of our country for these two weeks, let us not forget the "hidden olympics" of what is really going on behind the scenes in China..

Let us remain ever mindful of the tortured political dissenters and the Christians, including bishops and other clergy, who are imprisoned only because they seek to practice their faith outside of the State-controlled churches. Let us not forget all the censorship, including control of the Internet with the assistance of computer technology purchased from Bill Gates and Yahoo. Let us not forget the forced abortions and the fetuses aborted at nine months because they have Down's Syndrome or other diseases. All this, and more, while the athletes compete for their medals.



These all give quite a different view of China than the one being broadcast by NBC.

The Chinese regime does not even spare its helpless animals. Millions of dogs and cats in China are tortured or killed with the knowledge or support of its government. Many readers may be generally aware that dogs and cats are eaten in parts of the country. Few know that many or most are tortured to death in the belief they "taste" better the more they suffer.

Thus, dogs are slowly bludgeoned to death with pipes and hammers in China (scroll down to second China entry in left-hand column to see photo of a bludgeoned little rabbit at <http://www.tegendierenleed.nl/Foto's/index.htm>). Thousands are butchered and bled dogs to death while fully conscious, or, with cats, boil them alive. (Graphic photos and description at www.aapn.org./xichang.html, also read this page's link to Food Dogs. For photos of a Chinese street-side cat "restaurant," including a kitty being bled to death on the curb, scroll down to first China entry at: <http://www.tegendierenleed.nl/Foto's/index.htm>.)

Dogs also are skinned alive for their fur, which is surreptitiously mis-labeled and sold on garments in Western countries. The much loved St. Bernard rescue dogs are imported into China because, cross-bred, they make a good "food dog" which can be slaughtered at four months of age. Among other horrors, dogs have been observed tied in nets being dumped from trucks, crying as their feet are broken, then flung with tongs into fenced areas where laughing men bludgeon them just for kicks.

All this while the athletes compete for their medals on NBC.

Some will say that's the "culture" of this region. Well, dogs, cats and other animals have a different view of such "multiculturalism." First, no animal should be tortured. Second, dogs and cats are uniquely loyal and affectionate as human companions; dogs in particular serve as eyes for the blind, they are employed in therapy for disabled patients, and they are often seen saving our lives, as one last year rescued his human family's baby, himself absorbing the attacking rattlesnake's bites. Third, anyone who knows dogs and cats recognizes that, like all animals, they are a challenge to human vanity: our moral conscience requires that we understand how they express themselves on their own terms, as sentient creatures who know pain and joy as we do.

"A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal." Proverbs 12:10. And in words particularly applicable to the subject of this article, St. Francis of Assisi said: "If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow man."

It is all well and good to celebrate the Olympics. But it is also well to remember the many abuses that are carefully hidden by the Chinese regime. As Francis reminds us, what is really important is dealing well with our fellow man and the policies and actions that lead men and women closer or further from that goal. Sports can lead positively in that direction but oppression of people and animals cannot. Americans need to hear both sides of the story.

But where is NBC and the rest of the world's press?

Spencer Warren is Conservative Battle Line's media critic as well as president of Abner, Daisy and Snow's League for Animal Protection.

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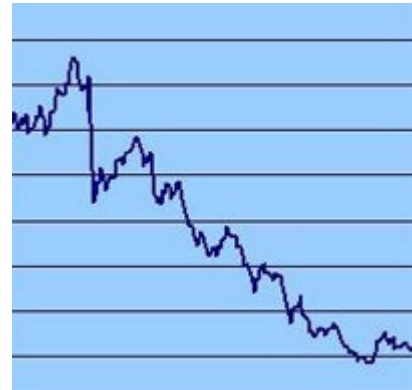
Economy Bottoming Out?

by William Simon, Jr.

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

This is the most uncertain and anxious time in the financial markets in my memory. We are a short step from a full blown panic.

Everywhere one turns – stocks, bonds, real estate and commodities, as well as related investment vehicles – there is a high degree of volatility. The pundits and commentators are full of dire predictions fueling the overwhelming negativity.



To be sure, there is more than ample negative economic data to support virtually any bearish scenario. The price of oil is not only at a historic high, but also the full effects have yet to be felt in the broad variety of areas of the economy to be impacted over immediate term. Prices of other commodities, especially food, have spiked recently and don't seem to be near a bottom. Home prices continue to mount. This lousy list could go on and on.

My crystal ball is cloudy. I don't have a strong view whether we are at the bottom but I strongly doubt it. If forced to make a prediction, I would expect six to nine months of continued decline and distress.

History may provide an interesting context.

Basically, over the last 50 years the equity markets have experienced sharp pullbacks on nine occasions. On four of those nine occasions the market declined just in excess of 20%, and on five of those occasions the equity markets declined over 30%.

Now, the pundits have been reminding us that, as of last week, we are now officially in a bear market – the markets are now down slightly over 20%.

So I think the proper question is whether this bear market will ultimately, with of course the benefit hindsight, rank within the group of four pullbacks averaging roughly a 20% decline or with the five pullbacks averaging an over 30% decline?

Other disturbing circumstances: The Fed basically has its hands tied, the credit markets are bordering on the dysfunctional, and the dangerously high percentage of homeowners has only a slice of equity left in their homes. Many experts believe a 15 to 20% decline from here would not be unexpected.

Given the existing level of nervousness and overall economic weakness, if the correct answer is that this time around we are now not at the bottom, look for some good old-fashioned panic in the not too far distant future.

So, for me, I am praying we are at a bottom but I am not willing to bet on it. I feel like I am whistling by the graveyard with fingers and toes crossed.

William E. (Bill) Simon, Jr., the son of the late Treasury Secretary in the Ford Administration, is an investment banker and Foundation President. He ran a very close race for Governor of California and continues to be active in conservative and Republican politics. He is a member of the Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees.

This first appeared for the Free Congress Foundation.

**E-mail the
Editor**

McCain's Real Health Reform

by John Goodman

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

If you listened only to the rhetoric in this presidential campaign season you might be tempted to conclude that Barack Obama has proposed bold new changes for our health care system, while John McCain is offering only small improvements.

If so, you are in for a surprise. Health policy analysts believe the most fundamental reform plan proposed by any serious presidential candidate this year is the McCain health plan. While Obama is promising health reforms paid for by socking it to the rich, the McCain plan involves even more redistribution. While Obama has waxed eloquently about the need to make health care more affordable for the middle class, the McCain plan would provide them with even more help. And while Obama throws the words "universal coverage" into almost every speech, McCain's plan would likely insure more of the uninsured than Obama's plan ever will.



John Goodman

What is it that makes the McCain plan so bold and so different?

Health insurance for most nonelderly Americans is purchased with funds from three sources: (1) an employer contribution, (2) an employee contribution and (3) a government tax subsidy. The McCain health plan is based on the idea that the first two contributions should be determined by individual choice and competition in the marketplace. The government's contribution, however, would be the same for everyone: \$2,500 for every adult and \$5,000 for every family.

Including state and local government, tax subsidies for private health insurance exceed \$200 billion a year. The distribution of these dollars is arbitrary, unfair and wasteful:

Arbitrary: How much help a family gets from government depends on such factors as its tax bracket, the type of health plan the employer chooses, health costs in the city where the family lives, and state and local tax rates. Example: An upper-income family living in a high-cost, high-tax city could realize an annual subsidy of \$10,000 or higher, while a low-income family living in a low-cost, low-tax city could receive a subsidy of \$750 or less.

Unfair: According to the Lewin Group, families earning \$100,000 a year get four times as much tax relief as families earning \$25,000. We give the most encouragement to those people who least need it and who probably would have purchased the insurance anyway. Example: A \$10,000 health plan purchased by an employer for a family in a 50% tax bracket gets \$5,000 of tax relief. The same plan for a family in a 15% bracket gets \$1,500 of tax relief.

Wasteful: People can always lower their taxes by spending more on health insurance and there is no limit to how bloated a health plan can be. Theoretically, the plan could cover marriage counseling, over-the-counter purchases of aspirin or anything else the IRS consider a medical expense. Example: Some companies have generous, first-dollar coverage for executives and their families (all subsidized through the tax code), while the rank-and-file workers have deductibles, copayments and a more limited range of benefits.

Special burdens for people who must purchase their own insurance. Four in every 10 employers do not offer health insurance to their employees. Yet when these workers purchase insurance on their own they must pay with after-tax dollars. For a worker facing a 15.3% (FICA) payroll tax and a 15% income tax rate, the after-tax cost is almost 50% more.

Special burdens for part-time workers. About one in every five workers is part-time. Often employers do not offer these workers health insurance. And federal law makes it difficult, if not

impossible, for employers to give them a choice between wages and health insurance. If they buy insurance on their own, they must do so with after-tax dollars.

Special burdens for the self-employed. The self-employed are now able to deduct health insurance costs on their income tax returns. But, unlike other workers, they get no relief from the 15.3% payroll tax. For many, the payroll tax bite is larger than the income tax.

Special burdens for women. Because women move into and out of the labor market more frequently than men, they are more likely to purchase insurance on their own. They are also more likely to work part-time and increasingly they are self-employed.

How the McCain Tax Credit Solves These Problems:

The McCain Plan is Fair. Everyone is treated alike, regardless of income or job status.

The McCain Plan provides much more help to low- and average-income families than the current system. For the first time since World War II, low- and moderate-income families would get just as much tax relief as the very rich to purchase health insurance.

Relative to his Democratic rivals, the McCain plan is much better for the middle class. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama would continue the current practice of giving the vast bulk of federal help to the rich (through tax subsidies) and the poor (through spending programs). By contrast, the McCain tax credit gives the most new tax relief to the broad middle class.

The McCain plan would end discrimination against people who must buy their own insurance. People who must purchase their own insurance (including part-time workers and the self-employed) would get just as much tax relief as people who obtain insurance through an employer.

The McCain plan encourages all Americans to control costs. The McCain tax credit subsidizes the core insurance that everyone should have. It does not subsidize all the bells and whistles, as the current system does. Since employees and their employers will be paying for additional coverage with after-tax dollars, everyone will have an incentive to compare the value of extra health benefits to the value of other things money can buy.

Attractive Features of the McCain Tax Credit:

The McCain plan not only offers all Americans the same tax relief, it does so in a way that makes it as easy as possible for people to acquire insurance.

The Credit is Refundable. People can apply \$2,500 per person or \$5,000 per family to the purchase of health insurance, even if they do not owe any income taxes.

The Credit is Advanceable. Families will not have to wait until April 15 the following year to get their credit. They can obtain the subsidy in the year in which the insurance is purchased.

The Credit is Transferable. Insurance companies and other intermediaries will be able to help families obtain their credit and apply it directly to the health insurance premiums.

John Goodman is President of the National Center for Policy Analysis

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Editor**

True Energy Security

by Alan Caruba

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

"The Arctic may hold 90 billion barrels of oil, more than all the known reserves of Nigeria, Kazakhstan, and Mexico combined, and enough to supply U.S. demand for 12 years." One would have thought Joe Carroll's Bloomberg News report would have evoked some interest by the public and other media outlets. Instead, news of the U.S. Geological Survey was greeted mostly by a giant collective yawn.



Alan Caruba

"One third of the undiscovered oil is in Alaskan territory, the agency found..." Considering that the Democrat-controlled Congress adamantly refuses to let drilling occur for the oil known to exist in and off-shore Alaska, it is not surprising the public has concluded this vast treasure will remain untouched.

Apathy, however, is not a very good response to the prospect of this mother lode of potential new oil. Worse yet, we stand to lose any of the wealth it will generate if the same Congress signs the United Nations Law of the Sea Treaty, whose acronym, LOST, could not be more accurate. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have endorsed it, apparently oblivious to the fact that the mighty U.S. Navy can go anywhere it wants in the world. Even the Bush administration has marshaled no arguments against it.

This monstrosity of a treaty has been around since the days when the Reagan administration first rejected it.

Full disclosure of the contents of this treaty would have Americans in the streets of Washington, D.C. brandishing pitchforks. Bernard Oxman a professor at my alma mater, the University of Miami, describes its text as "amply endowed with indeterminate principles, mind-numbing cross-references, institutional redundancies, exasperating opacity, and inelegant drafting." In other words, it is a document intended to steal the wealth to which the United States has a legitimate claim.

Douglas Stone, a Senior Fellow at the Center for Security Policy, warns that, "LOST fostered the idea, per se, of international organizations with increasing transnational jurisdiction. Its bureaucracy will be nourished by royalties on mineral extraction and provide a model for similar agencies to assume authority and impose taxes and to inexorably devour American institutions and autonomy."

Can you imagine gifting the United Nations with \$50 trillion in Arctic oil taxes? That is what the U.S. Senate proposes to do if it ratifies LOST.

Frank J. Gaffney Jr., president of the Center, reminds us that, "If Americans have learned anything about the United Nations over the last 50 years, it is that this 'world body' is, at best, riddled with corruption and incompetence. At worst, its bureaucracies, agencies and members are overwhelmingly hostile to the United States and other freedom-loving nations..."

For more than a decade, the United Nations International Seabed Authority (ISA) has never produced a single commercial minerals harvesting operation despite having unfettered access to all the world's great oceans resources.

The United States, however, needs more oil now. In addition to Congress having put vast reserves in Alaska's ANWR off-limits, it has done the same for exploration and drilling in 85% of the nation's continental shelf.

The solution to America's present oil crisis lies in part in the Arctic Commons and, in particular, the Amerasia-Canada basin that holds the promise of huge oil reserves for centuries to come.

A dangerous scramble for the oil and gas reserves between Russia and the West can be avoided and, more to the point, the U.S. will lose its entire future commercial and energy security by signing onto LOST. Meanwhile, Democrat leaders in both houses of Congress have already rejected President Bush's July 14 effort to end a 25-year moratorium on drilling in most coastal waters.

The Democrat controlled Congress is either insane, treasonous, or both. Its presumptive candidate for President wants to repeat Carter's appalling windfall profits tax on oil companies. The ultimate result was a nearly 60% reduction in U.S. oil production.

As the Bloomberg News report noted, "The region above the Arctic Circle also holds an estimated 1,669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, equal to 27 percent of the world's known gas reserves, according to the U.S. Geological Survey report. "Contributors to the data included the Geological Survey of Canada, the U.S. Interior Department's Minerals Management Service, the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, the Cambridge Arctic Shelf Program, and researchers in Denmark and Greenland. No Russian institutions took part in the study."

At a time when nationalized foreign oil companies control more than 70% of the world's energy resources, private enterprise is the only answer to our national energy security. The largest transfer of wealth in history is occurring and it bodes ill for the United States. We dare not compound this travesty by failing to take steps to ensure access to the Arctic Commons vast reserves.

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

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Editor**

Warming Consensus Shattered

by Dennis T. Avery

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

The “consensus” on man-made global warming may have received a mortal wound.

Physics & Society, The journal of the 46,000-member American Physical Society, just published “Climate Sensitivity Revisited,” by Viscount Christopher Monckton. Monckton is an avowed man-made warming skeptic, and former science advisor to the late British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. (If you want to see the science, go [here](#).)

Viscount Monckton contends that the climate alarmists have mistakenly pre-programmed their computer models with equations that overstate the earth’s sensitivity to CO² by 500 to 2,000 percent—thus creating a senseless First World panic that itself threatens the future of society.



Dennis T. Avery

Physics & Society says: “There is a considerable presence within the scientific community of people who do not agree with the IPCC conclusion that anthropogenic CO² emissions are very probably likely to be primarily responsible for the global warming that has occurred since the Industrial Revolution. Since the correctness or fallacy of that conclusion has immense implications for public policy and for the future of the biosphere, we thought it appropriate to present a debate within the pages of *P&S*.”

The journal then offers both the Monckton paper and a response by David Hafemeister and Peter Schwartz, of the California Polytechnic Institute. *P&S* also issued an open invitation to “further contributions from the physics community.”

It had to happen. Too much evidence has mounted against CO² as a cause of the modern warming. Sea ice is expanding globally, not retreating (especially in the Antarctic). The oceans have stopped rising, and actually started to fall; that might be because they “stopped warming 4–5 years ago” according to NASA, based on data from the 3,000 new Argo floats now scattered world-wide. The number and intensity of hurricanes, cyclones, and tornadoes hasn’t increased. Rain has returned to Australia, reminding us again it is naturally the driest continent on earth.

The crowning blow: After nine years of non-warming, the planet actually began to cool in 2007 and 2008 for the first time in 30 years. The net warming from 1940 to 1998 had been a miniscule 0.2 degree C; the UK’s Hadley Centre says earth’s temperature has now dropped back down to about the levels of 100 years ago. There has thus been no net global warming within “living memory”!

The current cooling doesn’t mean another Ice Age is looming. There is massive global evidence of a 1,500-year warming cycle, going back 1 million years. It may be driven by the slightly varying distance between the earth and the sun. The sunspot index has had a 79 percent correlation with the earth’s thermometer record since 1860, during this time, the temperature correlation with CO² is a dismissive 22 percent.

NASA’s Jason satellite tells us the Pacific Ocean has entered a cool phase. Historically, these have lasted 25–30 years. After that, there may be some additional warming. However, the 1,500-year cycles typically shift abruptly; we should already have most of this one’s warming. When we’ll get the inevitable cooling? Probably centuries from now.

The warming debate is far from over, but an actual debate looks likely. Reputations and huge bundles of cash have been bet on man-made warming, including billions in government funding for climate research. The UN’s reputation—and perhaps its future—are on the line.

The American Physical Society itself has issued a statement: It stands by its belief that human-emitted CO² is "changing the atmosphere in ways that affect the earth's climate" and notes that *Physics & Society* is not peer-reviewed. Nonetheless, the debate is finally and openly joined, after 20 years of the Greens proclaiming humanity's guilt for wrecking the planet as beyond sane discussion.

Now, we look forward to a full-scale exploration of the science. We have heard quite enough from the computers.

DENNIS T. AVERY is a senior fellow for the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC and is the Director for the Center for Global Food Issues. (www.cgfi.org) He was formerly a senior analyst for the Department of State. He is co-author, with S. Fred Singer, of Unstoppable Global Warming Every 1500 Hundred Years,

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Editor**

Black Conservative Lament

by Larry Elder

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

Oh, no, not another "blacks in America" news special! One of the cable networks recently put together another one of these "specials" on what it's like to be black in America. The network asked a conservative friend of mine to participate. He sent the following letter; and I wrote back.

Dear Larry,

OK, Larry, I grew up a bit last night. Those [unflattering descriptive Deleted] at that news network on cable used me like a two-dollar whore! I interviewed with them for almost 10 hours, and all that talk was whittled down into five-second sound bites that put me in a rather negative light. Part of our talk was about the crack epidemic. I spoke about the way we are fighting this drug war, which we should approach as a health issue as opposed to a law enforcement problem. I talked about the impact single parenthood has on crime rates. I talked and talked. They edited it all down to, "If you don't want to go to jail, don't sell crack." I am really angry.



Larry Elder

The "wretched blackness" slant was so clear. I was on live for the half-hour preceding the beginning of the program. They ran a long segment with a black comedian/actor, talking about how he tells his son each and every day about how to talk to the police and how black men must be wary of cops. They cut to me, and I said that I was certainly in agreement that we need to talk to our children about respecting authority, but I also wondered if the comedian/actor talked to his son about the proper color shirt to wear in case some knuckleheads have a dislike of the color red or blue. The truth is that his son has more to fear from other young black men than he does from the police. I then quoted a homicide statistic: 94 percent of black homicide victims are killed by other black people. It was dismissed by the moderator so we could focus instead on how racist the cops are. Unbelievable.

It should not surprise me, then, that producers and editors would give liberal, hypersensitive blacks room to make their points -- even if they were factually untrue. They spoke to a professor from Columbia, who was droning on about how the legacy of slavery is to account for blacks' out-of-wedlock birthrate. Slavery?! This nonsense was seconded by another panelist. When I corrected them and said that the out-of-wedlock rate was lower during Jim Crow eyes began rolling, and my point was ignored in order to move on. And I was reduced to sound bites. Had to vent a bit.

--Your friend.

Dear friend,

My sister-in-law, an almost-recovered victim (thanks, at least in part, to me) called me during the show. She asked whether I was watching it, and I said no -- I knew what to expect. BMW -- bitching, moaning and whining. I asked my sister-in-law why they didn't spend four hours on the "experience" of Chinese-Americans? Americans of Chinese heritage are among our country's most successful -- despite being the first ethnic group to be specifically excluded from legal immigration to America, by laws enacted in 1882, and despite mistreatment and discrimination including many anti-Chinese laws passed in places like San Francisco, which were designed to protect the "native" laundry business.

Why doesn't the cable network, I asked her, do a show on the "experience" of Japanese-Americans, also some of the most prosperous of all Americans -- despite the World War II "relocation" camps

and California's anti-Japanese laws, once passed to prevent them from owning farmland? I don't compare this in kind or in degree to slavery, but it's 2008 -- with a black man possibly on the brink of attaining the presidency of the United States. Can we move on? The problems of the "black community" have to do with the welfare-state-induced breakdown (or, more accurately, non-formation) of the family. This causes a disinterest in education, and leads to poor values, reckless and irresponsible breeding, as well as a lack of the job skills necessary in an information-age society. We also have grievance groups -- black "leaders"; the oh-so-sympathetic media; fear- and guilt-laden whites who refuse to say (as they do to their own children) work hard and play by the rules; and many reluctant blacks who refuse to preach the message of "no excuses, hard work" for fear of being labeled "Uncle Toms."

I told my sister-in-law that nearly half of Harvard's black freshman class consists of blacks from the Caribbean or Africa -- areas less prosperous with far less opportunity. Care to explain that?

I told her that I bet many of the "talking heads" live comfortable middle-class lives or better -- some, no doubt several, tenured college professors who, not so deep down, believe that they were smart enough or worked hard enough to have made it, but the other poor SOBs, well, they need a more compassionate government, a less racist society to pull them through.

So, try to relax. Thanks to editing, they can make anyone sound like Elmer Fudd.

--Larry

This first appeared at [Townhall](#).

Larry Elder is a syndicated radio talk-show host and best-selling author from Los Angeles. To find out more about Larry Elder, visit his webpage at [LarryElder.com](#).

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Editor**

Americans Comment on Israel?

by Daniel Pipes.

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

May I, an American citizen living in the United States, comment publicly on Israeli decision making?

I recently criticized the Israeli government for its exchange with Hizbullah in "[Samir Kuntar and the Last Laugh](#)"; to this, the eminent counterterrorism expert at Tel Aviv University, Yoram Schweitzer challenged the appropriateness of my offering views on this subject. In "[Not That Bad a Deal](#)," he explained to *Jerusalem Post* readers how the "contents and tone" of my analysis "patronizing and insulting, overlooking as they do the fact that the government and public have the right to decide for themselves ..., and to shoulder the resulting price." He also criticizes me for offering an opinion on Israeli issues from my "secure haven thousands of miles away."



Yoram Schweitzer

Schweitzer does not spell out the logic behind his resentment, but it rings familiar: Unless a person lives in Israel, the argument goes, pays its taxes, puts himself at risk in its streets, and has children in its armed forces, he should not second-guess Israeli decisionmaking. This approach, broadly speaking, stands behind the positions taken by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and other prominent Jewish institutions.

I respect that position without accepting its discipline. Responding to what foreign governments do is my meat and potatoes as a U.S. foreign policy analyst who spent time in the State and Defense departments and as a board member of the U.S. Institute of Peace, and who as a columnist has for nearly a decade unburdened himself of opinions. A quick bibliographic review finds me judging many governments, including the [British](#), [Canadian](#), [Danish](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Iranian](#), [Nepalese](#), [Saudi](#), [South Korean](#), [Syrian](#), and [Turkish](#).

Obviously, I do not have children serving in the armed forces of all these countries, but I assess their developments to help guide my readers' thinking. No one from these others countries, it bears noting, ever asked me to withhold comment on their internal affairs. And Schweitzer himself proffers advice to others; in July 2005, for example, he [instructed Muslim leaders in Europe](#) to be "more forceful in their rejection of the radical Islamic element." Independent analysts all do this.

So, Schweitzer and I may comment on developments around the world, but, when it comes to Israel, my mind should empty of thoughts, my tongue fall silent, and my keyboard go still? Hardly.

On a more profound level, I protest the whole concept of [privileged information](#) – that one's location, age, ethnicity, academic degrees, experience, or some other quality validates one's views. A recent book titled [I Wish I Hadn't Said that: The Experts Speak - and Get it Wrong!](#) humorously memorializes and exposes this conceit. Living in a country does not necessarily make one wiser about it.

During the Camp David II summit meeting of 2000, when Ehud Barak headed the government of Israel and [I disagreed with his policies](#), more than once, my critique was answered with a how-dare-you indignation: "Barak is the most decorated soldier in Israeli history – and who are you?" Yet, analysts now generally agree that Camp David II had disastrous results for Israel, precipitating the Palestinian violence that began two months later.

It is a mistake to reject information, ideas, or analysis on the basis of credentials. Correct and important thoughts can come from any provenance – even from thousands of miles away.

In that spirit, here are two responses concerning Schweitzer's take on the Samir al-Kuntar incident. Schweitzer argues that "to fail to do the utmost to rescue any citizen or soldier who falls into enemy hands would shatter one of the basic precepts of Israeli society." I agree that rescuing soldiers or their remains is an operationally useful and morally noble priority, but "utmost" has its limits. For example, a government should not hand live citizens to terrorists in return for soldiers' corpses. In like manner, the Olmert government's actions went much too far.

Another specific: Schweitzer claims that, "relatively speaking, the recent exchange with Hizbullah came at a cheap price. It is debatable whether Kuntar's release granted any kind of moral victory to Hizbullah." If that deal was cheap, I dread to imagine how an expensive one would look. And with Kuntar's arrival in Lebanon shutting down the government in giddy national celebration, denying Hizbullah a victory amounts to willful blindness.

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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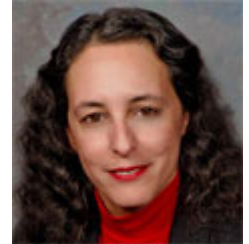
Obama Does Europe

by Lisa Fabrizio

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

Maybe it's me, but I'm still trying to understand the logic of the Obama campaign's European tour. Don't get me wrong, his obligatory trip to the Middle East and Afghanistan in his role as a U.S. senator was justified, if only by the presence of so many of his brave countrymen. But the reasoning behind 'Barry Does Europe' escapes me.

It has been suggested that Barack Obama went overseas in order to morph into 'presidential' material; that his mere presence on foreign shores would somehow be transformative. That would be like me jetting off to Never-Never-Land in order to become Peter Pan; an excursion that too many Obama backers already seem to have taken. After all, his lost boys have been playing White House make-believe--designing his presidential seal and getting his transition team ready for the big move--for months now.



Lisa Fabrizio

But his supporters loved the tour and the press went gaga as you'd expect, given that they got to spend a few days in Paris, France rather than Crawford, Texas; a place they've been forced to endure for the last seven years. And in the minds of all Obamamaniacs, that's symbolic of the difference between George W. Bush and their hero. Here's how the unbiased folks at the [AP](#) put it:

It's not only Obama's youth, eloquence and energy that have stolen hearts across the Atlantic. For Europeans, there have always been two Americas: one of cynicism, big business and bullying aggression, another of freedom, fairness and nothing-is-impossible dynamism. If President Bush has been seen as the embodiment of that first America, Obama has raised expectations of a chance for the nation to redeem itself in the role that — at various times through history — Europe has loved, respected and relied upon.

I hate to break it to the AP, but America's dynamism arose from her embrace of businesses, big and small; her idea of fairness was born of her cynicism toward the tyranny of her European parents; and her aggression against that tyranny has brought freedom to those who, if the press is to be believed, are still ungrateful for it.

But, just as most Europeans have formed their opinion of the U.S. by being force-fed the New York/Los Angeles slants of CNN and the New York Times, we should take with a grain of salt the reports that emanate from those international organs of liberalism that are in communion with their fellow travelers in Paris and Berlin.

We are gleefully told of a [poll](#), for instance, in which Obama was the presidential choice of 52% of a whopping 6,256 Europeans and Russians; as if that should somehow matter to a people whose ancestors fled the intrigue and "foreign entanglements" of Europe to build a nation where success was to be the reward for hard work and not simply bestowed by entitlement.

Not surprisingly, this has resulted in a [precipitous drop](#) in polling across the pond where Americans can see that, just like them, European voters have defied their own pollsters by electing center-right leaders like Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy and Silvio Berlusconi. This trend has flummoxed the liberal media on both sides of the Atlantic who bewail the fact that actual voting rights must be afforded to all citizens, even those who cling bitterly to guns and God.

This then is at the crux of Obama's domestic polling plunge. It may be that many of the coveted Independent voters are put off by a candidate who needs to display his foreign policy bonafides by illusion rather than from any concrete experience, and seeks approval at home via the opinions of foreigners. In any fair and balanced press coverage, this would be known as "being out of touch" with American voters.

Add to this that his [incoherent](#) explanations of how the surge in Iraq may or may not be working, but that he would still vote against it, are not very comforting in turbulent times. But don't expect the press--who has scolded President Bush mercilessly throughout his presidency for never admitting that he was wrong--to hold his feet to the fire over this or anything else, as they are clearly on board with whatever issues from his sainted mouth.

Also, the lingering concerns over Obama's American flag-pin flap and the infamous photo of his apparent reluctance to reverence our National Anthem were not helped by his reference to himself as a "citizen of the world." The majority of Americans will always be suspicious of any candidate who sides with those who consider us a bunch of rubes and hicks. It's akin to the old saying: I can call my wife whatever I want, but woe betide anyone else who does it.

You would think that liberal Democrats and the kingmakers of the worldwide press would have learned this lesson with John Kerry and his boast that foreign leaders were backing his presidential bid. Luckily for us, they have not. Obama recently [said](#):

It's embarrassing when Europeans come over here, they all speak English, they speak French, they speak German. And then we go over to Europe and all we can say is 'merci beaucoup.'

Thanks to you too Senator, and many happy returns on Election Day.

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

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Editor**

Controlling Coburn?

by David Keene

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

Tom Coburn's Senate colleagues don't know quite what to make of the doctor from Oklahoma. Many of them find him personally likable, but they can't understand why he seems to want to change the way the exclusive club to which they all belong has been doing business for so long.

And what's worse, they have no way of controlling the man. Coburn (R) left the House in 2000 after three terms there because he had voluntarily term-limited himself, and he says that he'll retire from the Senate after two terms there to go back to practicing medicine in Oklahoma. What that means, of course, is that he won't be around quite long enough to chair an important committee even if the GOP should retake the Senate at some point — and that, therefore, he doesn't have to watch his manners lest party leaders squelch his ambitions.



David Keene

Moreover, since he finds earmarks morally objectionable, his colleagues can't control him by cutting off funds for a library or parking garage back home and instead have to either confront his arguments or find a way around him. That was a lot easier in the House because there isn't all that much a lone congressman can do to derail spending programs there, but the Senate actually empowers folks like Coburn, who are willing to forsake the comity of the club and rely on the body's rules to get their way.

And that is exactly what Coburn has been doing by placing "holds" on legislation that he believes to be hard to justify under the Constitution, duplicative of existing programs or just plain wasteful. He has, over the course of this session, demanded that his fellow legislators seek cuts or revenue to fund the programs they seem so cavalierly willing to sponsor and tried to force them to ask themselves whether the programs they seek to establish are really needed.

This willingness to object has, of course, prevented Senate leaders from simply passing spending for senators' pet projects by unanimous consent and has forced the leadership either to abandon the bills objected to or to find a way to use the rules to get around Coburn's objections. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) came up with a way to do this by creating what many in the Senate are referring to as the Coburn Omnibus: combining many of the bills to which the senator has objected, along with other bills designed to draw the votes needed to invoke cloture and move to a vote on the package.

At the same time, it has just been announced there will be a record deficit next year that, as USA Today put it, "will saddle the next president with deepening budget problems in his first year in office."

That news worries Coburn and should worry the rest of us, but one man it doesn't worry is Reid, who argued that Coburn's objections to the package are unfounded because, since the bills in question are merely authorization bills rather than appropriations bills, their passage will have no impact on spending, the budget or the deficit. The senator even brandished a Congressional Budget Office letter to this effect with a grade-school lesson in the difference between authorizing and appropriating.

True in a technical sense, of course, but if the Senate leadership has no intention of ever appropriating the money to be spent as the legislation authorizes, Coburn wonders why Reid is so hot to pass it. In fact, he suggested during floor debate on the package that someone is lying to someone. It's either Reid, lying about never intending to fund the programs his colleagues are rushing to create, or him and his colleagues lying to their constituents by creating programs they never intend to fund.

Coburn is right, of course, because in Harry Reid's Senate it's business as usual regardless of the consequences down the road. Coburn says whether he wins or loses on the final vote is far less important than that he is beginning to force his colleagues to actually debate and perhaps even consider the future consequences of the often mindless spending they authorize and later fund.

One can only hope he's right.

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

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Editor**

Abortion An Issue?

by Sharon Hughes

Issue 114 - August 20, 2008

Barack Obama is gaining some support with evangelicals even though he is one of the strongest pro-choice Senators in Congress. Is abortion no longer important to people of faith as some say?

While a Catholic pro-life group warns Catholics and Evangelicals that a vote for Barack Obama is "a vote for the radical agenda of Planned Parenthood," the religious left doesn't think it's an issue of greatest importance.

Jim Wallis, editor of the religious left magazine [Sojourners](#), has argued that if Democrats want to win elections they must learn "how to talk the language of moral values, in a way that remains true to the party's principles."



Wallis says, "The American Right has been able to define "moral values" narrowly, almost exclusively in terms of wedge issues like abortion and gay marriage. It doesn't have to be this way. The abortion debate has really gotten very stale. It's a symbolic legal battle that takes place mostly only in election years. And it's a litmus test on the Left and the Right. No one seems to care about the abortion rate. The Republicans want a constitutional amendment banning abortion. That's just symbolic. It's never going to happen in America. And even if you do ban it, you're still going to have a huge problem in the culture."

I disagree with Wallis. The [abortion rate](#) still matters a great deal to the religious right. And why, may I ask, is a constitutional amendment banning abortion only a symbol?

While conservatives don't agree with John McCain on every issue, he is favored for his 100% pro-life voting record.

Obama boasted he had a 100-percent approval rating from Planned Parenthood compared to McCain's zero-percent rating, at a recent "Women for Obama" rally in New York where he welcomed the endorsement of the pro-abortion group. "I stand by my votes against confirming Justices Roberts and Alito.

I made it equally clear that I will never back down from making sure that women have their reproductive rights here in this country -- that's what's at stake in this election."

The following newstip on Planned Parenthood's most recent financial prosperity was passed on to me from a listener:

While most companies have started to feel the squeeze of our sagging economy, business has never been better for Planned Parenthood. Although the organization couldn't be more controversial, its profits have never been higher, according to the group's 2006-07 annual report. For the first time in history, Planned Parenthood surpassed the \$1 billion mark in annual income, a milestone made possible by \$336 million of your tax dollars.

Despite the rash of bad publicity, Planned Parenthood received a \$31.4 million pay raise in taxpayer funds--a 10.8 percent increase in the "nonprofit's" government revenue. Adding to the windfall, Planned Parenthood's clinics worked overtime for an extra 24,707 abortions in 2006, six times the number of casualties from the entire Iraq war. All together, its abortion mills put 289,650 unborn babies to death in the year 2006 alone. This is an increase of more than 20,000 aborted babies from the year before.

All this is from an organization whose supporters say they want to make abortion rare?

Is abortion still important in campaigns?

Yes, to Planned Parenthood—and to people of faith who stop and think.

Sharon Hughes is Founder and President of The Center for Changing Worldviews and a radio talk show host on KDIA in San Francisco, NPLR, RIGHTALK.com, and online at Salem Web Network's Oneplace.com.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Pickens' Wind

by Paul Driessen

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T. Boone Pickens is being lionized for his efforts to legislate a transformation to “eco-friendly” wind energy.

We’re “the Saudi Arabia of wind,” he argues. We need to “overcome our addiction to foreign oil,” by harnessing wind to replace natural gas in electricity generation, and using that gas to power more cars and buses. If Congress would simply “mandate the formation” of wind and solar corridors,” provide eminent domain authority to seize rights-of-way for transmission lines, and “renew the subsidies” for this energy, America can make the switch in a decade, he insists.



Pickens’ \$58-million media pitch makes good ad copy, especially in league with Senator Harry Reid’s absurd claim that oil and coal “make us sick.” However, his policy prescriptions would bring new energy, economic, legal and environmental problems – and a price tag of over \$1.2 trillion.

Hydrocarbon fuels built modern America, gave us the technologies and living standards we enjoy today, helped us eradicate diseases that plagued earlier generations, and boosted US life expectancy from 50 in 1900 to nearly 80 today. They still provide 85% of our total energy, and we could greatly reduce our reliance on oil imports if we would simply end the outrageous policies that keep our nation’s abundant energy resources locked up.

We have enough oil, natural gas, oil shale, coal and uranium to provide power for centuries. We have a growing consensus that we need to drill, onshore and off. But partisan intransigence and ridiculous environmental claims prevent us from utilizing these American resources.

Wind contributes more every year to our energy mix. But it still provides only 1% of our electricity – compared to 49% for coal, 22% for natural gas, 19% for nuclear and 7% for hydroelectric. Moreover, we will need 135 gigawatts of *new* electricity generation by 2020, but only 57 GW are planned.

We can and should harness the wind. But 22% by 2020 is far-fetched.

Wind power is intermittent, unreliable and expensive (even with subsidies). Many modern turbines are 400 feet tall and carry 130-foot, 7-ton, bird-slicing blades. They operate at only 20-30% of rated capacity – compared to 85% for coal, gas and nuclear plants – and provide little power during summer daytime hours, when air-conditioning demand is highest, but winds are at low ebb.

Using wind to replace all gas-fired power plants would require over 300,000 1.5-MW turbines, covering Midwestern “wind belt” agricultural and wildlife acreage equivalent to South Carolina.

Building and installing these turbines requires 5 to 10 times more steel and concrete than is needed to build far more reliable coal or nuclear plants to generate the same amount of electricity, says Berkeley engineer Per Peterson. Add in steel and cement needed to build transmission lines from distant wind farms to urban consumers, and the costs multiply.

It also means many more quarries, mines, cement plants and steel mills to supply those materials. But radical greens oppose such facilities. So the Pickens proposal would mean letting existing power plants rust, and importing steel and cement, instead of oil.

Since adequate wind is available only 3-8 hours a day, we would also need expensive gas-fired generating plants that mostly run at idle, kicking in whenever the wind dies down. That means still more money, cement and steel – and still higher electricity prices.

A successful speculator and corporate raider, who critics say never actually found oil, Pickens has large natural gas holdings that position him to make billions from selling gas for backup electricity generation – especially if drilling bans remain in effect, keeping gas prices in the stratosphere. Launching the enterprise with the backing of federal mandates and subsidies minimizes his financial risk and attracts semi-free-market investors, by putting the risks for his scheme on the backs of taxpayers. A \$58-million ad campaign could pay 100:1.

Pickens says we can't drill our way out of dependence on foreign oil. But that's true only if we keep our best prospects off limits to drilling. Open ANWR and the OCS, and the situation changes dramatically.

Unfortunately, greens and Democrats refuse to budge on these options – no matter how soaring energy prices batter poor families, workers, small businesses, Meals on Wheels and the automobile, airline, tourism, chemical and manufacturing industries. They're equally opposed to oil shale, coal and nuclear.

A single 1000-MW nuclear power plant would reliably generate more electricity than 2,800 1.5-MW intermittent wind turbines on 175,000 acres. Permitting more nukes would meet increasing electricity demand for a growing population and millions of plug-in hybrid cars.

Coal too offers affordable, reliable fuel for electricity and synthetic gas and oil, with steadily diminishing emissions. With 27% of the world's total coal, America is the Saudi Arabia of this vital resource, too. America needs more coal-fired plants, to avoid the widespread brownouts that analyst Mark Mills says will be commonplace if we don't build them.

Between 1970 and 2006, coal-fired electricity generation nearly tripled – while NOX emissions remained at 1970 levels, sulfur dioxide pollution fell nearly 40% below 1970 emissions, and fine particulates declined to 90% below 1970 levels. In a few years, power plants will emit only water and carbon dioxide, the two dominant greenhouse gases of Climate Armageddon hypotheses.

Al Gore, James Hansen and various legislators claim fossil fuels are destroying the planet. But they are increasingly on the fringes, whereas countless experts point out that we have far higher priorities than speculative climate monsters; the economic costs of climate bills like Warner-Lieberman would be staggering; and the global CO2 and climate benefits of US economic suicide would be imperceptible.

32,000 scientists have signed the consensus-busting [Oregon Petition](#), saying they see "no convincing scientific evidence" that humans are causing catastrophic climate change. The American Physical Society reopened its debate, because many of its 50,000 physicist members disagree that evidence for global warming is "incontrovertible." The [Manhattan Declaration](#) has been signed by 200 skeptics "highly trained" in climate science. And Lawrence Solomon's book [The Deniers](#) makes a compelling case against climate hysteria.

China is building two new coal-fired power plants every month, to power electricity-hungry homes and businesses. India too is charging ahead with hydrocarbon-based energy. Its new National Action Plan on Climate Change disputes manmade global warming fears and says the nation is more concerned about saving people from poverty than from climate change. Oil-rich Arab countries are also looking at coal.

"Political leaders," says journalist Barun Mitra, "can no longer afford to sacrifice the poor today for the sake of the rich tomorrow." Neither in India, nor in China, Europe, Africa or the United States.

It's increasingly obvious why Gore, Hansen and Reid are becoming more hysterical by the day. People are catching on that the hot air they're trying to blow up our shorts is no basis for economy-killing cap-and-trade rules or ecology-killing forests of unreliable wind turbines.

We need to safeguard access to the opportunities created by abundant, reliable, affordable energy – as a fundamental right of people the world over.

Paul Driessen is senior policy advisor for the Congress of Racial Equality and other public policy organizations, and author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power · Black death (www.Eco-Imperialism.com)

**E-mail the
Editor**

French and Scottish Liberty

by Robert Curry

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"We have had to the present day two different traditions in the theory of liberty...[one] was made explicit mainly by a group of Scottish moral philosophers led by David Hume, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson...Opposed to them was the tradition of the French Enlightenment."

F. A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*



F. A. Hayek

Hayek's point is important because of the decisive influence of the Scottish Enlightenment on the Founders' thinking on liberty. By contrast, the French Enlightenment had virtually no influence. The Founders were steeped in the Scottish tradition, and that was the tradition they relied upon. As Daniel Walker Howe put it, "the Scots spread a rich intellectual table from which the Americans could pick and choose and feast."

The Scottish Enlightenment was made up of men who delighted in vigorous debate. And yet, as Samuel Fleischacker has written, "the Scots did tend to share some general views--on the sociability of human nature, on the importance of history to moral philosophy and social science, on the dignity and intelligence of ordinary people--that were of great importance to their followers in America and elsewhere." Those shared general views informed the American debate, and provided the basis of a fundamental agreement among the Founders.

This fundamental agreement is a matter of the utmost importance. How different our history might have been if there had been a significant party among the Founders committed to the ideas of the French Enlightenment. For Voltaire and Diderot the political ideal was the enlightened despotism of a reforming monarch, like Frederick in Prussia or Catherine in Russia. Government by the people was folly because, as Diderot wrote, "the general mass of men are not so made that they can either promote or understand this forward march of the human spirit." Fortunately for us the Founders did not have to debate these fundamental issues.

The central role the Scottish Enlightenment played in America's founding has been largely forgotten. Even the fact that there was a Scottish Enlightenment has been eclipsed by the prominence of the French Enlightenment. When even well-educated people discuss the Enlightenment, they almost invariably are actually discussing the French Enlightenment. As a result, we are prevented from recognizing how much America is even today an Enlightenment enterprise.

If we want to understand the thinking of the Founders, perhaps the best place to start is where the Founders began--with the Enlightenment tradition of liberty that informed their thinking.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Reader Comments*Issue 114 - August 20, 2008*

**CONSERVATIVE
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Editor: May I say that I thought your "Old Right War Lessons" was brilliant. Your choice and use of the quotes and your development of your theme were right on target. I have long believed that McKinley's assassination was a true catastrophe. The result was Teddy Roosevelt immediately. TR's terrible decision to run against Taft threw the election to Wilson; with no TR, perhaps no FDR. TR has a lot to answer for. All the best, Robert Curry

Editor: Regarding "war lessons" Whatever Franklin Delano Roosevelt's offenses may have been in leading up to Pearl Harbor, he at least had enough respect for the Constitution to ask Congress to declare war, which it did with one nay vote (Rankin). If Truman had gone before Congress and asked for a declaration of War against North Korea or against the regime in North Korea, it would not only have shown some respect for the Constitution, it might have resulted in a better outcome. It is not my contention that FDR acted out of noble motives or that he is blameless in the coming of Pearl Harbor, but only, whatever his reasons, he was right to seek a declaration of war against Japan rather than simply saying, "We are at war." In this case he followed the Constitution, no matter how bloody his hands. The outbreak of the Korean War is probably attributable to stupid and weak statements and policies of Dean Acheson. Asking for a declaration of war against North Korea does not mean that we would have had to wait to start re-enforcing free Korea until the declaration was passed, but it would mean that we would not have waged the war under Achesonian ambiguities but instead we a clear goal of unconditional victory. The mainland Chinese Communist regime might not have intervened if it knew that the consequences would be a state of war with the United States. Without Chinese Communist intervention we would have won before Eisenhower was elected. Without the Korean precedent, Johnson would have probably had to get a declaration of war in response to Tonkin Gulf. With such a declaration we would have waged a real war against North Viet-Nam. Charles Mills

Editor: Constitution Art. I, Sect. 8 provides for Letters of Marque and Reprisal used to fight piracy would be an appropriate vehicle for anti-terrorist actions short of war.

<http://forums.hannity.com/showthread.php?t=457191>

Editor: Regarding "Faddish Planning Fantasies" and the increase in regulation over the past few years, my solution is that every one in Congress should go home and stay there and never return to D.C. It would be cheaper for us dumb souls who pay the taxes. I am a conservative and no longer a Republican. Klinka

Editor: Thanks so much for a great piece by Paul Weyrich on "judicial tyranny" and the widespread acceptance of it. As you so correctly state, true conservative leadership, at every level, that is faithful to the original intent of our Founders, is the only answer. I remain optimistic that such leadership is out there...and that the support base required to elect those who share you views is large and can be inspired to action. But we must come together...Thanks to Paul for all he has done and continue to do for this great nation. Dominick Strada

Editor: Paul Weyrich's article, "Taking Back the Constitution, "should be required reading for all elected representatives. Lawmakers make laws; judges only settle disputes. James C. McAlister, Tampa, FL

Editor: I liked Alan Caruba's article, "My Stimulus Bribe." It makes a whole lot of sense. God help us in the uncertain future. As the Bible repeatedly warns that without repentance, judgement is inevitable! We are the greatest terrorists on earth having killed nearly fifty million of our own in the womb and we are not the least bit repentent of this insanity. Our nation is about to pay for the evil we have perpetrated against our own. It is beginning now. I fear for my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Stanley Kon

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