



CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington

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The Palin Hope

by Donald Devine

Issue 115 - September 10, 2008

The selection of Sarah Palin as vice-presidential nominee can only be compared to Ronald Reagan's speech for Barry Goldwater in 1964, only she was already a governor when she first entered the nation's consciousness. Both revived faltering presidential campaigns but much more importantly they offered hope for a very battered philosophy of limited government that seemed to have run its course in the days of reckless spending and regulation that preceded their dramatic arrival on the national scene.



Let us be very frank. National government non-defense spending has hemorrhaged to historic highs during the last seven years under George W. Bush and Republican Congresses. Spending increased by an all-time modern high of 25 percent over his first term and an additional 14 percent so far the second, vastly exceeding any period since Lyndon Johnson's Great Society – before the bailouts and plus adding the largest new entitlement since Goldwater's opponent, in the form of Medicare prescription drugs. As far as regulation is concerned, the last year of the Carter Administration produced 73,258 pages of regulation, which Reagan cut back 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. And now we have a whole new regulatory scheme where Federal bureaucrats will decide subjectively which loans are "bad" and how much each banker will be paid for them. Stay tuned for the abuses and favoritism.



This is the record under self-professed conservatives. What hope could there be for the future of limited government when many of this year's candidates were hesitant in describing themselves as such, or even hostile to it? Had the Founders idea of a limited Constitutional government finally run out of steam? It seemed that no one was left who could defend it any longer.

Along came Governor Palin. There she was in Dayton being announced by Sen. John McCain, setting her philosophy and credentials simply and concisely. She introduced herself as "your average hockey mom" but in presenting her family proved without a word that she walked the walk of traditional values. She was "elected to the City Council and then elected mayor of my hometown, where my agenda was to stop wasteful spending and cut property taxes and put the people first." Could Reagan have been more simply eloquent? "As governor, I've stood up to the old politics as usual, to the special interests, to the lobbyists, the Big Oil companies and the good-old-boy network." Conservatives did not need more, but she was just as moving and committed to principle in her speech to the Republican Convention.

Maybe there was some future for limited government conservatism after all. Sure, much of the exaggerated media and campaign hype over Palin will disappear. Those on the right gleefully proclaiming polls about one-in-four Hillary Clinton voters saying they were now more likely to vote for McCain will be disappointed. At the end of the day, voters go for or against the top of the ticket. The polls also show that Palin's selection has lifted McCain's support among independents and women generally but, again, when it comes time to vote they will decide by whether they want Barak Obama's or John McCain's policies. Clearly, the Palin selection has invigorated the conservative base and that effect will last but even that could be mitigated by a very severe McCain public abandonment of principle.

The rap on Gov. Palin is her supposed lack of experience. In pure fact, she has more executive experience than Sen. Obama or even Sen. McCain. Only executive experience – and deep understanding and character - really count. That is why only two legislators have gone directly from the Senate to the White House. People inherently know legislators do not make decisions, only cast votes, usually on compromised positions. Executives must make decisions. And decisions mean the losing parties get angry, so executive popularity is never near unanimous, although Palin's is quite high. Legislators try to please 100 percent of their constituents – and are usually quite successful. That is why incumbent senators rarely lose and executives are much more likely to be defeated for re-election,



Take a full-page Washington Post headline blaring, “As Mayor of Wasilla, Palin Left Trail of Bad Blood.” That is what happens when executives decide. Someone will not like it whatever one does. Who are quoted in the article? Not surprisingly, it is defeated candidates, lobbyists, bureaucrats and activist liberals. As governor, she produced the same response from politicians and bureaucrats. While the media promote this line to attack Palin, it actually shows she has been successful – and, undercutting its other theme that she has no real experience. To the contrary, these stories prove she can make tough decisions - that she can say “no.” Saying no takes character. As we know going back to Aristotle, democracies cannot survive unless their politicians can say no to special interests, and even the people, or spending will explode and sink any government no matter how otherwise wealthy.

Actually, I was introduced to Ms. Palin in 1999 when I was recruiting activists for a conservative organization. I was overwhelmed by her intelligence, knowledge and judgment, to say nothing about her commitment to conservative principles. She was willing to discuss limited government philosophy and impressed this professor with her depth. I met her again to recruit her for Steve Forbes' campaign for president and was again overwhelmed by her questioning and inquiring mind and her willingness to commit to a dedicated conservative even though it would probably not benefit her politically.

In fact, Gov. Palin is criticized for being too ideologically rigid in her thinking. An executive needs a flexibility of temperament to be a great leader. Ronald Reagan was not only principled he knew when to be prudent. After all, he was willing to deal with the Soviet Union, America's proclaimed enemy, when he understood the great threat to U.S. security represented by its nuclear arsenal but also that Mikhail Gorbachev could be dealt with. In her highly-discussed extended interview with ABC, Charles Gibson tried to both expose her supposed lack of knowledge and her lack of prudence by attacking a strong point of her experience, her knowledge of neighboring Russia. After first getting her to agree Russia was wrong to attack Georgia, he tried to get her to agree with a long series of questions topped by whether the U.S. should be “going to war if Russia were to invade” again.



Gov. Palin was cool and handled it just right:

What I think is that smaller democratic countries that are invaded by a larger power is something for us to be vigilant against. We have got to be cognizant of what the consequences are if a larger power is able to take over smaller democratic countries. And we have got to be vigilant. We have got to show the support, in this case, for Georgia. The support that we can show is economic sanctions perhaps against Russia, if this is what it leads to. It doesn't have to lead to war and it doesn't have to lead, as I said, to a Cold War, but economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure, again, counting on our allies to help us do that in this mission of keeping our eye on Russia and Putin and some of his desire to control and to control much more than smaller democratic countries. His mission, if it is to control energy supplies, also, coming from and through Russia, that's a dangerous position for our world to be in, if we were to allow that to happen.



No rashness, several critical qualifications like it's not the Cold War, and in general subtle thought – but she won't be pushed around either – just like Reagan.

At the end of the day, it is results that count. What has she done to limit government? Mayor Palin cut property taxes by three-quarters and eliminated small taxes such as the personal property tax and the business inventory tax. Sales taxes increased with growth as consumption tax advocates anticipate and she refused a new city hall and library while meeting essential needs. She made some enemies – and if the

bureaucrats do not complain, an executive is not doing anything worthwhile. On the other hand, total spending grew in the rapidly expanding town.

As governor, she cut more than 10 percent off the state budget proposed by her predecessor and vetoed \$268 million in state projects and imposed objective performance standards. Some have mentioned a so-called windfall profits tax on oil but it was a project of the previous administration that she amended in a less regulatory manner. Yet, total controllable spending did increase under Gov. Palin. As one state conservative critic put it on spending, the best that can be said is that she has not had time to complete her agenda and she has put some funds into a "savings" account (unique to Alaska) and did not spend it all.

Gov. Palin has demonstrated that she has the intelligence to survive whatever the media or her opponents throw at her. If Sen. McCain is elected, she will undoubtedly make a fine vice president. Whether she will be another Reagan, it is too early to say. Only if she loses and must complete her term as governor or wins and succeeds as president will conservatives know if the hope is fulfilled. We know President Reagan really believed in limited Constitutional government because he did absolutely reduce nondefense discretionary spending over his two terms and did cut total domestic spending relative to Gross Domestic Product. It's not certain but there is good reason to hope Gov. Palin might just fill those very big shoes.

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Editor**

Kennan On Russia and Negotiations

by George Liebmann

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

Robert Kagan's "Power Play" (Wall Street Journal, August 31, 2005) will not convince those who prefer attention to historical particulars to neo-conservative grand theorizing.

Kagan caricatures today's realists by deriding them as believers in "the United Nations. . . and vast new international conferences, a la Woodrow Wilson." He invokes instead the shade of George Kennan and Dean Acheson, particularly Acheson, who he says "had nothing but disdain. . . for most international efforts to solve world problems" , who "aimed to build a 'preponderance of power'. . . around the world" pending which

"negotiations and international conferences with adversaries such as the Soviet Union were worthless. He opposed talks with Moscow throughout his entire time in office." (Churchill, the customary neo-conservative hero, is unavailable for this purpose, having devoted his entire final term in office (1951-55) to vain efforts to get the U.S. to talk to the Russians - on the sound premise that they were finding their Eastern European empire burdensome and indigestible.)



George Liebmann

But Acheson and Kennan did not disdain negotiations, only summit conferences. Kennan's authorized meetings with Jacob Malik at the U.N. gave rise to the negotiations that ended the Korean War. The Western Alliance was forged in meetings with foreign ministers, most notably Bevin, Schuman, and Sforza. Acheson never indulged the illusion that temporarily prostrate European powers would forever remain so; like the first George Bush, he sought to immerse them in international institutions and by recognizing that alliances required deference to the desires of allies, hence his reluctant support of the last efforts at colonialism. Acheson was a critic of our abandonment of the British and French at Suez; one cannot picture him embarking on a Middle East war against the wishes of the Russians, Chinese, French and Germans. He also believed that America's strength was to be focused on vital interests, chiefly the defense of the great industrial powers: Western Europe and Japan. Hence the withdrawal from China in 1948, the China White Paper, for which he was vituperatively attacked, and the recall of General Mac Arthur.

We need not speculate on what the postwar realists would have said about our current problems in Iraq and with Russia, for Kennan lived to tell us what he believed.

As to Russia, he lauded the Genscher-Shevardnadze agreement allowing the unification of Germany and excluding American missiles from East Germany, the product of enlightened diplomacy in which the first Bush administration played a critical part. He deplored the eastward expansion of NATO, predicting in 1997 that it would "influence the nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion [and] have an adverse effect on the development of Russian democracy." (Richard Holbrooke wrote in 2002 "Events, of course, proved Bill Clinton right and Kennan. . . wrong." This does not read too well now.)

As to Iraq and Afghanistan, Kennan declared in 2002 before the start of the Iraq war "Are you talking about one war or two wars? And if it's two wars, have we really faced up to the competing demands of the two. . . I have seen no evidence that we have any realistic plans for dealing with the great state of confusion in Iraqi affairs which would presumably follow even after the successful elimination of the dictator. . . any attempt to confront that situation by military means alone could easily serve to aggravate it rather than alleviate it. . . war has a momentum of its own and it carries you away from all thoughtful intentions when you get into it. You know where you begin--you never know where you're going to end."

Kagan regards as a "terrible blind spot" the realists' view that democracies are not necessarily pacific and dictatorships not necessarily aggressive. Kennan found much evidence for this: in the run-ups to

the Wars of 1812, Mexican War, Spanish-American War and indeed Civil War; and in the revanchism in France prior to the 1914 war, about which he wrote one of his lesser-known books (*Fateful Alliance*, 1984). The rationality of the Versailles Treaty did not benefit from the 'Khaki election' in Britain and the Palmer raids and Mc Carthyism were not American democracy's prouder moments. By contrast, Ataturk's Turkey, despite its bloody origins, pursued a non-expansionist foreign policy; the Lausanne treaty, which endures, was a monument to the benefits of rational and prolonged negotiation between foreign ministers and ambassadors: Ismet Inonu, Lord Curzon, and Sir Horace Rumbold. The Congress of Vienna, as Henry Kissinger reminded us, was a successful agreement with and among autocracies. Does Mr. Kagan really mean to deplore the Austrian State Treaty, *Ostpolitik*, the Berlin agreement, the nuclear test ban treaty, and the settlement of the Cuban missile crisis by Robert Kennedy's agreement with Ambassador Dobrynin that removal of American missiles from Turkey would follow Soviet withdrawal of missiles in Cuba? (P. Nash, *The Other Missiles of October*, 1997).

Nearly a century ago, Germany's Johann von Bernstorff reflected "Even England's experience in ruling subject nations will not enable it to found and maintain a world empire and a world civilization, like that of Rome. The material interests and the national character of the peoples of the earth are too discordant for this." The American diplomat Lewis Einstein, writing before World War I, noted that modern credit mechanisms rendered mobilizations more complete and wars more protracted and destructive. Cautioning against American acceptance of an Armenian mandate, ultimately rejected by the Senate, he observed that we would be required "to devise religious policies. . . alien to our experience [which] must surely lead to the development of a military imperialism. . . diverting American national enterprise into the bypaths of distant adventure. . . The essence of the democratic spirit is little favorable to the assertion of one man over another necessary to make the successful administrator of an alien race. We have no wide colonial experience. We fortunately possess no particular traditions of class domination."

The hard-boiled Turkish President and former foreign minister Ismet Inonu observed in 1960: "considering how impulsive were the actions which led to both world wars, it is hard to count on man's ability permanently to avoid fatal mistakes. . . mankind should be taught ceaselessly, in every possible way, that at the present stage of civilization nations are under a compulsion to, and should be able to, co-exist peacefully. If nations keep up contacts, keep discussing, then time will finally erode their hesitation and resistance. Impatience, especially as regards important problems between large groups of powers, is unnecessary and harmful. If the last fifteen years' experience has saved us now from the deadlock created by the idea that face-to-face discussions are futile, than all these years have not passed in vain."

The German militarists' downfall, General de Gaulle wrote after the first World War, came about because of "the characteristic taste for immoderate undertakings, the passion to expand their personal power at any cost, the contempt for the limits marked out by human experience, common sense, and the law." The terrible maledictions passed by George Kennan in 1952 on the warmongers of his time ought to be taken to heart by Mr. Kagan and his friends: "The counsels of impatience and hatred can always be supported by the crudest and cheapest symbols; for the counsels of moderation, the reasons are often intricate, rather than emotional, and difficult to explain. And so the chauvinists of all times and places go their appointed way: plucking the easy fruits, reaping the little triumphs of the day at the expense of someone else's tomorrow, deluging in noise and filth anyone who gets in their way, dancing their reckless dance on the prospects for human progress, drawing the shadow of a great doubt over the validity of democratic institutions. And until peoples learn to spot the fanning of mass emotions and the sowing of bitterness, suspicion and intolerance as crimes in themselves—as perhaps the greatest disservice that can be done to the cause of popular government—this sort of thing will continue to occur."

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How Terrorism Fails

by Daniel Pipes

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When it comes to a state fighting a non-state enemy, the impression widely exists that the state is doomed to fail.

In 1968, [Robert F. Kennedy](#) concluded that victory in Vietnam was "probably beyond our grasp," and called for a peaceful settlement. In 1983, the analyst [Shahram Chubin](#) wrote that the Soviets in Afghanistan were embroiled in an "unwinnable war." In 1992, [U.S. officials](#) shied away from involvement in Bosnia, fearing entanglement in a centuries-old conflict. In 2002, retired U.S. general [Wesley Clark](#) portrayed the American effort in Afghanistan as unwinnable. In 2004, President [George W. Bush](#) said of the war on terror, "I don't think you can win it." In 2007, the [Winograd Commission](#) deemed Israel's war against Hizbullah unwinnable.



Daniel Pipes

More than any other recent war, the allied forces' effort in Iraq was seen as a certain defeat, especially in the 2004-06 period. Former secretary of state [Henry A. Kissinger](#), former British minister [Tony Benn](#), and former U.S. special envoy [James Dobbins](#) all called it unwinnable. The Baker-Hamilton [Iraq Study Group Report](#) echoed this view. Military analyst [David Hackworth](#), among others, explicitly compared Iraq to Vietnam: "As with Vietnam, the Iraqi tar pit was oh-so-easy to sink into, but appears to be just as tough to exit."

The list of "unwinnable wars" goes on and includes, for example, the counterinsurgencies in [Sri Lanka](#) and [Nepal](#). "Underlying all these analyses," notes Yaakov Amidror, a retired Israeli major general, is the assumption "that counterinsurgency campaigns necessarily turn into protracted conflicts that will inevitably lose political support."

Amidror, however, disagrees with this assessment. In a recent study published by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, [Winning Counterinsurgency War: The Israeli Experience](#), he convincingly argues that states can beat non-state actors.

This debate has the greatest significance, for if the pessimists are right, Western powers are doomed to lose every current and future conflict not involving conventional forces (meaning planes, ships, and tanks). The future would look bleak, with the prospect of successful insurgencies around the world and even within the West itself. One can only shudder at the prospect of an Israeli-style intifada in, say, the [United States](#). Coincidentally, news came from [Australia](#) last week of an Islamist group calling for a "forest jihad" of massive fires in that country.

Victory over insurgencies is possible, Amidror argues, but they do not come easily. Unlike the emphasis on size of forces and arsenals in traditional wars, he postulates four conditions of a mostly political nature required to defeat insurgencies. Two of them concern the state, where the national leadership must:

- Understand and accept the political and public relations challenge involved in battling insurgents.
- Appreciate the vital role of intelligence, invest in it, and require the military to use it effectively.

Another two conditions concern counterterrorist operations, which must:

- Isolate terrorists from the non-terrorist civilian population.
- Control and isolate the territories where terrorists live and fight.

If these guidelines are successfully followed, the result will not be a signing ceremony and a victory parade but something more subtle – what Amidror calls "sufficient victory" but I would call "[sufficient control](#)." By this, he means a result "that does not produce many years of tranquility, but rather achieves only a 'repressed quiet,' requiring the investment of continuous effort to preserve it." As examples, Amidror offers the British achievement in Northern Ireland and the Spanish one vis-à-vis the Basques.

After these conditions have been met, Amidror argues, begins "the difficult, complex, crushing, dull war, without flags and trumpets." That war entails "fitting together bits of intelligence information, drawing conclusions, putting into operation small forces under difficult conditions within a mixed populace of terrorists and innocent civilians in a densely-populated urban center or isolated village, and small tactical victories."

Following these basic precepts does lead to success, and Western states over the past century have in fact enjoyed an impressive run of victories over insurgents. Twice U.S. forces defeated insurgents in the Philippines (1899-1902 and 1946-54), as did the British in Palestine (1936-39), Malaya (1952-57), and Oman (1964-75), the Israelis in the West Bank (Operation Defensive Shield, 2002), and most recently the U.S. surge in Iraq.

Counterinsurgency wars are winnable, but they have their own imperatives, ones very distinct from those of conventional warfare.

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Editor**

Freedom of Airwaves

by Paul Weyrich

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The year was 1920. A huge crowd gathered downtown to listen to a loud speaker. The city was Pittsburgh. The reason for the crowd? It was election night. Voters heard over KDKA that the Republicans, after eight years of President Woodrow Wilson, were returned to office with a ticket of Senator Warren G. Harding, of Ohio, and Governor Calvin Coolidge, of Massachusetts. It was the dawning of the radio era. So few homes had receivers that the only way most people could hear the returns was to assemble downtown. By 1924, the year Coolidge was nominated for President, President Harding having died on a West Coast trip, there was limited broadcasting from the two conventions and much greater coverage of the election itself. Coolidge remarked that he was President in the right era inasmuch as he had a good radio voice.



Paul M. Weyrich

Prior to the advent of radio voters had to wait for the wire services to report on developments from the States. Sometimes it took days before the results of the Presidential election were clear. Radio changed all of that. Radio was it until giving way to television, after World War II. Some rudimentary television was broadcast at the conventions of 1948, which re-nominated President Harry S. Truman and nominated New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey but it was 1952 before the networks really began to cover the conventions and the elections. I still remember the late Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen (R-IL) pointing his accusatory finger at the Eisenhower delegates, while leaning down from the podium, saying in his mellifluous voice, "Thou shall not steal." Dirksen had accused the Eisenhower campaign of stealing delegates from the Taft campaign by challenging already seated delegates. It was dramatic and conveyed a scene which only television could produce.

Then in 1960 television, in addition to playing its now customary role at the conventions (the three networks all covered the conventions, including the platform debates), televised the Nixon-Kennedy debates. Those who listened by radio thought Nixon had won the debates. Those who watched the debates on television thought, by a landslide, that Kennedy had won. That is because on television viewers saw Nixon's ill-at-ease body language. They also saw Nixon's heavy beard and the perspiration on Nixon's forehead. The radio listeners could not see any of those and upon the basis of audio only believed Nixon had prevailed. Millions more watched television. There were two additional debates but they were watched by far fewer viewers.

Post-election survey research indicated that the first televised debate was the one which influenced the majority of voters. Televised debates have now been part of the political process. Three Presidential debates have been scheduled before the election and in addition there will be one Vice Presidential debate.

Talk-radio came into its own following deregulation in 1987. A talk-radio show appeared at the 1988 conventions but there were few national broadcasts. By 1992 talk-radio came on its own. Dozens and dozens of local and national talk-radio shows broadcast from the conventions. This year the number of local and national radio talk-shows broadcasting from the national conventions nearly doubled. It is almost expected that talk-radio stations will broadcast from the national conventions, cover the debates with commentaries and offer special election coverage.

Now cable television is playing an increasing role as well. Fox News Network built a huge pavilion at both conventions. It brought 400 employees to Denver and 500 to St. Paul. A similar number was brought by CNN. MSNBC brought a smaller number. CSPAN was the only network to broadcast all proceedings as they were. The total cable viewership exceeded 30 million. The three regular broadcast networks confined their coverage to one hour each night in addition to originating their regular news programs from the conventions.

This is the year that the Internet came into its own. There were rows of bloggers voicing their views, left, right and center. The number of bloggers was almost comparable to the number of talk-radio outlets. If the left were to succeed in shutting down talk-radio at least temporarily there would be no way that the Internet could be shut down without violating the Constitution.

Basically it will be possible to turn the Internet into television. From the time that the telegraph first brought national news to local papers, communication has become easier and more abundant. The left may think that it will be able to suppress information by killing talk-radio. Even were the Supreme Court to uphold the so-called Fairness Doctrine should the Doctrine be re-imposed, which is highly doubtful, it would take a complete perversion of the Constitution to kill the Internet. And so long as free people have access to real information there will be some hope for the survival of this Republic.

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**E-mail the
Editor**

David Lean: Talent of a Master

by Spencer Warren

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Many readers likely regard *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) and *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), which were the biggest Oscar winners in their respective years, as among their favorite movies. Their director, David Lean, attained the height of fame and prestige with these two works, which won the best picture and best director Oscars. This is certainly a reasonable view, but many critics, including this writer, disagree, preferring Lean's films made before these two spectaculars. We find these two films, like the two that followed, *Dr. Zhivago* (1965) and *Ryan's Daughter* (1970), overblown and studied, and believe Lean's intense craftsmanship is seen to better advantage in his earlier, more intimate films.



The key to understanding Lean is that he began as an editor. Having rejected a career as an accountant, he entered the British film industry in the late 1920s. By 1939 he had edited major productions, and in 1942 got his first chance to direct, assisting Noel Coward on *In Which We Serve*. One of the major British wartime films, it tells the story of the crew of a destroyer, H.M.S. *Torrent*, which is sunk in action off Crete in 1941. (The film is based on the real-life destroyer, H.M.S. *Kelly*, commanded by Lt. Lord Louis Mountbatten.) The lives of the individual crew members (leading actors John Mills, Bernard Miles and the young Richard Attenborough) are told in flashback: we see them before the war in civilian life in their homes and with their families. The movie today serves as something of a documentary record of the British people's outlook during the grim days of the war, before victory was in sight.

Brief Encounter (1945) was Lean's breakthrough into the top rank of directors. From a play by Coward, this film today is seen by many as the greatest romantic drama ever put on screen. A conventional suburban housewife, Laura (Celia Johnson) meets by chance a married doctor, Alec (Trevor Howard) on one of her weekly excursions into town. Against their better judgment, they rendezvous with each other more and more, and they fall in love. Unlike films today based on contemporary morals (or what is left of them), this film builds great tension, if not suspense, as the pair struggle between their romantic attraction and the magnetic force of convention and decency. They take in a film one afternoon, a stroll on another, and then arrange to meet in the apartment of one of Alec's friends, only to be embarrassingly interrupted by the unexpected intrusion of the friend. Every meeting is haunted by the fear of being seen by someone they know. The tension is heightened further by the constrained, clipped British manner of the dialogue (to which Lean contributed) and direction, which is brilliantly set off against the moody, uber-romantic musical score from Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto. The tight discipline of Lean's intimate direction and pacing, which shows off his expert editing, makes this as engrossing a film as one will ever see. In the climactic scene, Laura and Alec, having agreed they must no longer see each other, are having tea in the nondescript waiting room of the railway station where Laura always catches her train home. Tragically, their final moments together are interrupted by an insufferable chatter-box lady acquaintance of Laura's, and they cannot even make a real farewell. The scene is heartbreaking, for unlike the demands of today's morality, they cannot have what their emotions demand. More than six decades later, this wonderful film is not dated in the least, a testament to Lean's under-stated but intense direction and the terrific acting. Lean received a best direction Oscar nomination, as did Celia Johnson for best actress. She also won the New York Film Critics' Award as best actress.

Taking leave of Noel Coward, Lean next turned to what are today two of his most admired films, adaptations of Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1946) and *Oliver Twist* (1948). The grim, mysterious opening scene of *Great Expectations*, dramatizing the encounter in a cemetery between the young Pip and the hulking escaped convict Magwitch (Finlay Currie), who in the course of the story will

play, from afar, a crucial role in Pip's life, is a master example of Lean's editing skill. He was again nominated for the best direction Oscar, and the film was nominated for best picture.

Many of Lean's films would feature such a set-piece showing off his editing skill. Thus, in *Oliver Twist* the climactic hunt for the evil tormentor of Oliver, the vicious killer Bill Sikes (Robert Newton), through the dark, dank Victorian streets and over the high rooftops by the enraged torch-carrying mob and then the police is another gem of Lean's editing and direction – he figuratively glues us to our seats. These two films are widely considered the greatest Dickens adaptations ever put on screen (along with the 1935 MGM *David Copperfield*, directed by George Cukor).

Lean followed his Dickens period with two romantic dramas starring his then wife, beautiful blond Ann Todd. Based on a novel by H.G. Wells and written by Eric Ambler, *The Passionate Friends* (U.S. title *One Woman's Story*) (1949) features Miss Todd continually torn between the security and riches offered by her older husband (Claude Rains) and the thrill of love she has known and would like to know again from a younger man (Trevor Howard). Better than this is *Madeleine* (1950); indeed, this little known film is one of Lean's best. Madeleine Smith (Miss Todd) is the gorgeous but oppressed daughter of a proper wealthy Scottish merchant in 1857 Glasgow. Although forced to become engaged to the stodgy man chosen by her strict father, Madeleine, a determined, independent girl well ahead of her time, carries on an affair in the basement of her home with a poor Frenchman, Emile L'Angelier (Ivan Desny). Their affair hits the rocks when she refuses his demands that she introduce him to her father, and he in turn refuses her pleadings that he take her away and marry her. He threatens to expose their affair by disclosing her love letters to him. Shortly thereafter, Emile dies of arsenic poisoning.

Glasgow is scandalized by the resulting trial of Madeleine for murder. Standing alone at the prisoner's bar before the stern Scottish court in her elaborate Victorian dress and bonnet, Madeleine is icy and defiant in her denials, despite the ample circumstantial evidence in the form of her prior purchases of arsenic on several occasions. This trial scene is one of the high points of Lean's career. One can just imagine him pouring over the film at his editing movieola for weeks and weeks, arranging the inter-cutting as he screws up the maximum suspense. To be able to do this in the setting only of one courtroom, without any action, requires the talent of a master. Lean thrived on such climactic scenes.

Lean entered the 1950s with *Breaking the Sound Barrier* (1952), his superb dramatization of the immense personal sacrifices required of an aircraft manufacturer (Ralph Richardson) as he struggles to develop an aircraft that can break the sound barrier. This was followed by a domestic comedy/drama, *Hobson's Choice* (1954), starring Charles Laughton as a shop-owning over-protective father of his daughters. The last film of Lean's pre-epic career, and also one of his best, is *Summertime* (1955). Shot on location in Venice in gorgeous, rich Technicolor, Katharine Hepburn plays one of her middle-aged spinster roles as Jane Hudson, a secretary from Akron, who is making her first excursion abroad. The object of many attentions from the local gents, she is befriended in an antique shop by the charming Renato (Rossano Brazzi). Jane begins to flower in the heady atmosphere, with Lean using the Italian settings to maximum effect. Alas, Jane learns that Renato is married with seven children and, just as Laura does in

Brief Encounter, she breaks off seeing Renato. This is Lean's most lyrical film. He won the New York Film Critics award for best direction.

Thereafter, Lean turned to the new wide screen and changed into a self-consciously epic filmmaker, first with *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957). I have two problems with this movie. First, it presents a sanitized, false account of the role of British, Australian and Dutch prisoners of the Japanese in construction of the famous bridge over the Kwai River, a crucial link in the enemy's Burma-Siam railway. The Japanese used 61,000 prisoners of war and an estimated 270,000 native laborers from Burma, Malaya, Siam and the Dutch East Indies for construction of the line through 260 miles of mountainous jungle in some of the most unhealthy conditions in the world. The starvation conditions were akin to Auschwitz, with an estimated 12,000 Allied prisoners and 90,000

native laborers dying as the Japanese considered them all expendable. The film does not remotely suggest just how horrible the conditions were. Further, it is untrue that the British commanders cooperated in construction of the bridge. The Alec Guinness character of Col. Nicholson simply did not exist, and the few real-life survivors have bitterly criticized the film and the book on which it is based. Second, we see here how Lean's intense craftsmanship, which served him so well in his earlier intimate dramas, becomes self-conscious and even contrived as he applies it to a grander subject. Thus, one can imagine him sitting before his movieola, editing the finale for weeks and weeks, trying to build up to a thrilling climax, with the two commandos (William Holden and Jack Hawkins) nervously waiting to blow the newly completed bridge just as an enemy train is crossing it and Col. Nicholson discovers the detonating wire. Having become as devoted to the bridge as his savage captors, Nicholson is intent on saving the bridge from destruction. However, just as the train begins to cross, he realizes his folly, exclaims, "What have I done?" and, shot through, just happens to fall on the detonator, thus blowing the bridge to smithereens and the train with it. This really is terribly contrived and not credible. It is well below the dramatic level of the previous two hours plus. And in reality, the bridge was destroyed by Allied bombers.

Lean now began to take more and more time on his projects, with *Lawrence of Arabia* not following until 1962. Many readers will disagree strongly, but some critics find this film self-conscious, labored and contrived. Lean's characteristic painstaking attention to detail, which serves an intimate film, becomes obvious and self-defeating when applied to such a huge canvas. Two examples are the scene of the Arab army's reaching the sea at Aqaba and Lawrence losing control of himself, shouting "No prisoners, No prisoners" as he leads an attack on the Turks. In the latter scene, Peter O'Toole comes across not as a madman but as a poor actor. There are other examples in this over-long opus, which is made more interminable by the insipid music of Maurice Jarre, for whom Lean unfortunately had a good deal of fondness. Yes, there are stunning shots of the desert vistas, but they call attention to themselves, as if Lean wanted to make the film just for the sake of these vistas. By contrast, Cecil B. DeMille's direction of *The Ten Commandments* (1956), Anthony Mann's direction of *El Cid* (1961), and even Stanley Kubrick's direction of *Spartacus* (1960) have a natural spontaneity and un-self-conscious ease with their epic material.

Lean began to lose critical opinion with his equally overbaked film of Boris Pasternak's celebrated anti-communist novel, *Dr. Zhivago* (1965). Yes, the photography is stunning as always, but his producers were starting to lose patience when they learned how Lean would order take after take after take just so he could capture some miniscule lighting effect – for example, the frozen snowflakes on the window panes of the country house where Zhivago (Omar Sharif) and Lara (Julie Christie) take refuge, which dissolve into spring, or the special look he wanted for the flowers surrounding the house. One example of an over-done scene is the mutiny of the Russian troops and their attack on their elderly Tsarist commander. The scene is so long and slow-paced in its striving for epic effect that it loses its drama. Lean's elaborate style works with the scene early in the film of the cavalry, sabers drawn, riding down a peaceful demonstration in the Moscow street, but overall the film once again is too long (three hours) and suffers from Jarre's bathetic Lara's theme music.

Lean's career came to a screeching halt with his next epic project, *Ryan's Daughter* (1970). This is the kind of story at which Lean excelled in the 1940s – a Madeleine Smith-type (Sarah Miles) in British-occupied Ireland goes after a handsome young British officer (Christopher Jones) at the expense of her modest, older, rather staid schoolteacher husband (a miscast Robert Mitchum). However, Lean makes the story balloon into another three-hour would-be epic, except that he has to employ big ocean waves to stand in for the masses of soldiers that filled his three preceding epics.

By now the recent two-time Oscar winner was no longer "bankable" and Lean's career dried up. More than ten years later he managed to get financing for his production of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. Released in 1984, when Lean was 76 (quite old for a director), his loyalty to traditional film-making in the wake of the sixties-seventies youth revolution was commendable. And in telling this story of the cultural clash between Britain and India in the 1920s, Lean, who also wrote the screenplay, returned to some of the intimacy that made his pre-epic films so memorable. Thus, the quiet scene of the elderly Mrs. Moore (Peggy Ashcroft, who won the best supporting actress Oscar)

alone in the garden, with Lean suggesting the mystery and alien nature of the colonized country, is the kind of evocative scene without dialogue we rarely see in movies of the past three or four decades. The film garnered many Oscar nominations, including best picture and director, and won the New York Film Critics Circle awards in these categories.

Thus, this highly talented but at times overly ambitious film artist ended his career on a high note. Lean died in 1991, aged 83. He is best known for

his epics, but should be remembered for his earlier, more disciplined, more modest, films.

Spencer Warren is ConservativeBattleline On Line's media critic.

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Editor**

Celebrities Embarrass Obama

by L. Brent Bozell, III.

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

Barack Obama's campaign has been seriously frightened by John McCain celebrity-mocking ads. Those celebrities were virtually nowhere to be found for most of the Denver convention. While the Obama machine may control the inside of the convention, outside these celebrities are clearly out of control – again.

That overbaked tart Madonna kicked off her latest concert tour with a fairly typical attempt to put her Kung Fu grip on media attention by signaling her preferences in the presidential race. In her first concert in London – the same city where the Dixie Chicks professed their shame for being geographically associated with Bush – Madonna performed a song titled “Give It 2 Me” with a video screen flashing images behind her.



Brent Bozell

First came John McCain's picture – alongside images of Adolf Hitler, Zimbabwe's dictator Robert Mugabe, environmental ruin, and starving children. (She also included Mike Huckabee in that odd hall of shame.) Then came the Obama segment, and the Democrat was surrounded by images of Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, John Lennon, and Al Gore.

Gossip columnist Liz Smith proclaimed: “I hate to be a cynic, but it smacks of ‘How do I get my tour opening night in the news during the Democratic Convention?’” She suggested that friends scoffed in disagreement, arguing that given Madonna's demonstrated lack of political acumen, it's quite possible she had no idea the Democratic convention was happening in Denver.

So what was the political message in the song accompanying those visuals? It featured hackneyed Madonna lyrics: “If it's against the law, arrest me. If you can handle it, undress me.” By now, as she turns 50, the lyrics are beginning to sound desperate.

Five years ago, Madonna laid an egg at the start of the Iraq war with her video “American Life,” in which she pulled the pin on a grenade and threw it at a George W. Bush look-alike. The look-alike picked up the grenade -- and lit his cigar with it. Madonna desperately tried to distance herself from the overt symbolism of presidential assassination, suggesting instead that she had meant to suggest that President Bush had the potential to take something violent and destructive and turn it into something more constructive. Blah, blah. The controversy didn't help. The song tanked.

McCain's campaign quickly threw Madonna's shtick at Obama: “It clearly shows that when it comes to supporting Barack Obama, his fellow worldwide celebrities refused to consider any smear or attack off limits.” That forced the Obama camp to condemn Madonna, sort of: “These comparisons are outrageous and offensive and have no place in the political process. We hope that John McCain will offer a similar condemnation as his allies increasingly practice sleazy swift boat politics.”

This is becoming a pattern for the poor, celebrity-loaded Obama campaign. Just a few weeks ago, the rapper calling himself Ludacris lauded Obama and slashed Bush and McCain in a YouTube video entitled “Obama's Here.” In the lyrics, Ludacris called himself Obama's favorite rapper, noting the candidate said (to Rolling Stone magazine) that he listens to Ludacris on his iPod.

First, Ludacris offended all the Hillary-adoring feminists. “Better yet put me in office, make me your vice president, Hillary hated on you, so that b---- is irrelevant.”

Then came the Republican-bashing: “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.” McCain deserves a wheelchair, and

Bush is a moron: "Yeah I said it cause Bush is mentally handicapped, ball up all of his speeches and just throw 'em like candy wrap."

It says something about our screwed-up culture that the President of the United States, a man with an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School, is mocked as a special-needs student by a guy with no college degree who misspells his album titles ("Word of Mouf") to look hip.

Obama spokesman Bill Burton expressed great shock and outrage: "As Barack Obama has said many, many times in the past, rap lyrics today too often perpetuate misogyny, materialism and degrading images that he doesn't want his daughters or any children exposed to....it is offensive to all of us who are trying to raise our children with the values we hold dear."

Really? When he spoke to Rolling Stone, Obama lauded Ludacris as one of several "great talents and great businessmen" and hailed "the genius of the art form." He said he was "troubled sometimes by the misogyny and materialism" in rap lyrics and added "It would be nice if I could have my daughters listen to their music without me worrying they were getting bad images of themselves." He didn't even claim his little girls didn't listen to it.

That hardly has the degrading and misogynistic rappers shaking in their boots.

Mr. Bozell is president of the Media Research Institute

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Editor**

Stop Bailout Plan

by Mike Pence

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

Our financial markets are in turmoil and the Bush Administration was right to call for decisive action to prevent further harm to our economy but nationalizing every bad mortgage in America is not the answer.

The Administration's request amounts to the largest corporate bailout in American history. Congress should act, but should act in a way that protects the integrity of our free market and protects the American taxpayer from more debt and higher taxes.

To have the freedom to succeed, we must preserve the freedom to fail. Any solution to our present crisis must preserve our essential economic freedom.

Congress should delay consideration of any legislation until the facts and competing solutions can be fully debated, consider alternatives to massive government spending and figure out how to pay for the solution through budget cuts and reform instead of more debt or taxes.

Congress must not hastily embrace a cure that may do more harm to our economy than the disease of bad debt

Before any bailout is enacted, Congress must set itself on an unalterable path to truly overhaul these Government Sponsored Enterprises from the top down and hold those accountable, in and out of government, who drove them, and our financial sector, to the brink of bankruptcy. Some important work is already underway, but additional reforms are needed. Even now, we read that the Treasury Department is using Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to purchase many of these bad mortgages while it seeks the authority to purchase them all. Congress should also ensure that these GSEs can no longer pose a systemic risk to the entire economy while placing them on a brisk schedule to be fully private companies with no guarantee of taxpayer support in times of trouble. And Congress should immediately repeal the Affordable Housing Fund, which will actually siphon off capital from these under-capitalized entities, in order to fund left-wing, third party organizations.

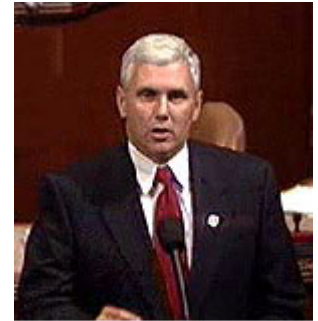
Next, Congress must consider all available options to put our nation's economy back on its feet. There are no easy answers but there are alternatives to massive government spending.

Indexing the Capital Gains tax to inflation (which the Treasury Department can do without any help from Congress), or suspending it for one year, would release an enormous amount of capital into our economy. Passing an energy bill that lessens the price of gasoline at the pump through more domestic drilling, wind, solar, nuclear and conservation would bring relief to family budgets and create American jobs. Establishing an entitlement reform commission to develop bipartisan solutions to the crushing weight of entitlements would strengthen the American dollar.

These and other alternatives to a massive federal bailout must be fully considered and debated before Congress acts.

Finally, any new expenditure of taxpayer dollars should be paid for with fiscal discipline and reform. If Congress decides to spend nearly 1 trillion dollars on a corporate bailout, it must find budget savings to prevent that cost from being passed along to the American people.

We must address this crisis with forethought, creativity and fiscal discipline. Protecting the American taxpayer from higher debt and taxes and renewing our belief in the power of the free market must be our guide.



Congressman
Mike Pence

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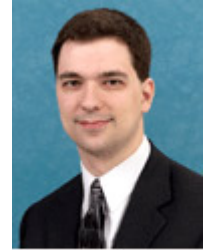
Spending Explosion

by Brian Riedl

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO)'s new estimate shows steep Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid spending costs driving the budget deficit sharply upwards.

The published CBO baseline shows manageable 10-year budget estimates based on unrealistic assumptions that Congress requires the CBO to include in its baseline. Therefore, the CBO also provides a set of alternative budget assumptions that can be used to build a more realistic baseline. This realistic baseline shows that, while tax revenues should begin recovering next year, entitlement spending is projected to drive the budget deficit to \$577 billion by 2013 and \$969 billion by 2018. The best way to get the budget under control is by reforming Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid and bringing down their 7 percent projected annual growth.



Brian Riedl

CBO's baseline projects \$2.6 trillion more in federal debt over the next decade than had been projected in the March baseline. However, most of this higher debt figure results from a methodology quirk in the scoring of Iraq and Afghanistan spending rather than any actual policy change that would result in additional spending. The substantive changes since March include higher inflation and interest rate assumptions that push spending slightly upward, as well as the inclusion of a new economic stimulus bill, a housing bailout, and veterans' entitlements.

The projections used in here adjust the CBO's baseline with the following assumptions:

- All expiring tax cuts will be extended, and the AMT will be adjusted for inflation annually;
- Spending on Iraq and Afghanistan will grow at the midpoint between CBO's "slow drawdown" and "fast drawdown" scenarios; and
- Other discretionary spending will expand by 4 percent per year beginning in FY 2010.

Through 2018, the more realistic baseline projects that federal spending will increase by an average of 5.2 percent annually and revenues will increase by an average of 4.4 percent annually. The budget deficit would reach \$407 billion in FY 2008, \$577 billion in FY 2013, and \$969 billion in FY 2018

The updated budget numbers reveal short-term challenges caused by the slowing economy, followed by long-term challenges caused by escalating entitlement costs.

- Since 2001, federal spending has surged by 59 percent—6.8 percent per year on average. Had spending increases been limited to 37 percent—4.6 percent annually—the budget would already be in balance.
- Spending levels in 2008 are projected 8.3 percent above last year's level. Revenues are projected 0.8 percent below last year's level.
- Of the projected \$247 billion rise in the budget deficit in 2008, \$226 billion results from additional spending, and \$21 billion results from decreased revenues.
- The "refundable" portion of the tax rebates is classified as spending (since it functions as a subsidy for those who paid little or no income taxes) and adds \$38 billion in 2008 spending. Deposit insurance costs from failing banks and thrifts add \$14 billion to 2008 spending, and rising unemployment insurance costs add \$11 billion. Each of these is considered temporary.
- In 2009, spending is projected to reach 21.4 percent of GDP for the first time since 1993.
- Another temporary expense—the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac bailout—adds \$25 billion in projected costs over 2009 and 2010.
- The new college subsidies for veterans added \$61 billion in projected spending over the next decade.

- Defense spending is currently 4.3 percent GDP, up from 3.0 percent when President Bush took office. However, it remains well below the 40-year average of 5.1 percent of GDP and lower than it had been at anytime during the Cold War.
- Balancing the budget by 2013 would require either limiting annual spending growth to 1.4 percent or raising annual revenue growth to 8.0 percent, or a combination of both.

The real danger is entitlements.

- Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid costs are the most serious threat to reining in spending. Medicare spending has surged by 59 percent over the past five years. Over the next decade, the CBO projects that Medicaid will expand by 8 percent annually, Medicare by 7 percent annually, and Social Security by 6 percent annually. These programs will rise from 8.4 percent to 10.4 percent of GDP as the baby boomers begin to retire en masse—a process that already began with the first baby boomers collecting Social Security benefits on January 1.
- The Medicare drug entitlement is projected to cost \$783 billion over the next decade. It will cost \$56 billion per year by 2012 and \$112 billion per year by 2018. Its annual expense will continue to increase thereafter.
- It is highly unlikely that the budget will ever be balanced again until Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are reformed. To eliminate a budget deficit, spending must grow more slowly than revenues. But with these three spending programs soon to comprise half of the federal budget, their combined 7 percent annual growth is simply too great for revenue growth to keep up with, much less exceed, over the long-term.

The public debt now stands at 38 percent of GDP, which is below the post-war average of 43 percent of GDP and lower than every year during the 1990s. The much larger threat is the trillions in future costs associated with Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, which the CBO projects could push the federal public debt to nearly 300 percent of GDP by 2050 and over 850 percent of GDP by 2082.

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Editor**

Health Uninsurance Solved

by John Goodman

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

The Census Bureau has just come out with new figures showing that the number of uninsured has reached an all-time high, causing gnashing of teeth, crying and wailing....possibly driving some people to drink. It will cause apoplexy on the editorial pages of The New York Times.

So I have a solution. And it will cost not one thin dime. The next president of the United States should sign an Executive Order requiring the Census Bureau to cease and desist from describing any American (even illegal aliens) as "uninsured." Instead, the Bureau should categorize people according to the likely source of payment should they need care.



John Goodman

So, there you have it. Voila! Problem solved.

Here is the idea: only people who are denied care are truly uninsured. Everyone who gets care is effectively insured by some mechanism. So instead of producing worthless statistics that people fling around in vacuous editorials and pointless debates, the Census Bureau should produce meaningful numbers, identifying all of the sources of funds people will draw on if they need medical care.

Also, my solution would put the United States on a par, say, with Britain and Canada. Those countries insist that all of their citizens are "insured," whether or not they get needed medical care.

Here are some categories I would use:

- **Self-Insured + EMTALA + Free Care.** At a minimum, everyone is self-insured up to the extent of his net worth; and it would be a useful Census activity to show the assets people have available to pay medical bills directly. Then, the fact that the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) requires hospital emergency rooms to provide emergency care (regardless of ability to pay) counts as additional insurance. It is supplemented by the availability of free care, variously estimated at between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per uninsured person per year.
- **Potential Medicaid.** About one in every four "uninsured" persons is eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP (for children), but is not yet enrolled. Enrollment is a mere formality, however. It can be done in the emergency room. In many places it can be done several months after the care has been delivered. Surely this must count as health insurance de facto prior to enrollment.
- **Self Insured + Potential Private Coverage.** There is also the possibility of buying private insurance after the onset of illness. About one-third of the uninsured are in households earning \$50,000 or more, and more than half of those earn \$75,000 and up. These people can clearly afford to buy a lot of medical care directly. They also can afford insurance. Six states have guaranteed issue and community rating in the individual market. In other states, many are protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and many have access to state subsidized risk pools allowing access to private insurance after illness has occurred. Sorting out how many people potentially have access to different types of private coverage would be another useful Census function.
- **Potential Employer Coverage.** About 80% of the uninsured are living in a household with someone in the labor market. More than one-fifth of them were offered coverage at work but turned it down. If the need arises, they can always enroll. Also, anyone who already has a job can probably land one with employer-provided coverage (if needed), possibly in return for a pay cut. Note: HIPAA prohibits employers from denying people coverage because of their (or a family member's) health status. In general, America has made it surprisingly easy to get someone else to pay your medical bills - even if you don't have a Blue Cross card.

So loyal readers, feel free to weigh in. Shall we get rid of the term "uninsured" on the grounds that it detracts from rational public policy discussion?

John Goodman is President of the National Center for Policy Analysis

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Editor**

Prince Charles For Hunger?

by Dennis T. and Alex A. Avery
Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

Prince Charles of England has come out again against the genetically modified foods that are a key hope for producing the extra food needed by our richer, more populous world in the decades just ahead. He must know that, thanks to science, world grain production tripled during his lifetime, from about 700 million tons per year to nearly 2,100 million tons. This achievement was certainly not due to his elitist organic farming, which continues to yield about half as much per acre as conventional farming. For fifty years, we've even bombarded seeds with radioactive isotopes to force useful new seed mutations!



Dr. Norman Borlaug, winner of the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize was honored for breeding the high-yield seeds of the Green Revolution of the 1960. What if we hadn't tripled the world's crop yields with the Green Revolution? Not only would one billion people have starved, but the fabric of the planet would have been rent by more "hunger wars." Millions more would have died in the battles, and in the famines and disease epidemics that always accompany wars.

Charles says biotech crops "haven't raised crop yields." Nonsense! For openers, biotechnology's pest-resistant cotton seeds have raised yields by one-third on the 35 million cotton acres in China and India. That has freed 15 million acres for additional food crops in the very countries which are currently adding the most pressure on world food supplies. Biotech varieties also produce higher corn and soy yields.

In Africa, genetically researched corn produces four times as much corn per acre—and an even bigger gain in food security—because new varieties are naturally tolerant of an herbicide called imazopyr. When these corn seeds are soaked in small amounts of the herbicide, the imazopyr suppresses the endemic witchweed, a parasitic weed that invades grain plants through their roots.

The newest biotech rice, wheat and rapeseed varieties suddenly need only half as much nitrogen fertilizer to produce a full yield. This cuts food costs, and means almost no N left over to leach into nearby streams. Nitrogen-efficient corn is also on its way.

We might ask the future King of England: "What about the millions of pounds of pesticide that haven't been sprayed in the air to protect our crops, because a safe and ubiquitous soil organism called *Bacillus thuringiensis*, engineered into the plants, kills crop-eating caterpillars?"

If humans will need twice as much food and feed in 2040 how would we feed ourselves and our increasing number of pets with low organic yields? Organic fields yields are limited primarily because of the global shortage of manure. However, the world would need billions more cattle to get extra manure, and we'd have to clear forests to grow their forage. "Green manure crops" steal land, sunshine, water, and soil nutrients from food and feed crops.

How would the future king tell the cat and dog owners of Britain that, because of his anti-science elitism, pet food sales must be banned so people could eat?

The best non-science solution I've heard is from Vijay Prakash, Secretary of Welfare in India's Bihar state. Prakash says we should eat rats. Then the rats won't eat the stored grain, and the people will get more high-quality protein. He is promoting rat meat in the villages—and talking with hotels about rat meat on their menus. It's at least more realistic than expecting humans to become vegetarian.

And we wish Queen Elizabeth a very long and healthy life.

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

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Editor**

Saving Species?

by Alan Caruba

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In mid-August Barack Obama had this to say about a White House decision regarding the Endangered Species Act: "After over 30 years of successfully protecting our nation's most endangered wildlife like the bald eagle, we should be looking for ways to improve it, not weaken it."



Alan Caruba

The White House executive order would eliminate the need for the advice of government scientists and permit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior and NOAA Fisheries of the Department of Commerce to determine whether to list or de-list an alleged endangered or threatened species.

Here's an example why this decision was issued. In an effort to ensure that no exploration or drilling for oil could occur anywhere in the habitat of the polar bear, this species was put forward for listing as "endangered" even though its population has been growing steadily since the 1950s.

The reason cited, however, involved the projection of melting sea ice over the course of the next fifty years resulting from global warming. That's right. A perfectly fine population of polar bears that have been around for millions of years is deemed "endangered" based on computer models for something that is not happening. As Interior Secretary Dick Kempthorne delicately put it, "It is not possible to draw a link between greenhouse gas emissions and distant observations of impacts on species."

Well, no. It is possible if you are a government scientist with lots of time on your hands, a commitment to the idiotic and discredited notion of global warming, and a need to justify your existence. Or dare I say your survival?

The Earth is not warming. It has been cooling for a decade and many scientists have concluded that the Earth is heading into either another mini-Ice Age or a full-scale one that will pretty much ruin everyone's plans for anywhere between the next fifty or few thousand years.

Let's get to the nitty-gritty of the Endangered Species Act. Originally adopted in 1973, the framers of the Act wanted to protect species believed to be on the brink of extinction. This is a noble idea, but 99% of *all* species that have existed on Earth are extinct. At some point or other, Nature steps in to kill them off. This is why there are no dinosaurs around except in Steven Spielberg movies and animated documentaries.

Despite ample evidence that the Act is a great waste of time and money, Congress has been funding the ESA ever since the first 109 species were listed.

According to the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition, these days there are approximately 1,300 species on the list with another 250 considered as "candidates" for listing and another nearly 4,000 species designated as "Species of Concern."

The ESA is testimony to the way stupid legislation, once it is passed, not only continues, but expands to ensure that government jobs and power do the same.

The website of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services provides six pages of small print listings of species put forth as "threatened" or "endangered." You will find 120 were deemed to lack standing because, as often as not, there was "insufficient data" to demonstrate any threat existed or it was determined that there were plenty of the critters. Others were believed to have gone extinct just as Nature *intended*.

Another USFWS page lists 21 species as "recovered" since 1978 and 9 as "extinct." In other words, over its glorious 30 year history, the Act claims justification for the expenditure of millions of taxpayer dollars for less than one species per year of its existence. The same page lists 16 species that should never have been listed in the first place as lacking sufficient data and thus "de-listed."

There is probably no way of knowing how many thousands of hours were wasted adjudicating these proposed listings, but if your job as a government scientist depends on such foolishness, you can bet it cost the taxpayers a bundle.

Here's the kicker. The ESA officially expired on October 1, 1992. Congress has continued to fund it for sixteen years!

This is legislation that Sen. Obama claims should continue despite an abysmal record of performance and lacking any rational justification for its existence. Where is it written in the U.S. Constitution that the federal government should undertake to save any species?

Other than preserving the Bald Eagle from idiot hunters, what purpose was served in saving tree frogs, shrews, doves, and other species from presumed extinction?

The intended consequences of the Endangered Species Act have been the delay or loss of needed dams, highways, hospitals, and entire subdivisions of new housing for the nation's growing human population. When some "concerned" environmental group secures a listing of some obscure species, the process mandated by the ESA ensures that progress will slow or defeat any a worthy project that would benefit humans.

The most endangered thing about the ESA is common sense and the humility to stand aside and let Nature do what it has done for millennia.

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>.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Coal Is Good

by Paul Driessen

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

They get little credit for their efforts, but most resource extraction, manufacturing and power generation companies strive to be “socially responsible” – by emphasizing energy efficiency, resource conservation, pollution control and worker safety in producing the raw materials, consumer products and electricity that improve, safeguard and enrich our lives.

It's not easy, due to the nature of their business, public intolerance for any ecological impacts – and the fact that “corporate social responsibility” is often defined and used by activist groups to promote ideological agendas. Above all, activists want to engineer a “wholesale transformation” of our energy and economic system, away from hydrocarbon fuels and into “eco-friendly” renewable resources; reduce our living standards to “sustainable” levels (their definition again); and give them power over the power that sustains our modern society.



Paul Driessen

This “hard green” version of CSR largely ignores socio-economic considerations, the many benefits of fossil fuel and nuclear power, the significant land and environmental impacts of wind, solar and ethanol – and the oppressive effects of soaring energy prices on jobs and poor families.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi closed down the House of Representatives on August 1, to avoid an energy vote that Democrats would have lost, and later displayed her acumen on the subject when she opined: “ **natural gas** is a clean, cheap alternative to **fossil fuels**.” News flash: Natural gas *is* a fossil fuel.

An Energy Economics 101 course is clearly needed, so that members of both parties can legislate more astutely ... understand why mining and burning coal is a socially responsible component of sound energy policy ... and help stanch the unnecessary flow of \$700 *billion* a year in foreign oil payments.

Energy is the master resource, the foundation for everything we eat, use and do. Sound policies ensure that energy is abundant, reliable and affordable. Restricting supplies in the face of rising global demand drives up prices and sends shockwaves through families, industries, communities and nations.

Average total energy costs for a typical American household doubled from \$2,400 in 1997 to over \$5,000 in 2007. Food prices also soared, while wages remained stagnant. More low and middle income families have been forced to choose between heating, eating, driving, medicines and rent – with little left over for vacations, emergencies, retirement, college or charity.

Thankfully, most electricity bills rose more modestly, because half of all US electricity is generated using coal, and the price for that fossil fuel has risen far less than oil, gasoline and natural gas prices. However, in places like Florida – where coal is verboten, natural gas is promoted but drilling for it is banned, and wind and solar are all the rage – electricity prices continue to climb. Florida Power & Light must pay four times as much for photovoltaic power as for coal power, the Heartland Institute reports, and schools face budget crunches for buses and electricity.

America has centuries' worth of coal. Our reliance on this resource has tripled since 1970 – but sulfur dioxide and particulate emissions are down 40% and 90% below 1970 levels, respectively, notes air pollution expert Joel Schwartz. New technologies and regulations will reduce coal power plant emissions even further by 2020, but even current emissions (including mercury) pose no significant risks to human health, he emphasizes.

Radical environmentalists worry and wail about speculative health risks, to justify anti-coal campaigns. But their concerns often disappear when the discussion shifts to millions of Africans who die every year from real, preventable lung and intestinal diseases that result from an absence of electricity for cooking, heating, refrigeration, safe drinking water, hospitals and decent living standards. Wind and solar will save few of those lives – and yet green pressure groups stridently oppose fossil fuel, nuclear and hydroelectric power for Africa.

US electricity consumption will continue climbing, even with conservation, because our population and technology use are increasing steadily. Meanwhile, 59 coal-fired plants were cancelled in 2007 thanks to eco-activists, who are challenging 50 more.

The US now has virtually no excess capacity, and switching to natural gas as a primary power plant fuel (and fuel for backup generators to support wind farms) means electricity prices could increase “as much as tenfold,” says energy analyst Mark Mills, especially if we continue to ban drilling. “After that we may see forced conservation, or even blackouts in rotation among business and residential customers.”

Energy shortages and price hikes could cost millions of jobs in the automotive, airline, tourism, food and beverage, textiles, paper making, plastics, chemicals, metals and manufacturing industries – especially if Congress also enacts cap-and-trade rules. Most will never be replaced by “green collar” jobs that some claim will be created by intermittent, unreliable wind and solar energy.

Switching to plug-in hybrid cars will only exacerbate the problem. They will need a well-stocked power grid to plug into, and current energy policies virtually ensure that it won't be there.

In addition to balance of trade issues, over-reliance on imports has major national security implications, as Russia's invasion of Georgia forcefully reminded Europe. Germany imports 40% of its natural gas from Russia, and six Eastern European countries are entirely dependent on Mr. Putin's energy. Shackled further by their opposition to nuclear power, fear of climate change Armageddon and fixation on the Kyoto Protocols, the EU has barely protested actions by a rogue bear that has already cut off natural gas supplies to Latvia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic, to impose its will.

That should cause Congress to reflect more soberly on US dependence on oil from Venezuela, Nigeria, Iran and Russia. Coal could be converted into synthetic liquid and gas fuels, to replace the oil and gas we refuse to develop, but legal and regulatory hurdles restrict that option, too.

A key justification for these anti-energy policies is cataclysmic global warming. However, 32,000 scientists have signed the Oregon Petition, saying they see “no convincing evidence” that humans are causing climate change, or that it will be catastrophic. Climate models continue to predict chaos but, as one scientist wryly notes, faith in their predictions is as misplaced as reliance on emails from Nigeria, advising recipients that they have won the Lotto.

Global temperatures have not increased since 1998, despite steadily increasing carbon dioxide levels, and solar scientists like Pal Brekke say the sun's formerly high activity level is leveling off or abating, which could bring falling global temperatures.

China and India are planning or building 700 coal-fired power plants; European countries plan to build 50 more in five years, to reduce dependence on Russian gas; and other nations are also increasing fossil fuel use for transportation and power generation.

Thus, no matter how much the USA reduces its energy use, driving, heating, air-conditioning and living standards – no matter how much it punishes poor families or commits economic suicide – its actions would not reduce global CO2 levels, or affect Earth's climate.

We need to conserve, and continue improving renewable energy technologies that currently provide just 0.5% of our energy. But at this time renewables are simply too inefficient, expensive and unreliable to permit a shutdown of hydrocarbon-based systems.

Putting "social responsibility" and "environmental justice" in the hands of eco-activists and liberals in general is like giving a machine gun to an idiot child. We need definitions that recognize the full spectrum of societal needs, and energy policies that acknowledge life in the real world.

Paul Driessen is senior policy advisor for the Congress of Racial Equality and other think tanks, and author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power · Black death.

**E-mail the
Editor**

CEOs Make Too Much?

by John E Nevola

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

Barack Obama stood before eighty-five thousand people in Invesco Field at Mile High and droned on about fairness. In his acceptance speech he also complained about CEO pay. A little throw away line in his speech that outrageous CEO compensation is "not fair" and needs to be changed. What does he intend to do, put a cap on CEO compensation or, to be fair, on all high-salaried people? Was he getting enough oxygen in Denver's thin air?

So now, it appears, Obama wants the Federal Government to regulate compensation; to decide who should earn what. It's no longer good enough to let the free market decide the worth of a person's skill or talent; the Federal Government now has to decide when enough compensation is too much. They have to dictate how much a Captain of Industry, a creator of goods and services and jobs is really worth.

The crowd goes wild.

However, someone ought to tell them, if they care to know, that there are many other jobs and professions with outrageous salaries out there that should also be capped, to be FAIR. If we have the stupidity to even entertain such an outrageous proposal, then more needs to be done besides stifling the compensation of just CEOs. Someone needs to tell Tiger Woods and the Williams sisters that you make too much money! Especially for what you do ! Sports are not that important. So sayeth the Obama administration.

And what about Hollywood? They pay directors and stars outrageous sums of money to "play make believe". Sorry, sweetie but you cannot make that much any more. You see, we have a ceiling, not glass either, on how much a person can make in America. Remember, we promised you CHANGE. Here it is, sweetie.

Danielle Steele and J.K. Rowling would be fat juicy targets along with Martha Stewart (oh, we went after her already) and Oprah because they make mega-bucks but Obama has to be careful here. He already dissed women big-time so he needs to be very smooth when he smacks down the ultra-rich ones.

And last but not least by a long shot (and probably not last either as there are so many more high salaries in the United States of America, land of dreams come true, that are less worthy than CEO compensation) are anchor-people. Someone needs to tell the talking heads, if they can shut up long enough to listen, that the mega-contracts they have become accustomed to are no longer allowed under a Liberal Democratic government. After all, Katie and Brian, you really are overpaid for what you do. Just because you look good on TV and can read a teleprompter does not make you worth millions. Sorry. We spanked the CEOs, sports stars, celebrities, authors and others that make too much money. We can't give you a pass on this just because you went in the tank for Obama and got him nominated. We're going to cap your compensation just like all the rest. Not to worry. It's going for a good cause. We found a new species of Water-Lilly that needs saving and we have to fund a United Nations project to build levies in Sumatra just in case another Tsunami occurs.

And when Obama examines the national budget and the ledger of revenues to be received, he will eventually discover, thanks to his draconian controls of compensation of private individuals, that he cannot afford Universal Healthcare or to save Social Security because there will be no one left in the country making more than 250 grand a year!



Is this not obvious to everyone?

**E-mail the
Editor**

"Imperfect Servant" McCain

by Lisa Fabrizio

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

This, to say the least, has been one of the strangest presidential races in years; especially for conservatives. When this marathon began many months ago, our choices ranged from liberal Rudy Giuliani to Libertarian Ron Paul, with a handful of conservatives of differing degrees in between. And then there was John McCain.

"Maverick" John McCain, as he was always known prior to his emergence as a threat to the felicity of the liberal media, was acutely unloved by many on the Right, most definitely including yours truly. And so it was with trepidation that I tuned into his acceptance speech at the Republican convention.



Lisa Fabrizio

When he took the floor at the convention center, I couldn't help being struck by the appearance of this very old-looking man with his crumpled gait; not surprising though, when you consider his age and the treatment his limbs received at the hands of his Vietnamese captors. This cringe-inducing entrance was not helped by his naturally-squeaky voice and almost total lack of stage presence as he began.

Far from joining in the apparent exuberance of the crowd, I felt a profound sense of pity for him. After all, in this land of photo op-celebrity and glib sound-bytes, this man didn't stand a chance against the prince of same. And after the whirlwind that hit St. Paul the night before in the form of Sarah Palin, I shuddered at the thought that McCain would not only fail to match the oratory of his opponent, but run the risk of being outshone by his running mate as well. I was wrong.

The major portion of the speech was representative of McCain himself; one minute raising conservative hopes by touting the need for smaller government, offshore drilling and school choice, followed by teeth-gnashing reminders of why they had never called him one of their own. And when he segued into his Vietnam experience I thought; oh no, here comes the John Kerry 'reporting for duty' moment.

But what we heard was different. What we heard was dramatically different. What we heard was the voice of humility. And what a sound it was, amidst the sea of narcissism that typically pervades most Beltway oratory. This was not an 'aw shucks' tale of humble beginnings that usually emanates from political podia, it was a story of true humility; the realization that one is small among much larger things.

In talking about national security he said, "I know how the world works. I know the good and the evil in it." This sent a Chris Matthews-like chill down my spine, because it takes a special kind of man to be face to face with the kind of evil he endured and not only fail to be embittered by it, but to emerge spiritually stronger because of it. And this also is a type of humility.

In relating his tale of personal growth through bitter experience, he seemed to be telling the country that it was time to grow up and start putting more important things before self, like standing up for "beautiful, blessed, bountiful America." Hearing these words spoken by a man who for five years was deprived not only of the comfort of his beloved country, but of the freedom she so greatly cherishes and fights for, brought tears of gratitude to my eyes.

Watching this man who still clearly bears the wounds from his time in the Hanoi Hilton, put me in mind of the story of a meeting George Washington had with some of his disgruntled officers near the end of the Revolutionary War. Having trouble reading his prepared remarks, he reached for his spectacles saying, "Gentlemen, you must pardon me. I have grown gray in your service and now find myself growing blind."

But for me, the highlight of the speech was when he thanked God for the privilege of being America's "imperfect servant." He went on to promise that he would "fight to make sure every American has every reason to thank God, as I thank Him." That millions of Americans get down on their knees every night and do the same is a notion that is foreign to many on the Left but may just well propel John McCain to the White House.

Lisa Fabrizio is a columnist who hails from Connecticut.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Obama Needs Second Act

Alex Castellanos

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

In theater, they say the second act is the hardest to write. It requires relentless focus and discipline. The writer must give himself fearlessly to one central idea and never waver, though temptation is the opposite: There are many paths a story can take.

So it is in politics, as Barack Obama's campaign is learning.

The clear campaign of change ran into trouble in Act II when was tasked with explaining what change actually meant. Obama, as they say in show business, "ran out of script."

The wind in his sails stalled in the hot calm of August and he has yet to recover. After John McCain's improbable resuscitation to seize the GOP nomination, the Arizona senator's top aides briefed him about his exacting challenge: He would go into the conventions trailing Obama by at least 8 percentage points and then battle back through the fall to parity.

Yet, as cooler days and hotter rhetoric mark the start of the fall finale, it is Obama who finds himself clawing back, forced to attack, launching uncharacteristic partisan and personal attacks against a McCain who has "lost track" of and is "confused" about how many houses he owns.

How did the soaring campaign of change become grinding politics-as-usual and crash so thunderously to earth?

The Obama campaign's clear message in the primaries was a bottom-up, organic populism that cast voters themselves as the agents of change.

"We are the change we have been waiting for," Obama told his supporters during the primaries. In return, they sang, "Yes we can." This heady mix of populism and change swelled his campaign into a cause.

In marketing terms, it is called "voter as hero." Obama empowered his supporters, telling them they, not the old political establishment, could achieve anything.

Bottom-up politics is one thing, however. Bottom-up government, another. When Barack Obama became the nominee of the national Democratic establishment, the candidate of hope ran into political reality: His party's canons of governing are the opposite of change.

Barack Obama may believe "change doesn't come from the top down, it comes from the bottom up," but the leadership of his party doesn't. The national Democratic establishment, from the Daily Kos and MoveOn.org to Pelosi and Reid in Congress, still believe in top-down big-government from Washington, especially if they get to run the factory. Politically, they are industrial-age dinosaurs

They believe the era of big government is back, not over. They would keep money and power in their hands, not devolve it to the average American. That was not something the Denver Democrats were eager to confess.

Instead, they advocated a sly European-style socialism that would not speak its intent. "Decent, quality health care as a fundamental right and not a privilege," the Democrats offered during the



Sen. Barack Obama

by

it

first night of their convention. A big-government health-care factory run by Washington? That's change? Why not the same for food, clothing and shelter?

But relax, Joe Lunchbucket, an even bigger public-sector industrial plant will impose no cost on your family. Obama's party promises not to tax you, just business -- the people who sell you your groceries and gasoline and sign your paychecks.

As Fred Thompson noted in his GOP convention speech, "They won't take any water out of your side of the bucket. Just the other side." This is not "voter as hero" but, instead, "voter as victim." A heroic Washington has all the money, the power, and the answers. Same old, same old. So the candidate of change fell silent. And he sang change never again.

Barack Obama could have spoken truth to power. He could have pledged to confront the Democratic Party establishment. He could have brought a more natural, organic era of bottom-up government, not just bottom-up politics, to a dated party clinging to a decaying philosophy of authority.

But when the irresistible force of Obama's bottom-up politics met the immovable object of Democratic Party power, it was the dream, not the power, that conceded.

"Yes we can" turned out to mean not "Yes the people can", just "Yes Washington can." Too bad. It would have refreshed the Democratic Party and the country.

This movie is not new: The candidate who runs to change the establishment doesn't. Instead, we see it change him. The hope for real change in Washington has been suffocated by an older generation's embrace.

Now, Barack Obama finds himself trapped without a post-partisan message. Instead of challenging politics-as-usual, he sells the usual partisan politics: "Bush-McCain", he shouts from rooftops, sounding like every other Democrat in the chorus, pretending partisanship is fresh.

The story? Bottom-up change ran into top-down liberalism. Old-fashioned liberalism won. That's Act II. Stand by for the play's end.

Republican strategist Alex Castellanos was a former campaign consultant for Mitt Romney's presidential campaign and has worked on more than half a dozen presidential campaigns. Castellanos is a partner in National Media Inc., a political and public affairs consulting firm that specializes in advertising. He has produced many Republican political ads and has clients such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Letter From a Catholic

by Warren Sweeney

Issue 115 - September 24, 2008

My name is Warren Sweeney. You do not know me. I am neither famous nor a celebrity – just an average, every day Catholic American like you.

Let me tell you a little about myself.

I am from the Bronx, NY. My Dad was a Teamster and a Marine, with four sons, prepared to participate in the invasion of Japan when WWII ended. My oldest brother was a Marine who served in Korea right after the end of the war there. Another brother served in the Army and retired as a NYC Fire Department Captain, and the third served in the Army Airborne and retired as a Captain of the NYC Police Department.

Mom raised us four boys while holding down her job at the A&P warehouse. I always thought I got my people-organizing and leadership skills from my Dad, who was a founding member and officer of a NYC Teamster union local and, afterwards, a union business agent. But then I remembered that Mom was always leading the girls at work, running their bowling league, and, when the A&P closed their Bronx warehouse, organizing them to charter a bus to get them to upstate New York to keep their jobs.

I attended Catholic grammar and high schools and was taught by Dominican Nuns, Sacred Heart and Xaverian Brothers and Diocesan Priests. I then went on to St. Bonaventure University to learn the Franciscan way of how you can love and serve God and your fellow man. I joined the Knights of Columbus in college, and also took ROTC, earning a Commission in the U.S. Army Field Artillery.

I served with the 25th Infantry Division in Viet Nam as a Forward Observer, receiving two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star for Service, and joined the DAV as a "Life" member when I got

My appreciation and twice in Viet Nam; so, appointed Director to Chairman of NY State



In 1980, I became the Committee, serving from New Jersey on Smith, former NJ RTL RTL connections and

respect for life came from having almost lost mine in 1973, I joined Bronx Right to Life and was the State RTL Board. In 1978, I served as Right to Life Committee.

Executive Director of National Right to Life until 1983. My wife Mary came to Washington the staff of newly elected Congressman Chris Executive Director. Mary and I met through our eventually married.

While in the Washington, D.C. area, I joined the AOH (Ancient Order of Hibernians), the oldest and largest Irish Catholic fraternal organization in America.

I was elected President of the AOH D.C. State Board and served from 1989 to 1991.

As AOH President, I initiated the ceremony of placing a wreath at the Viet Nam Memorial Wall on St. Patrick's Day in honor of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our country.

Mary and I have two children, both born with medical issues, whom we adopted from Russia and Moldova. Because of that, we were awarded the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's "Angels in Adoption Award" in 2005.



In 2006, as a member of the Healing the Children Philadelphia Area Chapter, we volunteered to be "host parents" for a Ukrainian boy born with a severe medical condition and, with the help of Congressman Smith, brought him here for medical help.

That's who I am – now let me tell you my views about Senator John McCain and Governor Sarah Palin.

I am convinced that Senator John McCain reflects what is best and good about America. He has been consistent on issues that are important to me as an American, a combat-wounded Veteran, a Catholic and a worker for the sanctity of all human life, Born and Unborn.

1. Being pro-life, Senator McCain selected another great pro-life politician, Governor Palin, a working Mom, who not only feels as Senator McCain and I do about pro-life commitment but gave the greatest example of it in giving birth this past April to her son, Trig, whom she knew would have Downs Syndrome.
2. Senator McCain and Governor Palin will fight any attempt by Senator Barack Obama and others to force Catholic and other medical facilities to perform, or recommend, abortions.
3. They endorse a Right of Conscience for medical personnel to refuse to participate in abortions.
4. Senator McCain has been – and is – a champion for Veteran healthcare and has visited and talked with our Wounded Warriors at Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval Hospitals on a constant basis.
5. Both Senator McCain and Governor Palin have sons in the military serving our country and in, or heading to, Iraq!
6. Having been to war, as have I, Senator McCain knows its terrors. Every combat veteran is an "Anti-War" veteran – the only difference is that combat Vets, like Senator McCain and me, would go to war again to protect our families and fellow Americans families from the horrors of war being visited upon them here at home! Senator McCain will not commit the lives of our servicemen and women – our family members and neighbors – to any war without good and sufficient reasons, and he will listen to the Generals, not to ideologies. He understands the concept of "Just War."
7. He has visited the frontline troops . . . on the frontline . . . more than seven times. You know – the real troops – the "dog-faced soldiers" and "Mud Marines" who have done it all – and more – for our Country and for us . . . more than we could have possibly asked!
8. Senator McCain has been constantly, without fanfare, working to insure a just peace in the North of Ireland, as well as full civil rights for Catholics in that troubled part of Ireland.
9. Senator McCain understands the moral obligation that we in this country, especially Catholics, have to the Christian Community in Iraq – which is mostly Catholic!

After deciding to share with other American Catholics my reasons for supporting John McCain for President, I went to his campaign's website to learn more about him and that's when I learned about the wonderful work his wife Cindy does for children around the world.

I found out that she met Mother Theresa and, at her request, brought two baby girls with medical issues back to America. She then adopted one and had friends adopt the other baby but paid for that baby's medical treatments and those of her own new daughter. I knew immediately that this was a woman of compassion – not just a spouse following in the shadow of her husband's success in politics!

Indeed, this is one President's wife who won't have to look for charitable endeavors and good works to pursue as First Lady – she will merely continue the good work she's already been doing for many years.

Cindy McCain is a woman who has not lived in the shadow of her husband but has been actively working to help and save young children for years!

And what more could we hope for than to have Sarah Palin, a woman with a compassionate mother's heart, in the White House doing her job as Vice President like a conscientious Mom getting all her work done, while keeping an eye out and her heart listening to the needs of her children and ours!

Sarah Palin is the persona of the strong feminists we have all known for years... the mothers we all had, watching our every move while we were growing up! Moms who made us all happy, watching over us, while getting everything else done!

And Senator John McCain has shown us, by his prior service to our country in the military and now by his campaigning and speeches, that he truly understands and lives the meaning and the values behind the words "Sacrifice, Life and Duty."

Sincerely,
Warren G. Sweeney

**E-mail the
Editor**

Teens On Pregnancy

by Lisa Miller

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

As the school year starts, teens all over the Nation will have their first conversations together about what happened over the summer. Items of interest will naturally arise and Governor Sarah Palin's daughter will surely be discussed.

Parents will find this a good opportunity to talk with their teens about sex, pregnancy and STDs. Pro-choice parents will have to contemplate and discuss the possible life or death of their own grandchildren, the realities of the destructive emotional aspects of abortion and the hardships and financials of young parents. This puts the debate in very real, personal terms for both teens and parents.

Most parents would like to avoid a pregnancy by their daughter or son abstaining from sexual activity until they have established their own identity, are responsible about birth control if they advocate that, are capable of supporting a child they might create and generally live a life in which personal responsibility is a foundation of all they do.

Many young women find themselves isolated and exhausted without the essential support of a loving spouse, financial resources and/or family. Even with all of these necessary supports, it is still a challenge.

Practicing a discipline of faith is a test. Discipline in the face of temptation is like a runner preparing for a marathon. Prudence, temperance and fortitude can develop over time. As we are fallible, we can make poor judgements. And still, we women can pick ourselves off the floor and work hard for financial and emotional success for ourselves and our children.

The Declaration of Independence clearly states the purpose of our Nation is to protect life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness because we are endowed by our creator with inalienable rights. The child is neither the mistake nor responsible for an act that caused their creation. A teen is "free" to make mistakes and should be held accountable for the consequences. Adoption is still a choice available to them as is supporting their unborn child's health by self care.

If it is an unwanted pregnancy, then what? The definition of life in the dictionary is 1 a: the quality that distinguishes a vital and functional being from a dead body b: a principle or force that is considered to underlie the distinctive quality of animate beings c: an organismic state characterized by capacity for metabolism, growth, reaction to stimuli, and reproduction.

I'll leave to pro-choice advocates to express how they rationalize abortion beyond these facts.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Reader Comments

Issue 116 - September 24, 2008

Editor: I could not agree more with your position on Russia as stated in "Russia Realities. Charles Wiley

Editor: To your comments and observations in "Russia Realities," I say absolutely right and amen.....
Brenda Farmer

Editor: Regarding "Russia Realities," long term, how can you trust a KGB man to live by any agreement? Get a guy like Obama's alter ego, Gorbachev, in there and you've got a chance. That notwithstanding, perhaps George H.W. Bush feared Russian influence on US leadership once installed in NATO, especially among the other former satellite nations. Sitting here at a desk in Scottsdale, I have no way of knowing. I think we'll just have to go toe-to-toe with the Russian Empire for as long as it takes for them to see that Eastern European/Asian hegemony, per se, isn't in their interests half as much as legitimately expanding their world economic power is. As long as ideologically-driven KGB and former communist party members who long for the good 'ol days of gulags and summary executions are in charge, I think that realization will be stalled. I think they are still so steeped in Marxism/Leninism that any real understanding of basic economics is unlikely to surface. They only know the old ways. A dangerous game perhaps, but I think McCain will do well with "toe-to-toe". Jeff Dover, Scottsdale, AZ

Editor: I have a few answers to the points you raised in "Russia Realities." 1. America did err in Bosnia in supporting Muslims. It destroyed a Christian nation and we committed acts of genocide against Serbia on behalf of Islamic murderers. The lesson there is to never support Jihad goals and objectives but sadly we have repeated the same spiritual blindness in so-called Palestine. 2. Yet, had we stopped Hitler in 1936 and exposed his weakness there millions would have lived. By not doing so with Russian imperialism now we are ensuring the probable deaths of billions later--see the Torah and New Testament if you think otherwise. Interestingly, both times US actions led to death and destruction of Christians. 3. It is a specious argument to indicate that Russia might launch weapons over Georgia. What needs to happen is to push the Russians out of Georgia and the breakaway provinces. If Georgia does not have the right to defend her sovereign state then I guess neither can the U.S. when Mazatlan is proclaimed by illegal aliens in the Southwest. 4. The "ragtag" Islamic murderers have done 100 billion in damage and murdered 3,500 Americans. They now attack us throughout the world and spread the blood cult of Islam while we act as Dhimmis. One nuclear device over Mecca would do a lot for world peace. It was a Muslim that murdered the Jews at LAX, it was a Muslim that shot up the Utah shopping center, it was Muslims that helped arrange the Oklahoma City atrocity, it was Muslims that flew the plane into the Tampa Bank of America building, it was a Muslim that murdered the defenseless women in Seattle and it was a Muslim that murdered the VaTech students. Any question? 5. Confront a bully and earn his respect. Show fear and the bullying continues. That was the school yard lesson I learned in the fifties. 6. Our vacuous response proves weakness to Putin just as Chamberlain's did to Hitler. Result: neither security nor peace but much worst war later. 7. Want to compare the government of Georgia with Russia? What a ridiculous statement from you. Georgia picked on Russia? Shame on them the big bully! 8. I don't give a damn what the world thinks. They hate us. What we need to do is promote American interests not anyone else's. To wit: take the army in Afghanistan and fly them to Georgia. Let the Afgghani Muslims use the remaining Europeans for target practice unless the Euros rediscover their manhood. Take the

army in Iraq and strike north to Georgia through Armenia. Use the combination to utterly destroy the third rate Russian forces and drive them to their beloved friends in Chechnya. Close the Black Sea to Russian shipping at the Dardanelles. Introduce troops to support Ukraine and close their ports to Russian shipping. Then demand human rights trial for Putin and the murders he has orchestrated and reparations for the destruction reigned on defenseless Georgia. 9. Did your cowardly neo cons consider any of these? I doubt it. Bill Ford

Editor: Regarding "Russia Realities," there are 545 people responsible for this and ALL of our problems today, Democrats and Republicans, one hundred senators, 435 congressmen and women, one president and also nine Supreme Court justices. They are the cause of our problems. Not the 300 million of us peons. Walter E. Klinka

Editor: Great article "Electrifying Palin" by David Keene. I could not agree more. She is what we need more of in the Republican Party. I had almost given up on our party because they seemed too eager to go along with the Democrats. Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi make me ill just to listen to them and what they want to do to this great nation. I spent my life in the Navy and retired. I lived through Vietnam and Korea and all the liberals at that time. Jane Fonda and her ilk left me so angry. We could not even wear our uniforms when on leave because of so much spite and hatred. I am energized, by our current ticket of McCain and Palin. I want McCain's experience in foreign affairs and the military and Palin for our economy and moral values. The only thing that could make me happier is if John McCain would pick Mitt Romney for a cabinet post. Rudy and Huckabee also. What a great and wonderful country we live in. Let's stand up for the flag and moral values that this nation was founded on. The founding fathers I believe are smiling right now. Again, thanks for a great article. Best wishes. Tom Kerr

Editor: David Keene's "Electrifying Palin" was a very well written article on our next Vice President. It's amazing the amount of response this lady Palin has brought to the news. Keep reporting these worthy articles. Yours in Greenville, SC, Ray Epling

Editor: "Electrifying Palin" has a good head on her shoulders. She uses common sense and looks at the big picture instead of tunnel vision. She would make an EXCELLENT President by herself. I would vote for her. With the two of them, it looks like an unbeatable team! Daniel E. Shea

Editor: To listen to the Democrats and the mainstream media, recent financial troubles are primarily due to those greedy folks who control Wall Street -- and they must surely be Republicans. But a check on political contributions shows that, whatever else the giants of Wall Street may be, they're Democrats, not Republicans. www.OpenSecrets.org has disseminated the data, which were publicly reported to the Federal Election Commission, that prove the point. You will see, for example, Lehman Brothers as the 13th biggest giver of Federal campaign contributions this year, with its money running two-to-one to Democrats over Republicans. It is pretty much the same for second largest giver Goldman Sachs (72% Democrats), third place Citigroup (61%), fourth place JPMorgan (59%), fifth place Morgan Stanley (57%) and the rest. But look it up yourself. Joseph Morris
