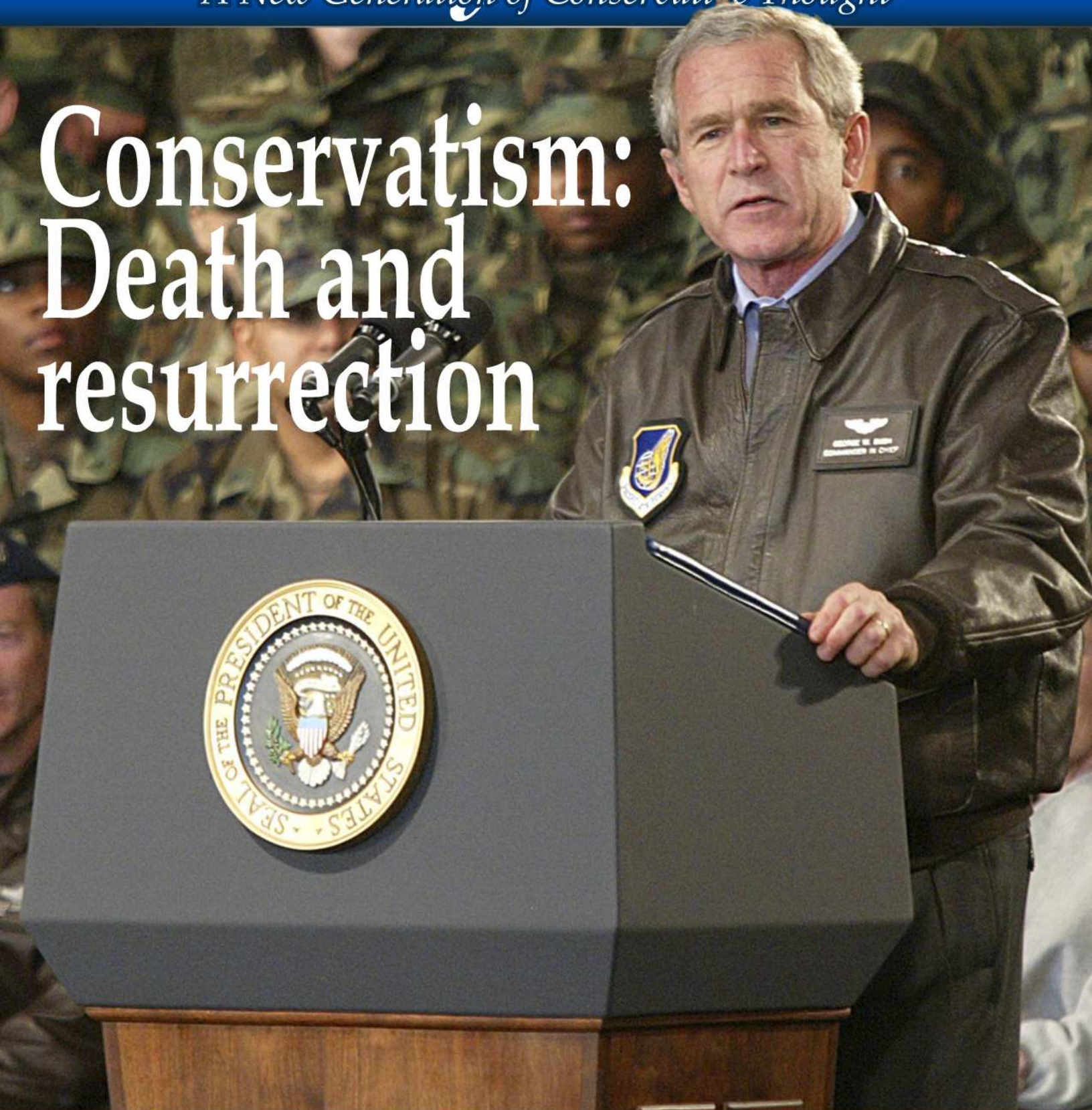


Conservatism: Death and resurrection



Reflections Magazine

The conservative movement is in crisis. Modern conservatism was born in 1955 with the founding of *National Review*. Its editor, William F. Buckley Jr., said the publication's mission was to "stand athwart history, yelling stop!" But history has kept rolling along, smashing every traditional institution in its path. Family, faith, capitalism, our constitutional republic—they have all been shattered by modern liberalism. In the face of this ideological juggernaut, conservatives have offered sporadic and weak resistance. Their ideas have become stale. Too many prefer power to principles. The movement has become corrupt, lazy and ineffective. Having come to Washington to confront the political rot and moral decay, conservatives have become part of the establishment. In other words, they have become part of the problem.

The mission of *Reflections* magazine is to launch a conservative moral and intellectual revival. We will bring together the finest minds and writers to defend the eternal principles of God, country and family. We seek to forge a reinvigorated conservative movement for the 21st century—one that champions a new nationalism, rooted in a culture of life, small government, a restoration of federalism and victory over Islamist terrorism. The time has come for a one-nation conservatism that

reaches out to minorities and women, the unborn and the poor, workers and students. The movement must go beyond its traditional base or else suffer a slow, agonizing death. Our goal is unabashedly counter-revolutionary: to roll back the forces of progressivism. Since the 1960s, a destructive liberal revolution has swept across our land. Characterized by radical secular humanism, sexual permissiveness and milk-toast socialism, it is transforming America into something our Founding Fathers would not only find unrecognizable but repugnant. We stand for the real America, the historic America, the eternal America—an America based on moral traditionalism, an America of limited government, self-reliance and entrepreneurship, an America that won its independence from imperial British rule, triumphed over Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, and has shed precious blood and treasure to liberate hundreds of millions of people around the world, and an America that champions human rights and freedom, in which every individual—regardless of race, color, gender or religion—possesses innate dignity and equal value in the eyes of our creator. We ask like-minded Americans to join us in this struggle for the heart and soul of America.

Edmund Burke, the great philosopher and godfather of Western conservatism, once said: "All that's necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing." We refuse to do nothing. We will fight for what is right, true and good. This is the rock upon which we take our stand.



contents

February 2009 • Vol. I • No. 1



4 Cover

Conservatism: Death and resurrection

Politics

- 8 Rainbow conservatism
- 10 I lost my country
- 12 Illegal immigration destroys the environment

Foreign Affairs

- 15 Standing up to the Russian mutant
- 19 U.S. must champion democratic realism in Mideast

Culture

- 24 Conservatives must overturn Roe v. Wade
- 26 Obama's radical abortion agenda
- 28 The myth of Hitler's pope
- 30 Racism in America's classrooms?

Public Policy

- 33 Toward 'reform realism' in federal education policy
- 35 Obama's disastrous health care plan

Mission

The Edmund Burke Institute for American Renewal was founded in June, 2005 in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. We are a non-partisan, non-profit, education and outreach organization which aspires to engage and mobilize the millions of African Americans, Hispanics, women and other minorities in this country who share conservative values. We will inform conservative leaders about the needs and aspirations of minorities in order to make the latter feel welcome amongst us. Also, we want minorities to appreciate fully how conservatism is congruent with their values and goals. In short, we will build a steadfast alliance between conservative leaders and minority groups. We hope to preserve all those elements in the American republic that render us a strong and vibrant nation. Simultaneously, we are open to new ideas that will allow more citizens to enjoy the blessings of freedom, prosperity and moral renewal.



How We Differ From Other Conservative Organizations:

1. We seek to update conservative thought. We want to find original ideas on how to bolster timeless principles.
2. We are attentive to the needs of women and minorities. These are not peripheral but are a primary focus of our institute. We want the conservative movement to make adjustments in order to accommodate the unique aspirations of previously marginalized groups. We also want minorities to learn how the conservative movement can benefit them.
3. We are devoted to cultural issues, not just politics. The main battle of our time is to seize the initiative in the cultural arena.
4. We hope to foster a broad alliance with those who adhere to traditional moral principles. We seek to build bridges with individuals of all faiths in order to combat assaults on human dignity.
5. We write policy initiatives, opinion articles and monographs as well as organize symposiums and conferences that appeal to our audience. Hence we do not just think and write: we take action!
6. We do not focus exclusively on one group or on one issue. There are excellent minority conservative organizations across the United States that are currently working in isolation from one another. Instead, we bring these groups together on a variety of issues in order to find common ground and, thus, to be effective in achieving political and cultural change.

Conservatism: Death and resurrection

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

The triumph of President Barack Obama is a watershed in American history. It marks the end of a rearguard conservative movement that has failed to dominate American politics and society. Yet, as we examine the road traveled—and take stock of the wreckage—we can also chart a new course that will eventually redeem us.

Since the 2000 election, Democrats have been obsessed with one goal: reducing George W. Bush's presidency to rubble. They have succeeded. For eight long years, Democratic leaders and liberal activists have waged all-out political guerilla warfare. Even the atrocity of 9/11 failed to blunt their partisan attacks. Mr. Bush has been denounced as an incompetent war criminal, someone who legitimized torture as official U.S. policy—the “new Hitler.” Democrats have blamed him for nearly everything: the tanking economy, the war in Iraq, Guantanamo, the federal response to Hurricane Katrina, global warming, the fraying of our international alliances, and rising inequality between the rich and poor. In short, Mr. Bush has been demonized; he has been portrayed as a Christian simpleton, a right-wing extremist and a primitive Texas gun-slinger.

This dangerous propaganda has been peddled by the media establishment relentlessly. This caricature obscures Mr. Bush's real successes and failures. More importantly, it shows the depths to which liberals are willing to go to maintain their hegemony. Since the 1930s, New Deal-Great Society liberalism has been consolidating its grip on national power. With the exception of the Reagan interregnum, the Left has continued its long march through America's institutions.

For a while, the Bush administration threatened its impending victory. Mr. Bush was pro-life, pro-guns and pro-war. Riding an initial wave of popularity after the 9/11 attacks, he appeared to be politically invincible. With Karl Rove acting as a modern-day Mark Hanna to Mr. Bush's William McKinley, it seemed as though the Republicans were on the cusp of forming an enduring electoral majority coalition. But conservatives were deluding themselves. Mr. Bush was not a traditional conservative. Rather, he was a big-government corporatist, who federalized education, added a new entitlement prescription-drug program for seniors, racked up massive budget deficits and championed “comprehensive” immigration reform.

Cover Story

Yet Mr. Bush did challenge the liberal status quo—and for this he had to be destroyed. His tax cuts and proposal to partially privatize Social Security frightened those who believed these measures were the first steps toward an ownership society—one that would supplant the cradle-to-grave, welfare state erected by big-government liberals over the past 70 years.

Moreover, Mr. Bush's invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq assaulted the basis of liberal foreign policy. Mr. Bush not only believed in the muscular use of American power (a great sin in the eyes of the Left), but in promoting democracy in the Middle East. He understood that multilateralism and global institutions are not effective mechanisms to combat Islamic terrorism; an army of international bureaucrats and diplomats is no match for religious extremists. Military "hard" power combined with self-government and political pluralism is the only realistic option.

Mr. Bush, however, failed to grasp that these policies threatened powerful vested interests—especially, in Washington. The permanent State Department bureaucracy and large

elements of the CIA waged a relentless campaign of press leaks against his administration. Democrats on Capitol Hill, along with elite media organs, such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *MSNBC* and *CNN*, declared war on his presidency. They were determined to paint him as another Richard Nixon—a dark, sinister leader who oversaw a lawless administration shrouded in secrecy.

This brings us to the central question of the Bush years: Why did the liberal establishment hate him so much? After all, he was a big-spending, open-borders Republican. On numerous issues—No Child Left Behind, prescription drugs, campaign finance, illegal immigrants, AIDS funding in Africa—he broke with conservative orthodoxy. Yet none of this mattered.

Why? The answer is a simple one: At their core, liberals—like all political revolutionaries—are obsessed with power. They use slogans and



Former U.S. President George W. Bush speech address at South Korea in U.S. Airbase in Osan-City, Gyeong-gi province, South Korea. Photo taken on: January 28th, 2009.

Cover Story

ideals to mask their drive to maintain and expand their control over society. The New Deal, contrary to the prevailing myth, did nothing to engender economic recovery or end the Great Depression. What it did do, however, was establish a new ruling class, a political and cultural elite determined to bring about an incremental (and bloodless) revolution. Liberals are now on the verge of achieving their radical project: the transformation of America into a European-style social democracy, characterized by confiscatory taxation, a nanny state, permissiveness and a transnationalist foreign policy. Mr. Bush's tax-cutting policies, his muscular unilateralism and unabashed Christian patriotism embodied the last vestiges of a traditionalist America that the Left not only despises, but seeks to abolish.

Instead of reacting vigorously to this ideological onslaught, Mr. Bush did nothing. He allowed his enemies to frame the terms of the debate. He neglected the basic rule of politics: always be on offense. Instead, he spent most of his time playing defense. It cost him dearly. As conservatives began to abandon him and the public tired of the Iraq war, his presidency crumbled. In 2006, Democrats regained control of both houses of Congress. The final blow came in November with Mr. Obama's triumph.

The GOP is once again in the political wilderness—a fate it fully deserves. During Mr. Bush's tenure, the GOP abandoned its principles and passed legislation that rendered it little more than an extension of the Democratic Party. Lacking fiscal restraint and a regard for limited government, the GOP became nothing more than Democrat-lite. And the American people were repulsed. What happened to the conservatives in Congress? Where did they go?

More ominously, the Democrats—building on the big-government policies of their Republican predecessors—now have the votes to pass a series of legislation that will mark New Deal liberalism's final victory: a trillion dollar economic “stimulus” package, nationalization of the banks and auto makers, government-run health care, federally funded daycare, granting legal status to millions of illegal aliens, and entrenching abortion on demand, euthanasia and same-sex marriage. We have seen the future and it is ... Sweden.

The Bush years have shown that a Republican president, lacking a coherent and firmly held worldview, is no match for our dominant liberal elites. But having the right principles—and sticking to them in the face of withering partisan criticism—is only a small part of the solution. Conservatives have a much deeper problem: They are caught in a time warp. They are still living in the 1980s, kidding themselves that a conservative

Cover Story

Republican administration can move the country rightward. It can't. The times have changed. Our age is marinated in trendy post-modern liberalism. Culture trumps politics. And whichever movement controls the cultural apparatus of power will eventually—sooner or later—capture the state.

Liberals dominate our culture. They control the federal bureaucracies, the courts, Hollywood, television, the arts, the universities, much of the media and the Internet, and now the White House and both houses of Congress. For conservatives to have any chance of stopping America's relentless leftward march, they must retake the culture—one segment at a time. This means that more than candidates (Sarah Palin, Bobby Jindal, Mitt Romney) or

fundraising or grass-roots networking, what is truly needed is the one thing conservatives have neglected for far too long: new ideas.

A reinvigorated conservatism can only succeed if it engages the enemy on the cultural battlefield. The Bush years—and the Clinton years, the Reagan years, the Carter years, the Nixon years, going all the way back to FDR—should have taught us one thing: We are in an ideological battle, a struggle for the heart and soul of America. The Left has been waging this culture war for generations, and the Right, instead of fighting back, has been offering token and weak resistance. It is high time for this to end.

Liberals champion economic collectivism and moral anarchy. Their policies lead not only to anemic growth, permanent high unemployment and unsustainable entitlement programs, but to the mass murder of unborn children, the destruction of the family and the appeasement of Islamic fascism. One need only look at Europe—Sweden, in fact—to see the disastrous consequences.

We have seen the future and it does not work. If conservatives have the strength of their convictions, they will win. But to win, they must first fight. And sadly, for too long too many conservatives have been too stupid, too cowardly or too corrupt to fight the culture of death that is modern-day liberalism.

It is time for our rebirth: Who wants to join us?

-Jeffrey T. Kuhner is the editor of Reflections and a columnist at The Washington Times.

Rainbow conservatism

By Grace Vuoto

The Republican rout in November presents an opportunity to learn from past mistakes and to rebuild the conservative movement. It is time to start anew and it should include expanding minority outreach.

The results of the 2008 election are a stinging indictment of a party that has lost its way and has adopted the big-government, high-deficit governing approach they used to lampoon. Although 78 percent of conservatives voted for John McCain, 60 percent of moderates opted for Barack Obama, according to exit polls conducted by Edison Media Research. A party without core convictions does not inspire much confidence or enthusiasm.



Republican Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin, in Dayton, Ohio at Wright State University's Nutter Center August 29, 2008.

The conservative movement has also failed to evolve with America's changing demographics. It was evident in the primaries that the Republicans were out of step with the times. Their presidential candidates were white males. By contrast, Democrats garnered the excitement of an evolving nation: A woman, a black male and a Hispanic were in the running. By the time the Republican Party caught the wave in the general election campaign and launched Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin onto the national stage, it was too little, too late.

Exit polls of the presidential race tell the story: New voters opted for Mr. Obama by a margin of 68 percent; Democrats captured 66 percent of voters between the ages of 18 and 29 and won 54 percent of voters between 30 and 39;

women chose the Democratic challenger by a margin of 56 percent; 64 percent of Latino men and 68 percent of Latino women voted for Mr. Obama; and 95 percent of black men and 96 percent of black women voted for the Democratic nominee. Mr. McCain won a majority of the white evangelical vote, but 77 percent of Jewish voters and 53 percent of Catholics

Politics

selected Mr. Obama. In a nutshell, America's new, young and minority voters helped put Mr. Obama in the White House.

The Obama, Hillary Clinton and Palin phenomena demonstrate that factors like gender and race matter to the electorate. The conservative movement needs to make zealous and effective efforts to reach out to women and minorities and to invest in leaders that can appeal to them.

Blanquita Cullum, a political analyst for WOAI radio in San Antonio and a Republican activist said in an interview that the Republican Party did not win the majority of the Hispanic vote because "they didn't ask for it." She said that "they had no strategy to reach out to the Hispanic community." When she asked many Hispanic Republican activists what their role would be during the campaign, they said they had not been approached or asked to participate. Essentially, Hispanic Republicans were "in disarray" and were by and large "ignored," she said.

Ms. Cullum said that the so-called "immigration debate backlash" was not a decisive factor. "Republicans must show Hispanics respect," she said. "Respect is very different from

acceptance. Respect means letting Hispanics know 'you are viable, you are credible, you have gifts and talents; we need you, we want you to join us.'" She said that conservatives need to do much better in investing in minority leaders and validating the contributions of minorities to American society. Ms. Cullum said that the same problems that Republicans face in reaching out to Hispanics, is also true of how they deal with other minorities.

She also suggested that conservatives should emulate the Obama campaign. Mr. Obama "used an effective spokesperson like New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and he did not treat Hispanics as a monolith. Mr. Obama was very sophisticated in his approach. He knew how to target specific areas." She said that Mr. Obama's victory is a wake-up call: "It shakes people and makes them think about how we are doing things."

The first thing conservatives must do is to ask ourselves why we have failed to attract the young, minorities and women. This deficiency in our

Respect means letting
Hispanics know 'you are
viable, you are credible,
you have gifts and
talents; we need you, we
want you to join us.'"

Blanquita Cullum

Politics

movement is not the result only of the last few years, but of the last few decades: The movement is falling behind the times; we are failing to entice key sectors of the public to our cause. Minority efforts that are attempted are sporadic, superficial and transparent efforts to temporarily get votes, rather than a long-term strategy to build profound relationships between these groups and the conservative movement.

Out of the rubble, a new conservative movement must be born.

-Grace Vuoto is the Executive Director of the Edmund Burke Institute

I lost my country

By Herbert London

The results are in and my candidate lost the presidency. Since I love this country, I wish President Barack Obama every success. But this was an election unlike any other. I don't think the Republicans merely lost an election. I believe many of us lost a country.

This was a land that once rewarded hard work and enterprise. A place where one's word was his bond. America was the land of opportunity. If you can't do it here, you cannot do it anywhere. We were a people to be envied, not only because we had the highest standard living, but because we had the greatest degree of stability.

Americans were notoriously optimistic because we counted on tomorrow being better than yesterday. We were an open people dependent on fair play and a free market bounded by a standard of virtue. With all the blemishes in our past and breaches in our own ethics, we were a model of civic rectitude. "Dems that gives, gets;" those who wish to bilk the system will be discovered and isolated.

There was a time not so long ago when people did not depend on government to bail them out of financial difficulty, a time when the nanny state bred apprehension, not affection. Now, it seems, in the new America almost everyone wants a free ride. The non-taxpayer wants a rebate from the taxpayer. The poor man wants everything the rich man has and he wants the rich man to give it to him.

Enemies of the nation, it turns out, are not enemies at all; we merely defined them as adversaries. Had we been clever in the past, we could have

Politics

defined them out of existence. All we have to do is engage in “soft power,” diplomacy and clever negotiating skill. Surely those who want to kill us will be persuaded that swords should be converted into plowshares. It’s odd, but Osama bin Laden doesn’t seem to embrace this position.

The America of “now” is one where Orwellian logic rules. Redistribution of wealth is fairness. Taxes are patriotic. The free market should be a regulated market. Big government is good for you. Politicians know what kind of health care is best for you. Choice should be limited, except when it comes to abortion. Power comes from being powerless. Progressive education is designed to promote progress toward socialism. Race doesn’t count unless a person of color tells you it counts. Higher education gets lower each year. Those who create our problems should be asked to solve them. Religion should be a private matter that does not inform public morality. Liberal is radical. Free speech is selective speech. Courage is impetuosity.

Yes, Americans—many Americans—want change. The level of dissatisfaction runs deep. But the national *cri de coeur* hasn’t a direction. That’s what makes it so dangerous. Americans live better than at any moment in our collective history, notwithstanding the meltdown on Wall Street. Yet despair is ubiquitous. Admittedly, observing 401K accounts disappear as soap bubbles will make anyone angry. Nonetheless, it is a privilege to live in the land of the free, a privilege now regarded as an entitlement.

It was once wrong to use community groups such as ACORN to steal an election. It was once wrong to conceal one’s past in order to invent an identity. It was once wrong to use the instrument of government finance to satisfy a constituency and then claim an unregulated market is what ails us. It was once wrong to lie in a campaign and still is except when the media panjandrums avert their gaze for the lies of a favored candidate.

Surely we face threats across the globe that cannot be easily forestalled. Arguably, the most significant threat is from within in the form of an unregulated government, a government that is large, intrusive and seductive. This is the new American government that promises everything and demands very little from its citizens. “Shop until you drop” is the national anthem. After all, you don’t have to fight if you don’t want to and you don’t have to sacrifice if that’s too much for you. All you have to do is visit malls and keep opinions to yourself. Opinions are important since Truth Squads want to be sure you don’t criticize the chosen candidate.

Politics

Where is my America, the place of fair play, individual rights, the rule of law and respect for private property? Was the past merely a dream from which I have awakened? Can that America of exceptionalism return? Can it find its way back into the public consciousness?

I have my doubts. Now the change agents scream “everything will be different.” Alas, they are right. It appears as if everything will be different, most especially the end of an America I loved.

- *Herbert London is president of the Hudson Institute and professor emeritus at New York University. He is the author of Decade of Denial (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2001) and America's Secular Challenge (Encounter Books).*

Illegal immigration destroys the environment

By Mark Carbonaro

One issue not discussed by either major party candidate during the 2008 presidential race is a topic that is one of America’s “elephants in the room”: illegal immigration and border security.

Along with conservatives, this paleo-libertarian laments that George W. Bush’s administration has been mostly disinterested in any kind of meaningful immigration reform or border security. The administration only half-heartedly enforced immigration laws and when Mr. Bush’s Justice Department zealously prosecuted two border patrol agents for doing their jobs we saw the true face of this administration and the message they sent to rank-and-file border patrol officers: “Don’t be too enthusiastic enforcing border security or you might end up like your buddies Ramos and Compeon.” So, with the incoming Obama administration what can we expect regarding illegal immigration and border issues?

I think the radical left-wing elements that will ride on Barack Obama’s coattails into Washington will insist on nothing less than full citizenship rights for everyone illegally in the country now and will insist on an easy and inexpensive path to citizenship for any family members of illegals still in the “old country” wanting to emigrate here.

Politics

This means conservatives and others who value the idea of national sovereignty and an America that is a constitutional republic must realize the very future of our country remaining as defined by our constitution will be in jeopardy and will be irrevocably destroyed should the Obama lefties get their way.

What many conservatives fail to realize is that the ulterior motive of those pushing unrestricted immigration and full citizenship for illegals is the ultimate leftist goal of destroying our constitutional republic and replacing it with a European-style socialist democracy. These people will never come right out and say in so many words what their ultimate aim is, but one must always remember the operating maxim of the Left: the ends always justify the means.

The illegal immigrant represents a malleable political commodity for the leftist. Many of these aliens come from patriarchal societies where individuals tend to look to the state rather than themselves for the solutions to life's problems. In other words, millions of people who see statism and big government as good things would be naturalized and allowed to vote. And of course, leftists and Democrats can count on this group solidly aligning themselves with left-wing goals and policies and creating a socialist hegemony in this country. Once that happens, it is "Good-bye America, hello France."

So how can this powerful effort be countered? One possible arrow in the quiver should be an emphasis on the environmental damage caused by illegal immigration and the carbon footprints of the additional millions of people experiencing the higher American standard of living.

Former congressman and Republican presidential candidate Tom Tancredo wrote about the devastating impact that illegal immigration has on the environment in his book, "In Mortal Danger." On numerous visits to America's southwest, Mr. Tancredo wrote about witnessing once-pristine areas of desert turned into garbage dumps, littered with the refuse brought in by thousands of illegal aliens.

In Arizona, the Organ Pipe National Monument Park could be easily renamed the Organ Pipe National Dump because of the way it now appears. Hundreds of plastic bags of garbage, drug paraphernalia, human feces, etc. are scattered about wantonly by these uninvited intruders. It's amazing that America's leading environmental organizations have little to say about this degradation. The Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, the Natural Resource

Politics

Defense Council and other left-wing environmentalist groups are strangely silent about this issue. Apparently, all environmental damage is not created equally—however, I wonder if the once-pristine desert areas destroyed by illegal alien foot traffic know the difference between the damage created by their politically correct marauders and the damage created by a developer building a shopping center nearby?

If America is to be preserved and saved, we must gain control of our borders once and for all. And those who love this country and want it to represent the perfection of our founders' vision must be willing to fight fire with fire and go to the mat with these very evil people who will lie, cheat and steal their way to destroy and change this country.

Right now Americans of all stripes are sensitized to the environment and the “green agenda.” Now is the time to turn the tables on the socialist Left—and make them try and defend the indefensible. Put them on their heels. Get pictorial evidence and scientific evidence of the great damage being done to sensitive habitats by illegal immigration and beat them with it like a mafia capo using a baseball bat on a victim. And don't let up until you've turned the socialist Left into a bleeding, bloody, whimpering mess left in a heap on a cold, basement floor.

Go for the jugular America. It's time to fight back.

-Mark Carbonaro is program director of KION radio in Salinas, California and the co-host of the “Mark & Jim Show” weekday mornings on KION.

Standing up to the Russian mutant

By Andrei Piontkovsky

The corporatist kleptocracy being erected by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is profoundly misunderstood in the West. Western defenders and apologists of the Putin regime trot out a pet argument which migrates from one publication to another. It goes something like this: What is most important for Russia right now is not abstract “democracy,” but the development of capitalism. A growing middle class with a vested interest in security for their property will ultimately demand the establishment of liberal institutions.

This extremely popular theory totally ignores the actual nature of Russian “capitalism.” The right to property in Russia is entirely conditional on the property owner’s loyalty to the Russian government. The system is tending to evolve, not in the direction of freedom and a post-industrial society, but rather back toward feudalism, when the sovereign distributed privileges and lands to his vassals and could take them away at any moment. The only difference is that, in today’s Russia, what Mr. Putin is distributing and taking away is not lands but gas and oil companies.

Over the last decade a mutant has evolved which is neither socialism nor capitalism, but some hitherto unknown creature. Its defining characteristics are a merging of money and power, the institutionalization of corruption, and domination of the economy by major corporations, chiefly trading in commodities, which flourish at the expense of the administrative resources they have privatized.

This is gendarme-bureaucratic capitalism with the Father of the Nation at its head. Such a petro-state model can deliver neither consistent economic growth, nor overcome the enormous gulf between the rich and poor, nor ensure a breakthrough to a post-industrial society. This model of provincial capitalism dooms Russia to economic degradation and marginalization. The current global crisis has made this truth crystal clear.

Several days after his inauguration, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, while speaking at the St. Petersburg economic forum, spoke with thinly disguised glee about the acute problems of the world economy and declared Russia to be the island of financial stability in the stormy ocean of the global crisis of the capitalist system.

Foreign Affairs

Russia's stock markets, however, have dropped by 75 percent since Mr. Medvedev's St. Petersburg sermon. But these are just external indicators of a crisis that is getting deeper. Much more dangerous for our "rising from the knees" economy is the loss of Western capital and the drop in oil prices. And it appears that both have taken leave for a long time. Without these factors Putinomics is not sustainable.

The kleptocrats immediately rushed to the rescue of their little bailiwicks—banks that belong to ministers and ex-ministers, state corporations that belong to the friends of the president—while spending tens of billions of government dollars for this purpose. The set of "anti-crisis" measures was so shameless and impudent, that even the super-loyal and the super-careful Russian Union of Manufactures and Entrepreneurs protested. Putinomics is becoming dysfunctional as well as mistrusted.

The artificially created image of a threatening West, and of the U.S. in particular, is now becoming the sole ideological justification for the Putin model of a corporate state. These internal political imperatives driving the Kremlin's foreign policy are grossly underestimated or deliberately ignored in the West.

A lot of the Kissinger-Primakov group and Valdai Club alumnus are calling on the new Obama administration to take into account Moscow's "grievances," "concerns" and "humiliations" to encourage the Kremlin to support what the U.S. regards as its vital interests in the Middle East. The problem with such an approach is that most of these "grievances" are those of choice, hysterically articulated by the Kremlin media to inflame anti-American sentiment. If they are accommodated, the Kremlin will immediately invent a new set of "humiliations" or unleash some new adventures in the post-Soviet space to prove to the public and to itself once again the fundamental hostility of the West.

Take for example two of Moscow's most lamented "grievances" or "humiliations"—ABM complexes in Europe and NATO expansion. Russian military experts know perfectly well that 10 interceptors don't present any threat to the huge Russian nuclear deterrent.

As for the mammoth, aggressive military machine of NATO of which Moscow has so long been warning, it truly has lumbered up to the sacred borders of the former Soviet Union, but not from the most expected direction. Indeed, my fear is that there it will meet its end, defending those borders and Russia's southern underbelly from the advance of Islamic

Foreign Affairs

radicals. For the first time in Russia's military history, somebody is doing our dirty work for us rather than the other way around. If NATO departs from Afghanistan, the front of the Islamic revolution will cut through the countries of Central Asia and Russia's Volga region.

Ukraine as a prospective member of European institutions does, indeed, present a threat, but not to Russia's security as Kremlin propagandists claim. The real threat is to the Putin model of a corporate, authoritarian state, which is hostile to the West. For the Kremlin's occupants, it is a matter of life and death that countries that were once part of the Soviet Union but choose a different model of development—Ukraine being the chief example—should never become attractive to ordinary Russians.

Ukrainians are close to us Russians in their culture and mentality. If they make a different choice, why can't we do the same?

Ukraine's success will mark the political death of Putinism, that squalid philosophy of KGB capitalism. If Ukraine succeeds in its European choice, if it is able to make it work, it can settle the question that has bedeviled Russian culture for centuries: whether Russia is a part of Europe? So the best way to help Russia today is to support Ukraine's claim that it belongs to Europe and its institutions. This will influence the Russian political mentality more than anything else.



Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin

The most sensitive and real "concerns" of Kremlin kleptocrats is the safety of their multi-billion dollar assets and their real estate investments in the West. This particular concern should have been long ago taken into account by Western courts as an act of justice and good will to the great Russian people. But it's never too late. A good case to start with is a legendary Swiss company, "Gunvor," owned by a citizen of Finland and Mr. Putin's KGB buddy, Mr. Timchenko, which is operating with about a half of Russia's oil exports.

The Iran nuclear project will be one of the first challenges faced by the

Foreign Affairs

new U.S. administration. The Anatol Lievens and Dmitrii Trenins of the world are trying to talk Americans into double stupidity: first, they reason, you need Mr. Putin's help for dealing with Iran; second, you should pay him for it. As for payments, these gentlemen usually suggest acquiescence to the Kremlin's claims for "domination in the post-Soviet space"—meaning selling out the democratic aspirations of Russia's neighbors.

As for "help," the Bush administration has been pretending for eight years that Mr. Putin is helping. Bush adviser Thomas Graham has been repeating all these years that "our views on Iran are converging," before he resigned and took a lucrative position at the Kissinger-Primakov group, where he is performing the same song from a new platform.

The U.S. may "pay" but Mr. Putin will never join in any serious biting sanctions against Iran, and he will never exert any real pressure on Tehran's mullahs to force them to stop their nuclear program. This is because his fundamental interests and objectives in this game are quite different.

For Moscow the best-case scenario for an end to the Iranian nuclear crisis would be an Israeli and/or American preventive strike against Tehran's nuclear sites. This is because an Iranian nuclear bomb is something Russian leaders do not need. Iran is, after all, the only state in the world with official territorial claims against Russia. (Part of the Caspian seabed is disputed).

Also, all the indignation of the Islamic world would be directed against Israel and the United States, which would also suit Moscow quite well. Iran would doubtless retaliate by destroying the Saudi oil platforms and blocking the Straits of Hormuz, interrupting the export of oil from the Middle East.

The thuggish oil barons, who form the core of Mr. Putin's entourage, are already rubbing their hands in anticipation of further turmoil in the Middle East. The ten or fifteen individuals who rule Russia, those in the current Politburo, also own it through their direct or indirect control of most of the country's oil and gas companies. Too much in their life—the regime's stability, their role on the world stage, and, finally, their personal wealth—depends on the number of dollars for a barrel of oil. It has always been the case. But now, when the price of oil is under \$40, it is a matter of life or death for Mr. Putin and his regime.

Every step of Moscow's policy in recent years has been aimed at moving events in this direction. By blocking or completely watering down U.N. Security Council resolutions on Iran, Moscow has facilitated Tehran's nuclear program. By supplying Iran with TOP M-2 missile installations and

Foreign Affairs

negotiating over delivery of the more cutting-edge S-300 complex, Russia is effectively pushing Israel towards having to undertake a military solution of the problem in the near future. After the Russian anti-aircraft installations to protect Iran's nuclear sites are fully commissioned, a military strike by Israel will no longer be feasible.

But Iran with the bomb is an unthinkable option for Israel. The only way for the U.S. to try to prevent such a scenario is to stop immediately wasting precious time on soliciting Mr. Putin's "help" at the U.N., and introduce the toughest possible sanctions against Iran together with Washington's allies.

Cool realism and tough patience are needed to deal with Mr. Putin's mutant creation. But it will not last for long. Crisis is the best political educator. The Russian nation's survival instinct will prevail; sooner rather than later. It would be foolish and shameful of the U.S. to sell out the hopes and aspirations of new democracies to a dying mutant for favors this creature has neither the intention nor the ability to deliver.

- Andrei Piontkovsky is the Executive Director of the Strategic Studies Center in Moscow and a well-known political analyst in Russia.

U.S. must champion democratic realism in Mideast

By Frederick Krantz

By what must be termed a minor political miracle, owed to the convoluted politics of its proportional-representation electoral system, Israel today, following the resignation of corruption-plagued Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, faces an election on February 10, 2009, instead of a weak continuing Kadima coalition government led by Foreign Minister Tsipi Livni.

It will, given the installation of a new U.S. government led by Barack Obama, be a fateful election. The key overriding issues facing Israel are, of course, not only



Smoke over Gaza strip after the Israeli army air strike on January 15 , 2009.

Foreign Affairs

the current Gaza crisis, precipitated by Hamas' mounting rocketing of southern Israel, but the domination of Lebanon by Iranian- (and Syrian-) backed Hezbollah and, even more importantly, what to do about a programmatically genocidal Iran as it gets steadily closer to nuclear-weapons capability (within a year or so, by the best estimates).

But while Israel as a sovereign state must, and will, act to ensure its basic existence and well-being, the new Obama government's policy towards Israel and, more broadly, the Middle East, is necessarily of paramount medium- and long-term importance. Leaving aside current speculations about the basic direction of that government, and the relatively conservative consequences of already-announced appointments like Hillary Clinton as secretary of state and the retention of Robert Gates as defense secretary, it is worth stepping back and asking in what, from Israel's point of view, an ideal new American foreign policy would consist.

(Such theoretical "ideal type" speculation, which of course tends to homogenize domestic left-right political differences within Israel itself, nevertheless has the utility of throwing into sharp relief recent American policy, its failures and successes, and of gauging the efficacy of the new administration's measures as they become known.)

Most generally, Israel would benefit from, to coin a term, a new democratic realism. What is meant here is not the "big-battalion realism" of the Baker-Scowcroft State Department "old hands" (purportedly shared by some Obama appointees), but a simple historical-political realism reflecting both America's democratic values and a clear awareness of the concrete nature and demonstrated dynamics of the Arab states.

While there may be some Arab regimes which are comparatively more "moderate" than others (say, Mubarak's Egypt and Abdullah's Jordan), the new realism would recognize that all are undemocratic and unrepresentative, and all have poor, politically excluded Muslim populations which share an antipathy to the Jewish, democratic state of Israel. This "Arab street" reflects an ingrained Islamic anti-Semitism, reinforced by over 60 years of indoctrination by extremist anti-Israel and modern anti-Semitic propaganda.

Often tribally-based Arab regimes, lacking the basic institutions of civil society, are inherently unstable and susceptible to destabilization by popular movements instigated by Islamist groups (Moslem Brotherhood, Al-Qaeda, Wahhabist preachers funded by the Saudis, Iranian-backed Hezbollah and Hamas leaders, and so on). This instability, in turn, limits the political latitude of even the relatively "moderate" Arab regimes (Mubarak, for

Foreign Affairs

example, has never made a state visit to Israel, Egyptian and Jordanian citizens are blocked from coming as tourists to the Jewish state, the Saudi leaders refused to shake Mr. Olmert's hand at Annapolis, and so on).

Given this reality, American backing for the "peace process," whether of the "Road Map," Annapolis, or any of the myriad earlier variants, has been both hypocritical and farcical. Fatah leader and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas (Yasser Arafat's long-time heir and successor), ignominiously kicked out of Gaza by Hamas, is Israel's and America's Palestinian interlocutor. But, lacking power, he plays to Israel and the U.S. not out of conviction, but because he is weak, lacks popular support, and is financially and politically dependent on them.

Since Islamist Hamas is "constitutionally" devoted to destroying Israel, and Mr. Abbas is too weak to defeat Hamas, no unitary Palestinian state is in the offing. And even if one were, it would not be in Israel's interest to allow it—revanchist and violent as it surely would be even under Mr. Abbas (just look at Fatah's current anti-Semitic, "martyr"-exalting television and radio media, and education system)—to come into existence. Hence, the current "two-state" notion is entirely utopian, a useful fiction at the moment for all concerned parties—the leftist Kadima government in Israel, the Obama administration, the United Nations, the Arab-oil-centered European Union, the cynical Arab regimes of the Arab League, the anti-Israel members of the Organization of Islamic States (the latter two of which have never lifted a finger to help the Palestinians), and so on.

Hence, a truly realist American foreign policy would, recognizing both Arab weakness and internal divisions, would cease playing to unending Arab intransigence, and cease pressuring Israel to make territorial compromises which (like the defunct Oslo Accords) can in fact facilitate terrorism and compromise Israel's security. Recognizing its historical, cultural, religious and democratic affinity with Jewish Israel, the new administration would instead apply economic and political pressure on the Arab regimes to accommodate Israel, as a fact of life in the Middle East. It would push client regimes like Egypt towards a "warm" peace and Saudi Arabia, finally, after 60 years, to recognize the Jewish state. And the U.S. itself would, at last, in an act at once symbolic and concrete, implement repeated congressional legislation and recognize Jerusalem as Israel's undivided capital, moving its embassy there.

A viable Palestinian state between Jordan and Israel is currently impossible. Hence, the Americans would be wise to adopt a new Palestinian policy.

Foreign Affairs

It would, first, pressure Egypt (which it supports to the tune of almost \$3 billion annually) to play a role in overseeing the Gaza Strip (as it did before 1967), and Jordan to provide state functions for the Arabs of Judea and Samaria (as it also did, even beyond the Yom Kippur war of 1973). Such an American- (and Israeli-) backed Egyptian-Jordanian condominium could easily co-exist with a restored Palestinian Authority presence under Mr. Abbas and/or his Fatah successor.

The U.S. would also accede to the plan of the Likud Party's Bibi Netanyahu, probably Israel's next prime minister, to terminate the current impossible "peace process" with its utopian vision of a unified, pacifist Palestinian state, and push instead for gradual Palestinian economic and social development, "peace from the bottom up," rather than from the "top down." Over the long term, such development of civil society would give the Palestinians something they currently lack, a concrete stake in making peace, something to lose, which might then make actual state-building realistic. Over the short term, this policy would also constitute a relatively stable status quo, a kind of de facto peace beneficial for all concerned.

Simultaneously, and more generally, the U.S. should continue George W. Bush's (recently abated) democratization pressures on Arab regimes, and demonstrate clear support for basic human rights in the region. While not without its utopian dimensions, this policy has born fruit in Iraq, which may well post-surge develop into—in comparative Middle Eastern terms—a tolerably democratic structure. Similar pressure should be exerted on Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon (and Syria), and on the Gulf states, Pakistan and Turkey (whose Islamist government should be disabused of any religious-dictatorial temptations).

No one expects Islamic-rooted and still-tribal societies to become model modern democracies overnight, but pressure for political as well as economic modernization should be a visible and unrelenting component of the new American realism. Here, American pressure on Saudi Arabia to curtail exportation of its radical Wahhabist Islamic ideology and support for Islamist madrassas around the Muslim world, from Indonesia to Bosnia, is long overdue. Tied to import quotas on Saudi-sourced oil, such a policy could, especially given the current and at least medium-term recession/depression and its negative impact on oil prices, be quite effective.

Finally, America must clearly address the imminent arrival of Iranian nuclear weapons. Learning the evident lessons of its botched attempts to first limit, then roll back, North Korean atomic weapons development, as well as finally giving up on the United Nations as a possible source of

Foreign Affairs

effective sanctions, the U.S. should deliver an ultimatum—backed by NATO and as many democratic nations as it can organize—to Iran: cease enrichment of uranium and plutonium production, or suffer the consequences. (Here a first, limited and well-publicized step would be to threaten a naval blockade of Iran, preventing it from getting the refined petroleum upon which its fragile economy depends, and then, after a clearly-demarcated time period, to impose the blockade should Tehran not comply.)

If the U.S., re-defining the “peace process,” would act to recognize and mitigate Palestinian, and Arab, anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism, while simultaneously pushing to moderate and modernize Arab society and, acting at the head of a democratic coalition, effectively to blunt the Iranian nuclear drive, it would embody a new, refreshing, and concretely effective diplomatic and political realism in the Near East.

Such steps towards a new democratic realism, some of which are the negation of past and current American policies, would not only ensure the well-being of America’s only real, and reliable, political and military ally in the region, Israel, but would also establish a new-found respect for American power and values, thus reversing the decline of American standing in, and beyond, the Arab and Muslim world.

There are historical moments when doing what is right, and what is effective, coincide. The potential for fresh policies represented by the new Obama administration could be such a moment. A new, muscular American democratic realism would establish a concrete basis for a truly effective politics of hope, not only for Israel and the Middle East, but for the world.

-Prof. Frederick Krantz is Director of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research in Montreal and editor of its Daily Isranet Briefing. He teaches at the Liberal Arts College, Concordia University.

Conservatives must overturn Roe v. Wade

By Joseph Beaudoin

Before it became a nation of laws on Sept. 17, 1787, with the adoption of the Constitution, the United States of America had been one of ideals for over a decade. These ideals were much debated in the years leading up to 1776 and were ultimately enshrined in the Declaration of Independence ratified on July 4, 1776. The Founding Fathers, along with their contemporaries, put their lives and possessions on the line for the proposition that all men are created equal and have inalienable rights that no king, nor anyone else, can take away.

These inalienable rights are the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The early patriots fought for those ideals often with little more than their courage, their muskets and a publicly stated reliance on the Divine Providence. Hence, the fight for American freedom was fundamentally Christian, both in terms of the patriots' ideals and in terms of the faith they invested into their struggle.

The notion that all men are equal before God is traceable to Jesus Christ. And hoping to build on Earth their interpretation of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Founding Fathers could do no less than repeat Christ's revolutionary statement that "all men are created equal." While the ideals of the Declaration did not extend to all at first, it was contemplated that, in time, they would. Thus was born the notion that future generations of Americans would, over time, develop a more perfect union.

The Declaration is a living document that still embodies the ethical, social and economic foundations of the political philosophy of American conservatives. Today, as at many times in the history of the Republic, these inalienable rights are under siege.

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness must be understood in comprehensive human terms. The right to life is not simply the right to breath. The right to life is the right to exist without one's life being subordinated to another's will, be he king or not. It is the right not to have one's life taken away with impunity. It is also the right to have a family, i.e. to create the conditions under which humans extend their lives to future generations. And the right to life gives unborn Americans the right to be

Culture

born. Indeed, the right to life is meaningless without the right to be born; so are the rights to liberty and to the pursuit of happiness. Hence, the Declaration is a pro-life document.

Liberals will argue that the Founding Fathers did not include fetuses in the Declaration. That is true in a narrow way. It is just as true that the Constitution did not, upon its adoption, end slavery or give women suffrage. Yet, today there are no more slaves and women can vote.

The scientific argument is particularly effective because it is not an opinion; it is not an act of faith.

The struggle for a more perfect union for all Americans, including unborn Americans, has been a work in progress. And it is the hope of conservatives as it is a foundational principle of our ethics that “a woman's right to choose” will be defined as a right that affirms life instead of one that conveniently terminates it.

Perhaps the convergence of science and ethics will bring Americans to an acceptance that the DNA of a fetus is sufficiently different from the DNA of the mother to regard the fetus as a separate human being. On this matter, science is leading the way. To the extent that Americans accept that no two humans have the same DNA, it will become quite difficult to deny the humanity of a fetus the DNA of whom is different from the mother's.

The scientific argument is particularly effective because it is not an opinion; it is not an act of faith. It is scientifically demonstrable over and over again. Liberals would have little to counter it with. Indeed, the very science which liberals have used to ridicule religion by making fun of “creationists” would now provide unassailable proof that abortion on demand, a pillar of the liberal agenda, does constitute mass killing of human beings.

Or perhaps Americans will make a quantum leap in consciousness much like the Western world did when it outlawed slavery.

Either way, the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* must remain a conservative objective.

-Joseph Beaudoin is a writer and regular contributor to Reflections.

Obama's radical abortion agenda

By Loredana Vuoto



A Stop Abortion sign along the road. Photo taken on: January 22, 2009.

President Barack Obama will give new meaning to “abortion on demand” when he takes control of the White House.

According to the incoming president, one of the first things he will do when he takes office is enact the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA)—a promise he made in a campaign speech delivered to Planned Parenthood back in July 2007. And the liberal Democrat will most likely not go back on his word.

FOCA is consistent with Mr. Obama's voting record against any kind of restrictions on abortion—including those for late-term abortions. FOCA will codify *Roe v. Wade* by eliminating all federal, state and local restrictions to abortion. States will have easier access to government funding with the removal of previous limitations. Parental notification will also be waived and state laws protecting doctors and nurses, who, in good conscience, refuse to participate in the procedure, will also be abolished.

Since 1989, limitations on abortion have been enforced. In *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, the Supreme Court upheld a Missouri law that imposed restrictions on the use of state funds, facilities and employees in performing or assisting with abortions. In 1992, the Supreme Court also mandated similar restrictions in *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* in which parental consent, informed consent and waiting period laws were upheld.

These restrictions have had a significant impact on reducing the number of abortions. According to a study by The Heritage Foundation, approximately 125,000 fewer abortions a year are performed due to these limitations. States where there are abortion laws for parental involvement, informed consent and funding have significantly less abortions than states where no such restrictions exist. Hence, there is no doubt that by signing FOCA into law, abortions will dramatically rise.

Culture

Mr. Obama has vowed to reduce the number of abortions. Yet his empty rhetoric fails to reconcile with his adamant support of a woman's right to choose and his pro-abortion voting record. His pick of numerous pro-choice candidates for key positions in his administration—Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel—reinforces his pro-choice stance and lack of concern for pro-life supporters. According to an ABC News and Washington Post poll in July 2008, 44 percent of Americans want all abortions to be illegal, except in cases of rape, incest and a threat to the mother's life. This is a four-point increase from a similar poll taken a few months earlier in January 2008. This new pro-life shift, however small, shows a deep-rooted concern for the dignity of life at conception.

Mr. Obama has also made no secret of his opposition to the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits the use of federal Medicaid funds for abortions except in cases of rape and incest. This important legislation has saved millions of lives since its introduction in 1976. Democrats and pro-choice groups are expected to attempt to repeal this amendment. According to Douglas Johnson, legislative director of the National Right to Life Committee, "the alignment of a hard-core pro-abortion president with pro-abortion Democratic majorities in Congress means that many existing pro-life policies are now in great jeopardy."

Moreover, health care reform threatens to erode pro-life policies currently in place. Mr. Obama is against the regulation George W. Bush enacted at the end of the year that prohibits health care providers who refuse to participate in abortion to be discriminated against for federal funding. Congress is poised to introduce a new regulation that could reverse this law.

Mr. Obama would be prudent to shift his focus from appeasing radical feminists and left-wing activists, and instead take stock of the alarming message that abortion policies send society—in particular, the destructive effect FOCA will have on teenagers. By eliminating parental notification, teenagers can bypass chastisement from their parents. More importantly, it allows teenagers to abnegate responsibility for their actions and further reinforces the toxic message that personal gratification and sex without consequences trumps all. But perhaps most disturbing is that young pregnant women will miss an invaluable opportunity to get advice on carrying their baby to term and opting for adoption. In the United States alone, there are more than 100,000 children waiting to be adopted. According to a study by the National Survey of Family Growth, there are more than half a million

women waiting to adopt a child. How tragic that the million babies expected to be aborted this year will not find their way into the arms of women yearning to be mothers.

But pro-life supporters are not alone. In protest to FOCA, U.S. Catholic bishops are sponsoring a nationwide postcard campaign on January 24. Postcards will be sent to members of Congress urging them to oppose this legislation that will enshrine abortion on demand.

By supporting FOCA, the Democratic Party is fast becoming the Party of Death. The late Pope John Paul II wisely noted that “a nation that kills its own children is a nation without a future.” The calls for “hope” and “change” that Mr. Obama promised on the campaign trail will soon come to an end if FOCA is enacted. Unborn babies deserve to have their voices heard and to see the light of day. A just and humane society will fight to make sure they do. Future generations depend on it.

-Loredana Vuoto is president of Eloquence, LLC, a speechwriting and writing services firm in Washington, DC.

The myth of Hitler's pope

By Grace Vuoto

Few issues are more contentious between Catholics and Jews than the Vatican's role in the Second World War. It has even led to diplomatic tensions between Rome and Tel Aviv.

On Oct. 19, the Vatican announced the cancellation of the pontiff's visit to Israel, in protest against the persistence of the Israeli Holocaust museum's caricature of Pope Pius XII. Eugenio Pacelli, who became Pope Pius XII upon his election in 1939, presided over the Catholic Church during World War II, one of the most challenging and dangerous periods in modern history. Shortly after his death in 1958, Pope Pius XII became the center of a controversy regarding the church's role during the Holocaust: Did the pontiff do enough to save the Jews?

According to many Israelis, he betrayed his most sacred calling to protect life. The Yad Vashem museum, established in 1953 by the Israeli Knesset and the world's largest Holocaust repository, has a caption under a portrait of the Catholic leader stating he did not safeguard the Jews from their persecutors, he did not "sign the Allied declaration condemning the extermination of the Jews," and that he erred in remaining "neutral"

Culture

throughout the war. A recent Israeli statement supports this viewpoint: "In the context of the open and good dialogue with the Catholic Church, we cannot close our eyes in the face of the historical role of Pope Pius XII and his behavior in the days in which thousands of Jews were sent daily to be massacred." This is an obstinate and disrespectful approach towards a man that many Catholics—and others around the world—view as saintly. The Vatican has begun the process for his beatification, the step which precedes canonization.

Pope Pius XII presided over a church that regards its mission as universal, not rooted to any one nation or people. During the Nazi era, Pope Pius XII was responsible for protecting the Catholic Church in all the states in which the Nazis and Fascists were launching devastating and brutal attacks. Had he not been a skilled diplomat in this calamitous time, the many defenseless nuns, monks and priests all across Europe would have been mercilessly slaughtered. In light of this, Pope Pius XII was nothing short of exemplary: He shrewdly protected as many innocent civilians as he could while also making numerous brave statements, both public and private, against the evils of racism and the grave sinfulness of idolizing the state. Moreover, papal relief programs saved at least 860,000 Jews from extermination. Pope Pius XII is considered a hero by many around the world, including fair-minded Jews.

Upon his death in 1958, Golda Meir, who was then an Israeli delegate to the United Nations and would later become the country's prime minister, praised Pope Pius XII's courageous efforts to rescue countless Jews from Hitler's Holocaust.

"When fearful martyrdom came to our people in the decade of Nazi terror, the voice of the pope was raised for the victims," she said. "The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out on the great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict. We mourn a great servant of peace."

Dr. Raphael Cantoni, a leader in Italy's Jewish Assistance Committee, added: "The Church and the papacy have saved Jews as much and insofar as they could Christians. Six million of my co-religionists have been murdered by the Nazis... but there would have been many more victims had it not been for the efficacious intervention of Pius XII."

The Israeli persistence in such superficial aspersions bespeaks a dreadful double standard. If we want to play the blame game for the horrific crimes of the Nazis, we can easily just as well place a caption saying "did not do enough to save the Jews" on the tomb of every Jew who either participated

in the regime (as some felt compelled to do as guards or administrators in the camps), remained silent throughout the persecutions or even did not take action in the trains or the concentration camps to defend themselves and their neighbors. We would all rightly recoil at this as the most ahistorical and uncharitable view of individuals caught in a barbaric age. Why is not the same courtesy extended to a former leader of the Catholic Church? Enough is enough.

-Grace Vuoto is the Executive Director of the Edmund Burke Institute.

Racism in America's classrooms?

By Jonathan Kelly

The Western canon is under assault. It is common to read news stories in which the great classic works of Western civilization are being banned for not being “politically correct.” Some attacks on freedom of thought are taking place in U.S. high school literature classes, and it is time that they stopped.

“Huck Finn must go!” chanted the demonstrators, according to a June 25 story in the Renton Reporter, which discussed a protest taking place outside the office of the Renton School District in Washington state. The demonstrators carried signs bearing messages such as “Nigger nigger out the door, don’t call us ‘niggers’ anymore” and “Racism in RSD” (Renton School District). What was going on here?

The Renton School District was experiencing how difficult it can be to balance competing goals of education and sensitivity. Some members of the community were incensed by what they perceived as harmful racism in one of America’s best-known works of literature, Mark Twain’s “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.”

“Huckleberry Finn” is widely considered the quintessential American literary classic. Its story, characters and description are highly compelling, so it is a commonly required text in high school literature coursework. The novel also is a masterful depiction of race relations in 19th-century America. Yet the touchy subject of race can cause trouble; some do not think 21st-century schoolchildren should read about the racial bigotry that Twain observed in his society.

At the Renton School District, a 2004 graduate of Renton High School

Culture

named Calista Phair objected to the use of the word “nigger” throughout Twain’s novel. Miss Phair said she was “beyond offended” by the class discussion of the book’s racial content and that it “made me feel lesser of a person.” She and her supporters lobbied unsuccessfully to have the book removed from Renton High School’s approved reading list. Miss Phair’s grandmother, Beatrice Clark, had tried the same thing in 2003.

“I still feel very passionate about the book,” Miss Phair said, according to the Renton Reporter. “I still feel that due to the fact I was in Renton School District, I did graduate, I was in the classroom, being told ‘It’s your history.’ I still think it should be out of school.”

Similar protests arose in 2007 at Richland High School in North Richland Hills, Texas, when the mother of a black student objected to her son being exposed to the n-word in class, and a coalition of groups tried (again, unsuccessfully) to have the novel banned from school. The Pennsylvania chapter of the NAACP would like to see “Huckleberry Finn” removed from required reading lists in the state’s high schools and colleges, though it doesn’t object to people reading it voluntarily.

“The concern we have is that, to a black child, it might be damaging,” NAACP Pennsylvania state President Charles Stokes once said in 2000, according to the Harvard University Gazette. “Also to a white child, or a Hispanic child, those words could be damaging...What the NAACP has done is take up a posture that the book as written is not good for America.”

Thus, critics claim that no black Americans—or any Americans—should be exposed to the language of hate. Exposure to hate, however, is not the issue. Twain’s depiction of racial hatred is intended to condemn and ridicule a culture of bigotry. The black slave character Jim is a likable and sympathetic figure, and by the end, Huck is willing to risk everything in order to free him. The story is an eye-opening, touching commentary on human friendship bridging a poisonous racial divide.

The issue at hand is whether books of classic literature should be stripped from the school curriculum, preventing any students from learning them in the classroom in order to supposedly protect them from racist thinking. Not only would this be an abandonment of responsibility on the part of educators, but it could also have the opposite effect. The suppression of ideas might result in more students being ignorant of and insensitive to racial bigotry.

The American Library Association lists “Huckleberry Finn” as one of the

Culture

most frequently challenged books in the country because of its racial content. Critics of depicting racism in literature have antagonized other classic books as well. Harper Lee's venerable "To Kill a Mockingbird" has been threatened because of the use of the n-word, a use which again is meant to denounce racism. The NAACP's branch in Pasadena, California, attempted unsuccessfully in 2006 to lobby a Pasadena school to drop Miss Lee's novel from its English classes. Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" is also frequently challenged due to racial themes illustrating a white European view of Africa under colonial rule.

Those who object to teaching such works of literature err in the notion that people need to be protected from unpleasantness. It is certainly true that individuals who may have genuine personal objections to these books could choose to opt out of them, but they should not block others from sharing in what these works have to offer. Instead, English teachers should be encouraged to design their lesson plans so that students

are not only introduced to the literature itself, but are also taught historical context. This would help students to understand that an examination of the racial tensions in our nation's history is in no way intended to ignite racial animosity. At the same time, students will get a healthy dose of both literature and history. Who can find fault with this?

Banishing great works of literature from the school curriculum is ridiculous and intolerant. Only in an educational setting of free thought and inquiry will students learn how to address race and acquire the skills of critical analysis. In such a setting, we should encourage students to learn from difficult, unpleasant issues like racism. We should not teach them to run away from those issues by purging classic books from our schools.

-Jonathan Kelly is a copy editor at The Washington Times.

Those who object to teaching such works of literature err in the notion that people need to be protected from unpleasantness.

Toward ‘reform realism’ in federal education policy

By Michael J. Petrilli

The federal role in education is in greater flux today and beset with more disputes and dilemmas than at any time in the past decade. Since at least the dawn of the 21st century, a rough “Washington Consensus” about education has shaped the core assumptions and basic strategies of both Democratic and Republican policymakers in the White House, the Department of Education, and the Congress. Closing achievement gaps has been the focus. “No excuses” has been the ethos. And standards- and test-based accountability, first encouraged, then coaxed, then more-or-less mandated by Uncle Sam, has been the dominant strategy.



These assumptions are now coming under heavy attack. The Washington Consensus is disintegrating. Both parties’ political bases are fed up with the No Child Left Behind act (NCLB)—the statutory linchpin, high-profile symbol, and main accomplishment of the old consensus. Education progressives and political liberals with ties to the teacher unions and other education groups recoil from the law’s obsession with testing and resist its presumption that schools alone can dramatically improve the life chances of poor children. Conservatives and libertarians abhor NCLB’s expansion of federal control and yearn to return to “first principles” of limited government. Somewhere in the middle are sundry reformers of various stripes, mostly occupying the political center, who are fighting to maintain the major contours of NCLB while fixing its more onerous and less workable provisions.

Navigating this rocky terrain will be a difficult, perhaps impossible, task for President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Compromises will be made. New policies will be imperfect. But the advent of a new administration and Congress is unfailingly a time of hope and creativity. It’s a good time to ask, what would the ideal federal role in K-12 education look like?

This question is particularly salient for conservatives. While the national press has lavished attention on the growing schism within the Democratic

Public Policy

Party on education, with teachers unions pitted against reformers, there's a similar divide within the GOP. On one side are what you might call "The

Army of the Potomac"—defenders of NCLB who hold strong school reform instincts but also boundless optimism about Washington's ability to do good in K-12 education. On the other side are the "Local Controllers," who see NCLB as an aberrant overreach, an unprecedented (and perhaps unconstitutional) foray into the states' domain.

We favor a vigorous but realistic federal role that respects what is best done from Washington and for the entire nation while dismissing federal programs, policies and practices that, in our judgment, cannot succeed.

Presented this way, it appears that conservatives must choose one or the other: federal policies that promote reform but unwisely expand the federal role, or no federal role at all.

But there's a "third way," what my colleagues at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute and I call "Reform Realism." We favor a vigorous but realistic federal role that respects what is best done from Washington and for the entire nation while dismissing federal programs, policies and practices that, in our judgment, cannot succeed.

Reform Realists share some core assumptions with both the Army of the Potomac and the Local Controllers. Like the Army, we embrace standards, assessment, and accountability. Like the Local Controllers, we favor school choice in almost all its forms and realize that individual communities, schools, educators and families have variegated needs and differing priorities across this big and diverse land.

So how to bridge the divide? We believe that the federal government should direct funds to needy children; make school results transparent, ideally through a system of national standards and tests; provide financial incentives for states and local school districts to adopt key reforms; generate high-quality research and data; and protect individual civil rights.

Public Policy

Then stop. That's right. Stop.

That's plenty for Uncle Sam to tackle, we believe, but it would mean jettisoning major pieces of his current role, including oversight of state testing and reporting systems, mandates regarding school sanctions, and dictates around teacher credentials.

We're well aware that this is a fundamentally different approach to federal policymaking in K-12 education and only in our dreams do we picture the Obama administration and Democratic leaders of the 111th Congress swiftly embracing it. But it's a perfect fit for reform-minded conservatives. And it might actually work.

-Michael J. Petrilli is a vice president at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, where he contributes to its Flypaper blog. He is also a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Obama's disastrous health care plan

By Robert M. Goldberg

Recently, Rahm Emanuel, President Barack Obama's chief of staff, urged the leaders of corporate America to join the new administration in a push for universal health care reform, telling a group of CEOs that "incremental changes" (in our health care system) won't be acceptable. If this sounds like *deja vu* all over again—a Clinton aide warning corporate America to either work on universal coverage or face—as Mr. Emanuel put it, "a revolt"—you're not alone. That's not Honest Abe from Springfield, that's Al Capone from Chicago.

However, it is not clear that, in electing Mr. Obama, Americans gave the President or his new advisers a mandate to increase the role of government in running or paying for health insurance. And in particular, it is far from certain that most Americans signed onto to the details of the Obama, Clinton or any other Democrat proposal to create a single-payer health care system. Indeed, if past is prologue, the imperious demand for government-controlled health care is the surest path to losing political support and reviving the Republican Party.

The foundation of the Obama plan (as well as all other Democrat plans) to provide universal coverage is to stabilize the employer-based health care system. Every "blueprint" claims that doing so will allow Americans to

Public Policy

obtain better care at a lower cost. Every liberal think tank and foundation—from the Kaiser Foundation to the Commonwealth Foundation—have weighed in with estimates asserting that subsidizing the employer-based system and providing the rest of Americans a way to buy into what’s referred to as “public” insurance can get the job done. And what’s more, the entire package will bring about a wholesale improvement in America’s health.

There are a few problems with this scenario. First, subsidizing the employer-based system is bailing out the auto industry or the auto unions to be more precise. The congressional proposal to provide General Motors a \$25 billion loan covers what its CEO Rick Wagoner calls “operating expenses.” Over half of that money will pay the health care benefits for current GM workers and retirees for the next six months. That’s money GM will get a tax break on in addition to the bailout, a tax break that rewards higher income Americans than it does poorer ones. The rampant rise in the auto industry’s health care spending is a direct result of the structure of its health benefits and the corporate tax breaks that reward them.

Second, these benefits have been shaped not by the clinical or consumer value of care, but by the same pork barrel politics that have shaped the Democrat plan to both protect the employer-based system and the benefits package it would require every American to accept. And those benefits are unparalleled on the planet. For generations, auto workers paid nothing for health care. For GM, the annual deductibles for employees and retirees using managed care will be \$100 for individuals and \$200 for families. If you want to use a doctor or hospital outside of your health plan, your out of pocket expense is capped at \$500 for individuals and \$1,000 for families. Many other workers and retirees pay no premiums or deductibles at all, for life. If, as most liberals claim, coverage equals better health, then UAW members and retirees should be the healthiest people in the universe. In fact, they are some of the most chronically ill of all Americans.

Mr. Emanuel claims that unions are addressing the concerns of the middle class. Yet, the way Mr. Obama and other Democrats pay for propping up the tax advantages of big corporations and the excessive health benefits of a powerful union is by shoving 51 million Americans into Medicaid or something like it. Further, how doctors practice medicine and what they get paid will be tied to a Comparative Effectiveness Institute, a new national agency that decides the most valuable care for the price. According to the Lewin Group, doctors and hospitals will get paid 22 percent less than what they are getting from private insurers—a revenue loss of about \$140 billion. Cuts in doctor pay in Medicaid and state-run

Public Policy

“universal” health plans like those in Massachusetts have led to hollow health care coverage: people with insurance but without doctors who can afford to treat them.

Two years ago, Drew Altman, president of the Kaiser Foundation, noted rampant growth in the auto industry’s health care spending “begins to call into question whether employers can continue to be the backbone of our health care system.” The fundamental problems of the employer-based system have gotten worse. Yet Mr. Emanuel and others want to keep propping it up by restricting the medical choices of consumers, reducing what’s spent on health care and having government tell doctors how to practice medicine.

If Mr. Emanuel believes there is a mandate for such a plan, he is mistaken. Americans want protection against the unexpected cost of necessary medical care. When they pay premiums they expect health care companies to help them get and stay well in return, not repay the favor by fighting them or denying them treatment. But that’s exactly what the Democrat proposal has in mind for most Americans. That’s the only way the Democrats can afford to continue to bail out a failing and flailing employer-based system.

-Robert M. Goldberg is vice president of the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest.

