

**INSIDE: Under Secretary of State for Arms Control John Bolton
Sen. Susan Collins ♦ Sen. Orrin Hatch ♦ Rep. Phil English ♦ Rep. Jim Greenwood
Rep. Melissa Hart ♦ Rep. Nancy Johnson ♦ Rep. Sue Kelly ♦ Rep. John Sweeney**

VOLUME 38 • NUMBER II • SUMMER 2004

The Rippon Forum



**GEORGE SOROS
FUNDS DEMOCRATS:
WILL KERRY
BE HIS PUPPET?**

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minority homeownership,
so we're taking on the
challenge of getting
more people into homes."**

Angelo Mozilo
Chairman & CEO
Countrywide Financial Corporation



On the cover:

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry speaks at Wayne State University March 26, 2004 in Detroit, Michigan.

Photo by Bill Pugliano/Getty Images

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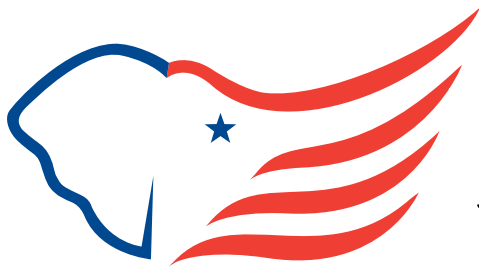
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Note From The Executive Director

June 2004 marks a significant benchmark for The Ripon Society and its members. Our corporate and personal membership tallies are on the rise by a strong margin and the Beltway buzz is that The Ripon Society is one of a select few groups prepared to counter the Democrats' 527 messaging (see cover story on George Soros). In this pivotal election year, action and communication are our paramount goals. Thus, this issue of The Ripon Forum offers potent fodder for communicating your thoughts and values with friends, family and colleagues.

Medicare cards will have already begun to assist hundreds of thousands of seniors with their prescription drug expenses by the time we have gone to print. It is far easier than they say — just go to www.medicare.gov, type in your zip code and the medications you take, and compare the top two card options to make your best card choice. That's right, welcome to democracy — it's your choice — not the government's, not the liberal media, not your HMO. This benefit to our elders, strongly promoted by our Republican Congress, is soon to be promoted nationally by Ripon with television commercials. The Ripon Society's own Congressional Advisory Board co-chair, Congresswoman Nancy Johnson (R-CT), adeptly promotes the Medicare reform package she co-authored. So, be on the lookout for our informational piece on the airwaves soon.

Also, be sure to read Congressional Advisory Board co-chair Congressman Jim Greenwood's (R-PA) article on the importance of stem cell research. Congresswoman Melissa Hart (R-PA) devoted her time to write an ode to Health Savings Accounts on our behalf. Also read Robert Goldberg's case against Canadian drug reimportation. Our health and medical content is strong in this issue, as is our dedication to delivering factual information to you.

As Lenny Bruce and Andy Kauffman roll in their graves at the above-ground rumblings generated by anti-free speech squadrons in the FCC and Congress, I am especially proud of our Capitol Forum this issue. Avid First Amendment supporter Nicholas Gaffney's piece is formidably flanked by none other than Jack Valenti's succinct elocution entitled "Freedom's Music." A special thank you to those who exercise your personal or familial authority to choose what is right to view or listen to as opposed to encouraging more heavy-handed federal intervention in your lives.

As you read our Table of Contents, you will note that The Ripon Forum continues to be a provocative, open medium for scholars, members of Congress and concerned citizens. Our topics range from the international impact of Islamic extremism in the Balkans to Ralph Nader's effect on our national presidential election. Our scope is as broad as our party is diverse. We encourage you to write to us via e-mail at info@riponsoc.org and share your opinions with us. Your important issues are our important issues — that's the benefit of membership with The Ripon Society.

Thank you once again for your support of The Ripon Society. Pass this issue on to a friend: Remember action and communication are our keys to success.

Sincerely,

Elvis Oxley
Executive Director
eoxy@riponsoc.org

One-Nation Republicanism

Bush outlines a new governing approach

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

In this new age of global terrorism and cultural polarization, the Republican Party has an historic opportunity to establish itself as the dominant voice for the disaffected broad middle of the American electorate.

Polls consistently show that voters trust the Republicans more than the Democrats on issues such as taxes, expanding global markets and national security. Even on so-called wedge issues like gay marriage and affirmative action, the GOP enjoys a decisive advantage. Yet Republicans have so far failed to bring about a new political realignment similar to Richard Nixon's "Silent Majority" electoral strategy or Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal coalition.

The major reason for this is that the media and the Democratic Party have largely succeeded in portraying the Republican Party as being hostage to its social conservative wing. The GOP is widely viewed as the party of God and guns. The result is that many independent and centrist-leaning voters, who generally agree with Republican positions on most bread-and-butter issues, are turned off by what they perceive as a party which has strong overtones of religious fundamentalism.

In fact, the reality is very different. Social conservatives are only a small faction within the GOP, based primarily in the Bible Belt. The party is composed of several other wings such as economic conservatives, neo-con hawks and even neo-liberals (for example, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Rudy Giuliani).

Moreover, cultural traditionalists have been in retreat for over a decade. Regarding abortion, pornography, euthanasia and gay civil unions, the country has been moving increasingly leftward on these hotly contested policy debates. The culture wars of the 1990s and the Clinton impeachment debacle demonstrated that social conservatives have become a political minority: their numbers and influence are waning. Social conservatives may occupy the commanding heights of talk radio, but they are thin on the ground.

While social conservatives are an essential element of the GOP and are indispensable in fighting the culture war, the party would be wise to broaden its base.

Republicans should seek to appeal to potentially very fertile ground: the vast center-right majority of the electorate. By championing a "one-nation Republicanism" that reaches out not only to white, middle-class voters, but also to African-Americans, Hispanics, blue-collar workers and women, the GOP can craft an almost invincible electoral formula: political progressivism combined with economic conservatism.



President George W. Bush

In fact, President Bush has incrementally adopted the one-nation Republican model in his approach to governance — albeit in rudimentary form. The administration has come under fire from conservative activists for deviating from right-wing orthodoxy on government spending and immigration.

However, President Bush is not an old-fashioned Reaganite. He believes that the GOP, instead of waging a hopeless battle to roll back costly but nevertheless popular entitlement programs, needs to forge a viable alternative to the modern welfare state. From creating private Social Security accounts to Medicare reform, President Bush has proposed ambitious policy initiatives that simultaneously seek to

maintain a basic social safety net while also fostering the virtues of personal responsibility and individual empowerment. His goal is to create a nation of middle-class investors, who will have a greater stake and ownership in many social programs traditionally run by Big Government.

By attempting to create a conservative welfare state, the administration is hoping to cobble together a new political coalition. President Bush has made some bold attempts to reach out to several non-traditional Republican voting groups — mainly Hispanics and "soccer moms" — through his proposed guest-worker program for illegal immigrants and the No Child Left Behind Act (which, despite harsh conservative criticism, has succeeded in raising education standards in much of the nation's public school system). Besides being good policy, these initiatives are important first steps in forging a new Republican electoral majority.

But they are not enough. The GOP needs to craft a comprehensive legislative agenda that will substantially broaden the party's base: such as urban renewal, the creation of empowerment zones in inner cities, greater funding for programs that enable workers to upgrade their skills in the New Economy and substantially boosting the tax credit for working mothers to help with rising day-care costs. These policies will not only strengthen America's economy and its tattered social fabric, but they will also help bring new supporters into the Republican Big Tent.

President Bush's one-nation Republicanism is an attempt to transcend the traditional left-right debates of the past century. He is seeking to articulate a conservative version of "The Third Way." If successful, President Bush will go down in history as a first-rank leader alongside such giants as Abraham Lincoln, FDR and Ronald Reagan — all of whom transformed the American political landscape during their time in office and beyond. However, can the president pull it off? He and the Republican Party must address this challenge. ☞

—Jeffrey T. Kuhner is the editor of *The Ripon Forum* and communications director at *The Ripon Society*.



The Center Still Holds

A Moderate Republican call to action

By U.S. Senator Susan M. Collins

It has been my privilege to serve the people of Maine in the U.S. Senate since 1996, and during that time I have made it my priority to travel home to see my constituents nearly every weekend. I consider it essential to be able to see my neighbors back home and hear their thoughts first-hand. It's not only enjoyable, but it's also highly informative. Mainers often have a very different set of concerns than those of opinion-makers in Washington. The specific subjects may vary, but I always hear that Americans are fed up with partisan bickering. My constituents want Congress to make progress on the issues they care about, the issues that affect their lives.

Washington could use a dose of this common sense. I know this is an election year, and I know what a difference having the right man in the White House will make for the next four years. But at the same time, our system requires a certain level of mutual respect, cooperation, and, above all, moderation. In the midst of the tough competition that lies ahead, I hope that both sides will remember that in order to win the support of undecided voters, they will need to persuade those voters of their sensible judgment, not their commitment to narrow ideology. Voters are looking for sensible, pragmatic solutions and a willingness to compromise in order to get the job done. Any progress will be forged at the center. That is where I will be — and have been since I began serving in the Senate in 1997.

Throughout my time in Washington, I have worked hard to provide the people of Maine with sensible, independent representation. In the tradition of former Maine senators such as Margaret Chase Smith and William Cohen, I have made every effort to provide balanced, common-sense leadership on issues like the environment, health care, the economy, civil liberties and America's role in world affairs. This has meant that, while I am a strong supporter of our Republican leadership and in particular of President Bush, I have nonetheless had to express my disagreement with the direction in which certain policies would take our party and our country.

I believe, for example, that our stewardship of our country's natural resources is one of the richest legacies that we can provide for future generations. Proposals that would weaken important

existing protections or erode the basic principles underlying our environmental laws do the Republican Party no service because they do America no service. Voters know that a better balance can be struck between industry on the one hand and limiting pollution and preserving our environmental treasures on the other. It is time that we in the Republican Party make it clear that we know it too.

Perhaps no issue is more contentious than the protection of a woman's right to choose. Pro-choice Republicans have a proud history within our party and we must not be afraid to make ourselves known and our voices heard. Our position is in keeping with the principles of freedom that have long guided our party: the government should not be involved in a woman's personal family planning decisions. Rather, those choices should be the responsibility of the woman herself, in consultation with her family and her doctor.

It is very encouraging that in a range of areas, however, moderates within our party have been able to shape the Republican agenda and have met with legislative success. Congress' approval of sweeping Medicare reform to include a prescription-drug benefit, and the president's endorsement of our efforts, are accomplishments about which we can be proud. Similarly, the enactment of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill is evidence of the willingness of our party to put the integrity of the system ahead of ideology, and evidence as well that the goals we moderates propose can be achieved. We moderates are not simply the outliers in an otherwise unbroken consensus. We have the power to bring about real change on terms that are most attractive to the American people, and it is important not to forget our own strength.

The Republican Party has always been my home and will always be my home. There is certainly more to unite us than to divide us. Our platform, based as much today as at our founding on the freedom that America has always symbolized and provided, is strong enough to support all sorts of Americans in our political life. Our economy still needs relief from excessive regulation; our government still needs to be more accountable; the tax burden on families is still too high; and our national defense always requires vigilance and



Courtesy of Sen. Collins' office

U.S. Sen. Susan M. Collins

support. With a proper emphasis on these common commitments, our party can continue to grow in numbers and strength and we can help to unleash the great potential stored up in the American people.

If Maine has any say, this political vision can certainly become a reality. Maine has a great tradition of electing centrist leaders, and sending leaders in that mold to Washington will be more important than ever before. But it requires support from outside, which itself depends on the courage of our convictions and our willingness to support each other. That is what makes groups like The Ripon Society so effective and essential, both for the forum they provide and the organizational opportunities they afford. With only the barest electoral majority, this is the right time for moderate Republicans to remind our leadership, our members and our independent-minded constituents of the Republican principles that bind us and the vision of America we have to offer. ☞

— U.S. Sen. Susan M. Collins is a Maine Republican and chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee

The Nader Factor

Ralph Nader may deliver the election to Bush

By Donald Lambro

Democratic Party officials say that President George W. Bush wouldn't be in the White House today if Ralph Nader had not run for president in 2000 and there is certainly a lot of truth to that claim.

They also say that Mr. Nader's plan to get on the ballot again this year, this time as an independent, is going to get a lot of help from Republicans who want him to do to John Kerry what he did to Al Gore. And there's a lot of truth to that, too. Republicans will eagerly line up to sign Mr. Nader's ballot petitions in as many states as possible — from Maine to California.

Mr. Nader, who ran for president on the Green Party ticket, eroded the Democratic vote just enough in 2000 to tip key states into the Republican column, giving then-Gov. Bush the microscopic electoral margin he needed to beat Bill Clinton's mercurial vice president.

The far-left, anti-capitalist crusader, who nonetheless made a bundle in the stock market boom of the 1990s when no one was looking, won 2.6 percent of the vote last time. That tells you how popular his ideas were.

But Mr. Nader was able to win 97,488 votes in Florida. If those votes had gone to Mr. Gore, even a small portion of them, President Bush — who won the state by 537 votes — would have lost Florida and the election.

A similar situation occurred in New Hampshire where Mr. Bush beat Mr. Gore by only 7,211 votes while Mr. Nader won 22,198 votes — many of which could have gone to Mr. Gore if Mr. Nader had not run.

Needless to say, Democrats are outraged over Mr. Nader's decision to run again and there are threats of political warfare to block his attempts to get his name on the ballot.

Each state sets its own rules on ballot applications and the certification process and it can be brutally complicated and bureaucratic — a legal and political obstacle course that is hostile to independent candidates. Top Democratic officials tell me there are going to be legal and procedural challenges lodged against Mr. Nader's ballot petitions wherever possible.

One of those officials is Florida Democratic Chairman Scott Maddox, who told me that Mr. Nader is going to encounter some heavy opposition when he



Ralph Nader prepares to address supporters, April 5, 2004, in Portland, Oregon.

tries to get on the Sunshine state's ballot.

Mr. Maddox, a student of political hardball, thinks that Mr. Nader is acting in "his own self-interest and feeding his own ego to the detriment of the nation."

"He reminds me of another American who had done great things for his country in the past but then decided to act in his own self-interest rather than in the country's interests. Ralph Nader is the Benedict Arnold of modern democracy," he said.

What can Mr. Nader's campaign expect to encounter in Florida this time around? "We are going to be looking at [the ballot certification process] very closely as we go forward, very closely. I would imagine that he will receive assistance in collecting signatures from Republican operatives so they can pull votes away from the Democratic nominee," Mr. Maddox said.

Mr. Maddox is not off on an independent stop-Nader strategy of his own making here. This appears to be the emerging plan at the Democratic National Committee and the Kerry campaign.

When I pointedly asked DNC chief spokesman Debra DeShong if the party planned to take steps to challenge Mr. Nader's efforts to get on the ballot in key states, she did not react negatively to such action.

"At this point, it's premature as to what we are going to do. It's much too early to be discussing situations like that," she said.

But this is in fact what Democrats at the party's highest levels are talking about doing. "Nader robbed us of one election, we're not going to let him do it to us again," one party official told me.

A state-by-state guerrilla war against Mr. Nader might be what many party leaders have in mind, but the Democratic Leadership Council is urging a strategy of benign neglect.

"We hope Democrats will finally adopt the approach that Nader so richly deserves — and ignore him altogether," the DLC said in a political broadside against him in February.

"Nader's only real hope for relevance in 2004 is that panicky Democrats will urge their nominee to run as hard and far to the left as possible in order to minimize his vote...and Democrats should not make it come true for Nader," the DLC analysis said.

DLC officials believe that leaving Mr. Nader alone will leave him "on the margin of politics where he belongs." But three years ago the Democrats learned that elections can be won or lost on the margins and that's where Mr. Nader exerts his greatest strength.

In 2000, the U.S. economy was still in good shape and Mr. Nader's far-left, anti-trade, anti-corporate tirades had only a very limited potential. This year, however, his message could have a much bigger impact in battleground states like Michigan and Ohio where the loss of millions of manufacturing jobs is a much bigger issue.

All those angry Dean Democrats, who cannot forgive Mr. Kerry's votes for NAFTA and other free trade pacts, could become Nader voters this fall and pave the way for President Bush's second term.

— Donald Lambro is a nationally syndicated columnist

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PETA's Death Wish

When fried chicken becomes Auschwitz

By Rachel K. Ayerst

If People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is correct, then millions of American families are sitting down for dinner each night to a "Holocaust" on their plates. According to the organization, humans eating animals is the moral equivalent of Nazis murdering Jews in concentration camps. This advertising campaign, which is just one of many tasteless stunts staged by PETA in the last few years, proves that the animal rights group can no longer be taken seriously by reasonable Americans.

Founded in 1980, PETA has as its operating principle "that animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, or use for entertainment." But they have moved far beyond educating responsible citizens about animal cruelty. By adopting a policy of fear mongering in order to gain some easy attention, PETA has finally succeeded in discrediting itself.

The "Holocaust on Your Plate" campaign, which began in February 2003, brought large-scale posters to cities and college campuses across the nation. The posters compare the slaughter of animals to the slaughter of Jews by Hitler's Nazi thugs. The disturbing billboards juxtapose graphic images of the lifeless bodies of concentration camp victims with the corpses of various farm animals. According to PETA, the United States' invention of the slaughterhouse has provoked as much, if not more, horror in the world as the gas chamber did under the Nazis. By equating human life with the lives of animals, PETA has not only trivialized the suffering of Holocaust victims, but offended the moral sensibilities of millions of Americans who realize that the life of a rat is not equal to the life of a human being.

If PETA's perverse moral equivalence isn't enough to completely marginalize it, decent Americans should be outraged at its deliberate attempts to indoctrinate children with frightening propaganda. In recent months, PETA has begun targeting KFC restaurants for cruelty to chickens. In order to raise awareness for their cause, members of PETA have begun distributing "buckets of blood" to children outside KFC restaurants. By specifically targeting children with these buckets, which include fake

bones, bloodied feathers and a rubber chicken, PETA has sunk to an all-time low. In a special section of a PETA-sponsored Web site aimed at elementary school-aged children, the most basic fears of children are exploited with propaganda like "chickens on Colonel Sanders' farms never get to be loved by their moms. These birds' lives are awful and scary even before they are killed and cut up for food."



According to the organization, humans eating animals is the moral equivalent of Nazis murdering Jews in concentration camps.

Contrary to popular belief, PETA does not use the bulk of its operating budget to fight animal cruelty. Rather, it puts the money toward offensive ideological campaigns designed to remake American society. According to the Center for Consumer Freedom, a Washington-based coalition of consumers, food companies and restaurants, less than one percent of PETA's total budget is dedicated to actually "helping animals." They report that in 1999 alone PETA "euthanized more than 1,300 cats and dogs...preferring to spend its money on cheap publicity stunts and criminal defense rather than finding the animals suitable homes."

Unfortunately, indecent advertising campaigns and misspent funds are not the only serious problems facing PETA. In 2001, PETA made donations to the Earth

Liberation Front. ELF has been responsible for a number of arsons and other incidents of eco-terrorism around the country, provoking the FBI to add it to its list of domestic terrorist organizations. As a charitable organization that receives millions of dollars in annual donations from Americans, PETA's tax-exempt status depends on its ability to abide by the law.

The Center for Consumer Freedom has undertaken a massive campaign to expose PETA's radicalism. It has begun a petition against PETA that highlights the group's involvement with criminal organizations and calls on the government to revoke PETA's tax-exempt status immediately. With more than 35,000 signatures, it appears that the Center for Consumer Freedom is having a noticeable impact on Americans.

In addition to the petition, the Center for Consumer Freedom has also begun an awareness campaign designed to educate Americans about PETA's twisted morality. PETA opposes any organization that uses animals for medical testing, and has recently directed its membership to boycott such organizations as the Pediatric AIDS Foundation and the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Some of the Center for Consumer Freedom's advertisements, which have been strategically placed in the Capital District's Metro system for maximum exposure, quote PETA's President Ingrid Newkirk as saying "even if animal research resulted in a cure for AIDS we'd be against it." This type of statement reveals just how out of touch PETA has become.

PETA's radicalism, however, appears to be catching up with it. With groups like the Center for Consumer Freedom mounting a sweeping counter-offensive, it seems only a matter of time before Americans become fully aware of PETA's activities, and as a result, cease making donations to the organization. In the most ironic of endings, perhaps it's now PETA's goose that may be cooked. ☞

— Rachel K. Ayerst is the culture editor of *The Ripon Forum*.

Lilly

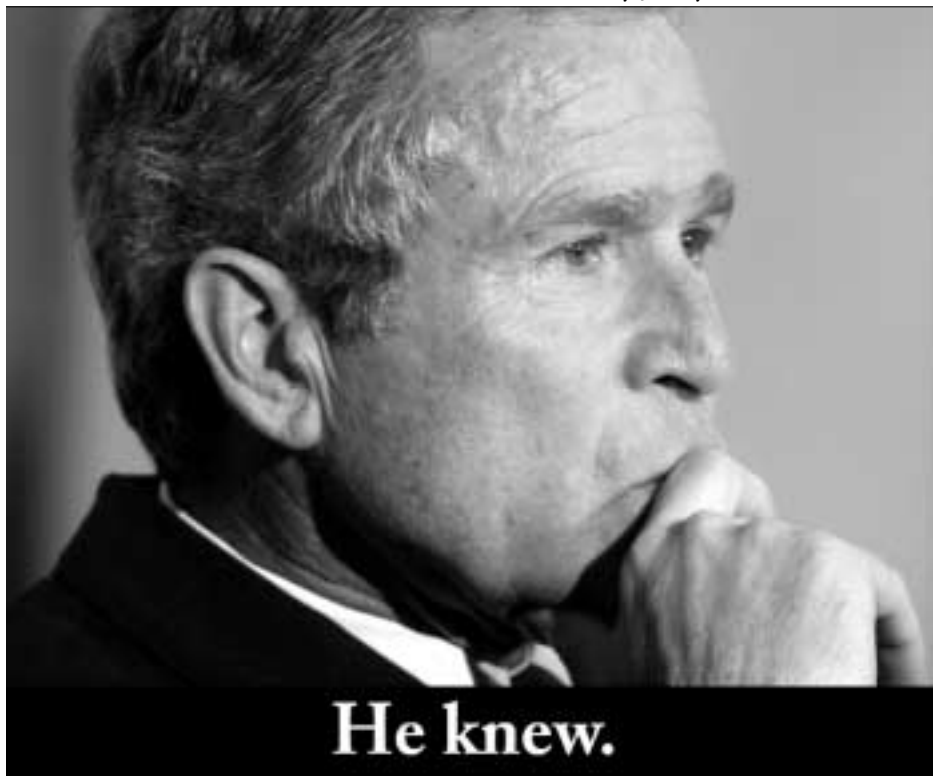
Answers That Matter.



The Soros Empire

Billionaire George Soros declares war on Bush

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner



He knew.

Congress must censure the president.

MoveOn.org, a political group funded by Soros, has placed ads criticizing President Bush's war against Iraq (as shown above).

Financier George Soros is seeking to defeat President Bush in this year's election. "I have made rejection of the Bush doctrine the central project of my life," Mr. Soros declared in January. He added that "I am determined to do what I can" to assure that President Bush is not re-elected this November.

Normally, such partisan comments from a wealthy Democratic donor would be dismissed as typical election-year rhetoric. But Mr. Soros' statements rightly have attracted considerable media attention. The international currency speculator has developed a well-earned reputation for being a can-do individual who accomplishes his goals — both in business and politics.

Having fled communism in his native

Hungary, Mr. Soros came to America in 1956 at the age of 26. He then proceeded to trade and speculate his way to an immense fortune. The financier is estimated to be worth around \$6 billion, making him one of the richest men in the world.

His prominent notoriety, however, is based not on his considerable wealth but on his political activism. Mr. Soros first became a political force to be reckoned with during the 1980s, when he helped to finance numerous anti-communist groups throughout Eastern Europe. However, the fall of the Berlin Wall released Mr. Soros from his self-imposed, tentative alliance of convenience with the region's numerous conservative and nationalist dissidents.

Mr. Soros was always a man of the democratic Left. The collapse of communism enabled him to pursue his real objectives: transforming the former communist bloc into a bastion of social democracy and "civil society." He pumped millions of dollars into left-leaning non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In some countries, the financier's aid exceeds that of the U.S. government. He often boasts that "the former Soviet Empire is now called the Soros Empire."

Mr. Soros and his NGOs have played a major role in toppling nationalist governments in Serbia, Slovakia and Georgia. Emboldened by his successes, Mr. Soros has now set his sights on President Bush. Yet the financier-philanthropist is not simply a Democratic partisan who wants to see a Republican administration fall from power; rather, he is an elitist leftist who has embraced an increasingly extremist worldview during the past decade.

Capitalism: The Enemy

Always prone to a kind of sentimental liberalism, the maverick billionaire has in the past several years embraced a radical left-wing agenda that champions legalizing drugs, euthanasia, open borders and the repeal of welfare reform. But his main target is economic globalization.

"Capitalism is coming apart at the seams," Mr. Soros said at the time of the Asian financial crisis. He believes that the rise of "laissez-faire capitalism" threatens democratic governance and international stability by concentrating too much power in the hands of corporations.

To offset the ravaging effects of global markets, Mr. Soros argues that nations should be made subservient to international institutions. The billionaire insists that, in order to stabilize and regulate the global economy, there needs to be "some global system of political decision-making." In other words, the solution to the supposed capitalist crisis is to create one-world government.

His ideological kookiness extends to

Referring to himself as a “stateless statesman,” Mr. Soros confessed to biographer Michael Kaufman that his “goal is to become the conscience of the world.” He has also admitted that he has “godlike, messianic ideas” and that he sometimes thinks of himself as “superhuman.” “I am a kind of nut who wants to have an impact,” he told Mr. Kaufman.

American foreign policy as well. In his new book, “The Bubble of American Supremacy,” Mr. Soros decries the Bush administration’s “unilateralism” and “arrogance” in international affairs. He compares the United States under President Bush’s leadership to Nazi Germany. “When I hear President Bush say that, ‘either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists,’ I hear alarm bells,” Mr. Soros writes. He is a ferocious critic of the war in Iraq. He believes that America has degenerated into a militaristic fascist empire bent on spreading its “ideology of American supremacy.” His world view can be distilled to one simple idea: American “unilateralism” is evil, while United Nations-style multilateralism is good.

Backing MoveOn.org

The billionaire now hopes to inject his anti-American, anti-capitalist message into this year’s U.S. presidential race. Although campaign finance reform has placed stringent limits on the amount of money that can go to candidates and political parties, the law still allows unlimited contributions to so-called “independent” political committees. As of last November, Mr. Soros has already given over \$18 million to anti-Bush groups. The most infamous of the groups is MoveOn.org, an organization originally formed to defend President Clinton during his impeachment.

Mr. Soros has said he is “willing to put my money where my mouth is,” vowing “to give more” if “necessary.” The financier has become the sugar daddy of the “shadow” Democratic Party — a collection of eight progressive 527 groups dedicated to defeating President Bush (527s take their name from a section in the federal tax code). As Christine Iverson, spokeswoman for the Republican National Committee, put it: “George Soros has purchased the Democratic Party. By virtue of his enormous wealth Soros is the most powerful person in the Democratic Party.”

The Bush campaign should not allow the billionaire’s growing influence among Democrats to go unchallenged. President Bush needs to ask Sen. John Kerry whether



Associated Press, AP

George Soros, founder and chairman of the Soros Fund Management LLC., addresses the 2004 graduating class of the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs Monday, May 17, 2004 in New York.

the presumptive Democratic nominee shares any of Mr. Soros’ extreme views. The electorate has a right to know if the financier’s money comes with strings attached.

For ultimately what is dangerous about Mr. Soros is not his fringe politics, but his messiah complex. Referring to himself as a “stateless statesman,” the financier confessed to biographer Michael Kaufman that his “goal is to become the conscience of the world.” He has also admitted that he has “godlike, messianic ideas” and that he sometimes thinks of himself as “superhuman.” “I am a kind of nut who wants to have an impact,” he told Mr. Kaufman.

The Lenin of the 21st Century

The 20th century is littered with examples of messianic visionaries — Lenin, Hitler and Castro — whose megalomania

and absolute desire for power have wreaked unimaginable havoc. Mr. Soros’ brand of neo-Marxism is no different. His one-world globalism and hostility to capitalism are part of the radical left’s long-term ambitions to alter human reality through social engineering. Like the Nazi and communist projects, the results would be disastrous. The financier’s call for international income redistribution would significantly undermine the West’s prosperity, increasing poverty and instability around the world. Meanwhile, his desire for a system of global government would in reality empower numerous Third World dictators at the expense of Western democracies that are much smaller both in number and population. If implemented, Mr. Soros’ utopianism would eventually lead to a form of one-world authoritarianism and economic collectivism.

Mr. Soros is a rabid ideologue who is seeking to use the Democratic Party to advance his own radical aims. The Democrats need to understand that their alliance with this man may come with a heavy price tag. Their association with a self-confessed “nut” undermines their credibility and opens them up to charges of being sympathetic to his ideological persuasion.

If the Democrats will not cut their ties to him, then the GOP would be wise to make Mr. Soros a major campaign issue. The billionaire-turned-activist has boastfully declared war on President Bush. It is time for Republicans to declare war on him. ☺

— Jeffrey T. Kuhner is the editor of The Ripon Forum. A shorter version of this essay appeared in the May 4, 2004 editions of Investor’s Business Daily.

You can also read
Jeffrey T. Kuhner’s commentaries
in *The Washington Times*

Perils of WMD Proliferation

An exclusive interview with Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

John R. Bolton was sworn in as Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security on May 11, 2001.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Bolton was senior vice president of the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington-based conservative think tank.

Mr. Bolton has spent many years of his career in public service. Previous positions he has held are Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs at the Department of State, 1989-1993; Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, 1985-1989; Assistant Administrator for Program and Policy Coordination, U.S. Agency for International Development, 1982-1983; General Counsel, U.S. Agency for International Development, 1981-1982.

Mr. Bolton is also an attorney. From 1974-1981 he was an associate at the Washington office of Covington & Burling, where he returned as a member of the firm from 1983-1985, after public service at the U.S. Agency for International Development. From 1993 through 1999, he was a partner in the law firm of Lerner, Reed, Bolton & McManus.

Mr. Bolton was born in Baltimore on Nov. 20, 1948. He graduated with a B.A., *summa cum laude*, from Yale University and received his J.D. from Yale Law School.

Mr. Bolton kindly agreed to a face-to-face interview in his office at the State Department. We also wish to thank members of his staff — especially, Sarah Tinsley Demarest — for their generosity, time and cooperation. Here are excerpts from the interview.

RF: Under Secretary Bolton, you have been a leading critic of the International Criminal Court within the Bush administration. What are your primary objections to the ICC?

Under Secretary Bolton: The ICC prosecutor has enormous authority, power and discretion to bring investigations and prosecutions against people alleged with



Under Secretary John R. Bolton

Courtesy of Under Secretary Bolton's office

having committed war crimes and crimes against humanity. That authority is not checked by any democratic institutions. The only supervision the prosecutor has is by the court, which is, of course, a concept we rejected when we created the separation of powers inherent in the Constitution. The substantive authority of the prosecutor is very vague and we are quite concerned that the inherent unaccountability of the prosecutor would result in making essentially politicized prosecution decisions directed against top officials of the United States.

The United States is absolutely committed, where appropriate, to investigate and prosecute allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity. And, Secretary of State Colin Powell said we would be happy to match our record on that score against anyone in the world.

The issue is whether an institution like the ICC is the best way to make those decisions, and as you can see in case after case, as in the former Yugoslavia and in South Africa and in Eastern Europe and in many countries around the world where there have been allegations of crimes against humanity, they have also been associated with the political resolutions to the disputes in question and the risk of politicized prosecution — especially against the United States — is quite high. So our feeling is that the best way to handle gross abuses of human rights is to require the

country in question to decide [about] what it wants to do, whether to prosecute the people, as for example will happen in the case of Iraq when sovereignty is restored on July 1, or whether a country wants to seek other alternatives.

South Africa, for example, after the fall of the apartheid regime, created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission because the new government of President Mandela felt that the important thing was to get out the facts of what had happened under apartheid, not to use prosecution as a form of retribution. Other countries, like the countries of Central Europe, could have had the prosecutions of the communist regimes, but decided that the best thing was to have a general amnesty and to look toward the future. I am not saying that any of these alternatives is right or wrong. My point is that each country has to decide on its own. And the institution of the ICC, which is purely prosecutorial, prejudges that question.

RF: What do you think U.S. policy should be toward curtailing North Korea's nuclear weapons program?

Under Secretary Bolton: President Bush has been very clear that our preference is to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue through peaceful, democratic means. So that has been our goal: the peaceful elimination of North Korea's weapons. We have been engaged in six-party talks for quite some time now, and we are continuing to pursue that. We hope to have another round of six-party talks within the next few months. But our objective has always been two-fold: the peaceful resolution of the issue, and the elimination of North Korea's weapons program.

And, National Security Advisor Condi Rice was asked a short time ago how long we would pursue the diplomatic route. She said, "as long as it is productive." The vice president just took an important trip to Asia, where he warned that the continued North Korean nuclear weapons program means that time may not be on our side on

this. Delay may be the North Korean strategy. Maybe their strategy is to delay past our election, hoping President Bush is defeated. I hope that is not the North Korean strategy.

But the fact is that North Korea's behavior on a broad variety of fronts shows that we simply can't trust them to have nuclear weapons. We can't allow that result both because of the instability that would create in Northeast Asia, and because the North Koreans are known proliferators and if they came to possess nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons technology there would be every reason to think that they would try to sell it to somebody else. They might sell it to rogue states in the Middle East. They might sell it to terrorist groups. They would sell it to anybody who would pay them for it. So it's not just the Northeast Asia threat — although that is our most important concern — it is a global threat because of the nature of the North Korean nation.

RF: President Bush's critics charge the administration has been contradictory in its policies toward Iraq and North Korea, both of whom were singled out as rogue states with dangerous WMD programs. Yet the administration advocated military force to topple Saddam Hussein from power, while calling for peaceful diplomacy to deal with North Korea. How do you respond to the critics?

Under Secretary Bolton: Well, I think the situations are dramatically different. The use of force in Iraq followed 12 years of Iraqi defiance of ceasefire resolutions going back to the war in 1991. And I think you have to look at Iraq as something that began in 1990 with the invasion of Kuwait and finished last year with the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. It is one long story and the one central element was Saddam Hussein's unwillingness to demonstrate that he was giving up weapons of mass destruction. North Korea is a very different set of circumstances and therefore, we have approached it very differently.

I would say this: if you want to know how to give up weapons of mass destruction look at the Libya example. They made a strategic decision that the pursuit of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction were not making Libya more secure, it was making it less secure. So they opened up completely and we have had a very productive relationship with them. We packed up their nuclear weapons program and moved them to Oakridge, Tennessee. That is completely different than the way Iraq behaved, and completely different than the way Iran and North Korea have been behaving.

RF: How extensive do you think the damage was to American national security regarding the recent revelations that Pakistan's top nuclear scientist, A.Q. Khan, sold sensitive nuclear secrets to Libya, Iran and North Korea?

Under Secretary Bolton: Well, the A.Q. Khan network was an unquestionably very dangerous, very threatening operation. But our judgment is that Khan operated without the approval of the government of Pakistan. This is what President Musharraf has told us and based on all the information we have, we don't have any reason to doubt his word on that. Now, I might say that that doesn't make me feel more comfortable; it makes me feel less comfortable that somebody like Khan could operate so successfully without the support of a nation-state. He created an international network, facilities, financial mechanisms and transportations that allowed him to engage in this proliferation of activity ...

So it was a great success of our intelligence and our allied intelligence operations to be able to bring the Khan network down. I think it was a direct contributor to Libya's decision to give up its weapons of mass destruction. The derailing of the network was made possible in part by President Bush's Proliferation Security Initiative, which played a major role in uncovering Khan's operation. So I would view it as having very positive aspects — the success of our aggressive pursuit against the black market in WMD materials, but a real warning sign of just how severe this problem is on a world basis.

RF: What do you say to anti-war opponents who charge that the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq was morally illegitimate and a strategic blunder? [*Note to readers: U.N. Resolution 687 was passed in 1991. It called for Saddam Hussein, among other things, to verifiably destroy his WMD program under international supervision.*]

Under Secretary Bolton: I think the premise of the decision to use military force was that the continued existence of Saddam Hussein's regime was a threat to international peace and security. If he had failed to comply with his obligations under the ceasefire resolution in 687 for over 12 years and if he had been able to free himself from the U.N.'s constraints, the economic constraints, the weapons constraints, based on his record in office, he would have returned to the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction as soon as he was free of them.

The concern of what weapons he might have had was not simply based on intelligence; it was based on Saddam's own

declarations of chemical and biological weapons, for example, of declarations of weapons, weapons of related materials he had. There was no evidence that they had been destroyed. And that was something Saddam Hussein had declared to the United Nations in the early 1990s. The United Nations searched for these materials for years and never found them. When confronted with these facts, the regime had said, "we destroyed those materials — we just didn't keep any records of it." ... [But] you don't destroy chemical weapons and don't keep records. So it wasn't simply a question of intelligence. It was a question of what Saddam Hussein had told the United Nations and we have no evidence of the material being destroyed.

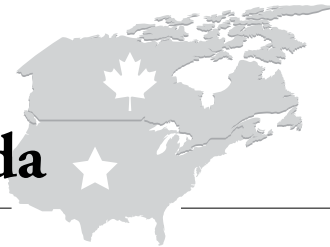
Let's not forget: there is undisputed evidence that, in the missile fields, Saddam was in violation of 687 through missiles that unquestionably had a range greater than that permitted by 687 that the United Nations found. So you can't say he wasn't building those missiles and that missile capacity without having found some use for it. There was a range of evidence to that effect. Now, what the full story is of the WMD remains to be seen. I suspect we will find that Saddam Hussein kept the intellectual capability to recreate the weapons capacity and that he was simply waiting for the United Nations and the international community to turn its attention elsewhere.

So let's come back to the reason. So the reason for force was the threat posed by Saddam's regime — not that we said it was an imminent threat.

President Bush never made that argument. In fact, back in the 2003 State of the Union address, he expressly said, "some have said that we must wait until the threat is imminent but since when have dictators ever given notice of their intentions." So the argument of imminent threat was made by those who opposed military force at all. And the president considered that argument and rejected it — and so did Congress because we made that case expressly. I think the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and the devastating damage they can do to innocent civilians is what justifies the use of force.

These weapons are almost entirely weapons of terrorism. They don't pose a significant military threat to the United States. They do pose a risk to our civilians and civilian populations and our friends and allies, and no responsible president can let those people be held at risk. ☞

—Jeffrey T. Kuhmer is the
editor of *The Ripon Forum*



Drug Wars

Perils of importing drugs from Canada

By Robert Goldberg

The adage that if something seems to be too good to be true it usually isn't true, could have originated with the idea that importing drugs from Canada and other countries will save America about \$63 billion a year on drug expenditures.

Bus trips to Canada and internet pharmacies dramatize these differences in ways that suggest importation can save consumers and governments up to 80 percent of what they spend on all drugs forevermore.

But the retail purchase of drugs by individuals — or even some small buying groups — is a misleading indicator of what importation could really save. Indeed, most, if not all of the evidence about price differences and importation indicates that, even before the serious concerns about the safety of drug imports can be addressed, Americans will not save much money now and even less in the future.

The reality is and will be quite different even without taking into account the significant costs of protecting the American medicine supply against criminals, counterfeiters and terrorists. Like anecdotal bus trips, most previous studies are based on a few widely used brand-name drugs and omit all generics, even though generics now account for roughly half of the unit volume in the United States. And they ignore the fact that many health plans extract discounts from drug companies and from pharmacies. Finally, different cost of living and fluctuating exchange rates between nations explain much of the remaining drug price differences. Patricia Danzon, from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, found that exchange rates played a crucial role in explaining price differences between the United States and Canada. In fact, she found that by “netting out” exchange rates, the Canada-U.S. drug price differential was reduced from 33 percent to 14 percent, and that after taking into account “health purchasing power parities” for common medical services the relative drug price differential between Europe and the United States is largely eliminated.¹

As long as a relatively small group of seniors take advantage of the favorable exchange rates and retail price differentials for a relatively small group of medicines, importation might seem to work. But all

importation proposals being considered in Congress would allow any distributor, wholesaler, pharmacy or chain store to import directly from Canada or anywhere else. That would make the American market for pharmaceuticals more like Europe's, which has encouraged the importation of low price drugs as a way of reducing drug costs.

To the extent that America could implement importation — again assuming that serious issues about the violation of a company's patent and drug safety can be addressed — it would likely result in almost no savings at all. Rather, drug importers would reap the benefits of price differences because of price controls on drugs.

Indeed, a study conducted by the London School of Economics found that parallel importation — importing drugs from countries with lower prices to their higher priced EU counterparts — produced very little savings for importing countries. The study found that intra-European importation in 2002 to the 6 major destination countries accounted for only 0.3-2% of national medicine budgets, representing a total saving of just EUR44.7 million out of the EUR82 billion EU pharmaceutical market. On the other hand, the parallel importers who bought these same medicines from across the EU made enormous profits (EUR648 million). In the United Kingdom, the LSE study found that on the most heavily imported drugs the “National Health Service saved EUR55.9 million [if the markup on imported drugs taken by pharmacists is included], or 2.8% of the medicines budget from parallel imports in 2002.” This small benefit is contrasted, again, with far-larger gains for parallel importation firms, garnered through markups of 49% that yielded EUR469 million in profits.

Not surprisingly, middle men will find that not every drug is or will be worth importing. In Europe only a handful of drugs in any country offer wide enough of a price spread, are prescribed often enough, and are in enough supply to make importation profitable. According to IMS Global Health, 50% of parallel imports in the United Kingdom were accounted for by just 12 brands and only four companies were responsible for 55% of all parallel imports.

Europe and Canada also lag in their launch of breakthrough medicines such as Gleevec, Xolair (for severe asthma), and Alimta (for lung cancer) and restrict their use in order to control drug spending. These drugs are usually launched at about the same price worldwide. For drugs launched in the last two years, all countries except Germany use new drugs about half as much as America. Consequently, importation will be of no value in making newer medicines cheaper or more available.

Importation won't save money and it won't benefit seniors who lack drug coverage and pay retail for their medicines, particularly those who are chronically ill and poor. However, these seniors will immediately get assistance with the combination of the new Medicare discount card combined with a \$600 subsidy until the Medicare drug plan is added to traditional Medicare in 2006. The discount card alone makes many of the most commonly prescribed drugs about the same price or cheaper than buying drugs from Canadian internet pharmacies (which is still illegal and carries safety risks) and paying the added shipping costs. An additional 40 percent savings, and in some cases, a month's supply of medicines for a small monthly fee will also be available for over 200 of the most commonly prescribed medicines through pharmaceutical company programs that will in turn be coordinated with the Medicare drug effort.

Such programs are no substitute for prescription drug coverage as part of a health plan. However, they offer more comprehensive and direct support to seniors than an importation scheme which fails to fully address concerns about misleading internet sites, counterfeiters and shoddy drugs. Most importantly, drug discount plans provide competition for customers, and this will ensure that seniors get the best and newest medicines as quickly as possible. In contrast, drug importation moves America toward universal drug price controls, with less access to cutting-edge drugs and less overall medical innovation. ☞

— Robert Goldberg is director of the Center for Medical Progress at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

¹ Patricia M. Danzon and Michael F. Furukawa, Prices and Availability of Pharmaceuticals: Evidence from Nine Countries, *Health Affairs* Web Exclusive, October 29, 2003.

Expanding Health Insurance

Helping small businesses overcome their most difficult challenge

By U.S. Representative Sue Kelly

As a former small business owner and a member of the House Small Business Committee, one of my top priorities in Washington is to protect and enhance our nation's small businesses. The Hudson Valley region of New York where I live is filled with vibrant small businesses that are the life blood of our local economy. People living in cities and towns throughout America rely on small businesses for their everyday needs, and small business owners rely on the success of their business to support their families and create additional jobs to employ more and more workers in our country.

In my continuing quest to boost the health and success of our small businesses, I recently held an open forum with small business owners in my congressional district. I wanted to learn more, directly from them, about the challenges they are facing every day as they run their businesses. They confirmed what I suspected: the most daunting challenge facing small business owners today is finding affordable health insurance coverage for themselves, their families and their employees.

Approximately 60 percent of uninsured Americans are the employees or owners of small businesses and their families. The problem of America's uninsured is clearly a problem of small business access to health care at a reasonable cost. My objective is to find ways that we, at the federal level, can bring those costs down.

The small business owners at my forum stressed that it isn't so much a problem of finding health insurance as it is paying for it. "We know health insurance is out there, we just can't afford it," one small business owner told me. They sincerely want to offer health insurance to all employees, but the enormous expense would cripple them financially and likely force them to later cut the jobs of those same employees they were trying to insure. In 2002, monthly premiums for employer-sponsored health insurance increased by 12.7 percent — the largest increase in 12 years. One survey reports that 7 out of 10 small businesses do not provide health coverage to their employees, and increasing costs are cited as the chief reason for this trend.

If we continue to allow a lack of



Courtesy of Rep. Kelly's office

U.S. Rep. Sue Kelly

affordable health insurance options for small businesses and their employees, the number of uninsured Americans will continue to swell. It is imperative that we act quickly to reverse this trend in the small business health insurance market before we reach a point where no small businesses can afford health coverage.

Reducing unnecessary regulations and administrative costs would allow more owners of businesses to obtain affordable health coverage for themselves and their employees. The premiums that small businesses pay for health insurance are typically 20-30 percent higher than those paid by larger companies or unions that can self-insure. Additionally, the administrative costs incurred by small businesses are higher: 25 to 27 percent for small businesses versus 5 to 11 percent for larger businesses.

In the U.S. House of Representatives, we have approved legislation that would allow small businesses to band together and reduce their health insurance costs through Association Health Plans (AHPs). This would level the playing field and give participating small employers the same advantages that larger employers have under ERISA. AHPs could allow as many as 8.5 million currently uninsured Americans to gain access to private sector health insurance with premiums that would be an estimated 15 to 30 percent lower than they are currently forced to pay. A national survey determined that more than 90 percent of Americans support the creation of AHPs.

We also need medical liability reform in our country to get our health insurance

costs back under control. Multiple surveys have found that the majority of Americans favor medical liability reform and believe that it would lower health insurance premiums. Congress needs to act on behalf of this majority.

In the House of Representatives, we passed the HEALTH Act to help reduce the skyrocketing costs of medical liability insurance that are putting doctors out of work or forcing them to charge higher fees for their services. This drives up the cost of health insurance premiums for all Americans, and the loss of doctors and cuts in services are severely limiting patient access to vital health care services.

The HEALTH Act does not limit the amount for which injured patients can sue for economic damages after legitimate medical errors. Specifically, the HEALTH Act would put a \$250,000 cap on non-economic damages in lawsuits. Again, there are no limits on such economic damages as lost wages, home services, medical costs, drugs, therapy, or lifetime rehabilitation care. Nor does the HEALTH Act in any way limit a patient's access to our court system. This legislation should improve patient access to the courts by implementing reforms that speed up the settlement of claims.

According to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the HEALTH Act would cut premiums for medical malpractice insurance by an average of 25 percent to 30 percent, and this savings would ultimately be returned to patients. The Congressional Budget Office concluded that the HEALTH Act would bring about "an increase in the number of employers offering insurance to their employees and in the number of employees enrolling in employer-sponsored insurance, changes in the types of health plans that are offered, and increases in the scope or generosity of health insurance benefits."

With AHPs and the HEALTH Act, we have passed legislation in the House that would immediately slash health insurance costs for small business workers throughout our country.

Now our counterparts in the Senate need to act. Our small business workers suffer each day that the Senate delays passing this common-sense legislation. Our small businesses deserve better. ☞

— U.S. Rep. Sue Kelly is a New York Republican and is a member of the House Financial Services Committee and the Small Business Committee.



Defending Medicare Reform Prescription drugs are the hot topic at gathering

By Brent Curtis, *Rutland Herald*

Note to readers: This article is reprinted from the April 6, 2004 editions of the Vermont Rutland Herald. U.S. Rep. Nancy L. Johnson addressed a group of Vermont Republicans at a Ripon Society outreach dinner event held on April 5 in Rutland, VT.

Rep. Nancy Johnson, R-Conn., is used to thinking about the big picture on national legislation affecting everything from education to the economy.

But she told a gathering of about 100 Republicans and a handful of Democrats and independents at Howe Center on Monday that federal legislation coming out of Washington, D.C., was setting goals rather than dictating strategies states must follow to meet them.

“We are in an era where the balance of power is changing. We have the ability to lay down our wants, but have the inability to dictate how it is done,” Johnson said.

Johnson, 69, came to Vermont at the behest of the Ripon Society, a nonprofit organization that encourages moderate views within the Republican Party.

Johnson is co-chairwoman of the Ripon Society.

The group was in Vermont as part of a nationwide campaign to promote grassroots participation in the organization, which is based in Washington, D.C., according to Elvis Oxley, the society’s executive director.

The event was well attended by state lawmakers. Eleven state representatives from Rutland County and beyond were on hand, as well as all three Rutland County senators and Republican candidates for the U.S. House and Senate.

But Johnson’s speech didn’t focus on The Ripon Society.

Instead, the 22-year incumbent focused on the changing dynamics driving health care, education, the economy and terrorism.

As one of the architects of the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003, Johnson said the government had taken an important step toward filling a number of coverage gaps.

The multifaceted legislation installs

prescription drug benefits on a voluntary basis, pays rural physicians and hospitals a higher rate as an incentive to work in isolated areas, provides comprehensive chronic illness coverage, encourages preventative doctor visits and allows employers to establish health savings accounts for people under age 65.



U.S. Rep. Nancy L. Johnson

Some of the act’s critics have pointed to the legislation’s high price — \$400 billion over 10 years. But Johnson said the estimates that she’s seen assume almost universal use of the voluntary components, and don’t account for potential savings from the healthy living and preventative medicine components of the law.

“They have to be smoking something to believe that over 99 percent of eligible people will use it,” she said.

Johnson’s familiarity with prescription drug issues piqued the interest of Rep. Thomas DePoy, R-Rutland.

DePoy, a member of the House Health and Welfare Committee, said that body is preparing to consider prescription drug costs and the possibility of importing drugs from Canada.

“The things you’ve said tonight have caught my attention,” DePoy said. “I was hoping you could talk about Canadian

importation and I was also wondering if you would be available to testify.”

His request drew a chuckle from Johnson, who said she was hardly available for anything.

But she was glad to answer his question on Canadian drug imports, which she said seem like a cheaper alternative but could ultimately cost American companies their lead status in the global economy.

The problem, she claimed, is that imported drugs — whether they arrive from Canada or Bangladesh — are largely imitations of drugs that were researched and developed by American firms which had to spend more to make to research and develop the drugs in the first place.

If states turned to the global market, it would hurt American companies’ abilities to stay at the top of the industry because they would have less money to put toward research and development, she said.

The pharmaceutical industry isn’t the only one where American companies are in jeopardy, she said.

Compared to the rest of the world, U.S. businesses are at a disadvantage because of high corporate tax laws, she said.

“The U.S. has the second highest corporate tax rate in the world,” she said. “Other countries have adjusted their tax structures to the point where if we don’t adjust, if we don’t modify, we can’t survive.”

Johnson said there are different ways to make American industry more competitive and ways to protect intellectual property for drug companies which are being pirated by foreign firms.

But she said there is only one way to deal with terrorism.

“We need to play less Monday morning quarterback and figure out what institutional strengths we have and how we can work with different nations,” she said. “If we don’t do that, we’ll live in a world where ambassadors and diplomats don’t matter.”

“Terrorism delivers the same force that big governments deliver, but they don’t have embassies and diplomats. There’s no one to talk to and nothing to talk about,” Johnson said. ☺

Courtesy of Rep. Johnson’s office

Virtues of Health Savings Accounts

Making health care more consumer driven

By U.S. Representative Melissa A. Hart

Public policy should assist people in making prudent decisions affecting life's most important issues. Among the most important decisions is providing for our retirement years and making choices with respect to our medical care. Both of these decisions were addressed in December when President Bush signed into law the Medicare Modernization and Prescription Drug Act — in particular, with the provision creating Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). I supported the legislation, and one of the main reasons was the creation of HSAs.

HSAs are tax-free savings accounts for medical expenses — prescription drugs, surgery, long-term care, insurance and other medical services — that could well reform private and retiree health care.

During an employee's working years, HSAs are available to those who have health insurance with annual deductibles of at least \$1,000 for individuals or \$2,000 for families. Employers may also make tax-free contributions into an employee's account. Unlike prior plans like Medical Savings Accounts (MSAs), HSAs have no caps on participation, no expiration, and are available to anyone under 65 years of age.

In our retirement years, HSA savings can be drawn upon to pay for retiree health care once an individual reaches Medicare eligibility age. Catch-up contributions during peak saving years allow individuals to build a nest egg to pay for retiree health needs. Catch-up contributions allow a married couple to save an additional \$2,000 annually (once fully phased in) if both spouses are at least 55. Additionally upon death, HSA ownership may be transferred to the spouse on a tax-free basis.

HSAs provide an important option for many Americans to fund their health care expenses. The recent legislation gives consumers new and better choices and encourages them to take more responsibility for their medical and retirement needs. HSAs are very attractive as well because they are portable, that is to say that they can follow an employee from job to job.

Another exciting aspect of HSAs is the impact they could have on reforming an increasingly expensive health care system

whose costs are excessive. The savings accounts will encourage individuals to buy health plans that better suit their needs so that insurance kicks in only when it is truly needed, saving dollars which will no longer drain the system. Moreover, HSAs will nudge the system away from the current scenario where insurance companies dominate the health care transaction. Instead, the HSA will enable transactions between doctor and patient in which the patient controls how dollars are spent.

In effect, these savings accounts are exactly what is needed to respond to steadily increasing demands for taxpayers to finance more and more of the health care system through higher taxes.

In Congress, we have heard reports that the average American spends more time choosing their home entertainment systems than in selecting their health insurance plans. Alternatively, HSAs will encourage individuals to shop for health plans that best fit their needs and to make cost-conscious decisions about how to direct their own health dollars as opposed to a third party making these decisions. Individuals who manage their own health dollars should be discriminating consumers of health services.

The new Medicare bill and its provisions for HSAs allows individuals to take control of their own health care spending. This will enable them to provide better health for themselves with a collateral benefit of contributing rather than detracting from the economy.

Previously, health care was a prime candidate for revision for government reform that would have resulted in fewer options and less individual choice in medical decisions. For many years, tax policy has encouraged people to finance their health care through their employers, resulting in great inflation.

However, due to the tax-friendly incentives involved in HSAs, Americans have the potential to restructure the health care marketplace to shift the focus where it should be: on

individuals who pay out of pocket for their own routine health-care needs. This advance should lead to many improvements that naturally follow from free-market principles: consumers will be empowered, a rational pricing structure will emerge, and costs will fall.

Throughout my career in Congress and in the Pennsylvania State Senate, I have been a big proponent of responsible spending. Therefore, I am very enthusiastic over this new provision of the Medicare Modernization Act that allows individuals to have a greater input in their own health care decisions. I encourage employees to consider these more consumer-driven options when considering funding their retirement plans. ☞

— U.S. Rep. Melissa A. Hart is a Pennsylvania Republican and a member of the House Judiciary Committee, Financial Services Committee and Science Committee



U.S. Rep. Melissa A. Hart

Courtesy of Rep. Hart's office



Putting Progress First Benefits of stem cell research

By U.S. Representative James C. Greenwood

Regenerative medicine and cellular therapies represent the newest and most exciting frontiers in medicine. Over the past century, our nation's bold commitment to scientific research has enabled us to take great strides in mitigating damage and alleviating pain as well as curing disease. For many conditions and diseases, though, the cure continues to elude us. Consider spinal cord injuries and juvenile diabetes — while we have made great strides in treating both, much remains to be done. Advances in regenerative medicine hold the greatest promise for improved treatments and therapies.

Regenerative medicine is the science of replacing damaged or dead cells with healthy and vigorous new ones. These transplanted cells can then either repair malfunctioning cells so they function properly again or even replace dead or irreparably damaged cells with fresh healthy ones. Even more hopeful is the prospect that these cells can be frequently drawn from the patient's own body, dramatically reducing the need for costly and dangerous organ transplants and ending our reliance on toxic immunosuppressive drugs.

These new regenerative therapies will rely on what are referred to by scientists as "stem cells." According to the National Institute of Health, stem cells have two important characteristics that distinguish them from other types of cells. First, they are unspecialized cells that renew themselves for long periods through cell division. The second is that, under certain conditions, they are also able to become cells with special functions such as the beating cells of the heart muscle or the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas.

"Studies of human embryonic stem cells have shown that they can develop into multiple tissue types and exhibit long-term self-renewal in culture, features that have not yet been demonstrated with many human adult stem cells."

— National Academy of Sciences



Courtesy of Rep. Greenwood's office

U.S. Rep. James C. Greenwood

This is not science fiction. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently gave the go-ahead to the first clinical trial for 30 patients in the United States to test a stem cell therapy for severe heart failure. In this trial, stem cells will be introduced into the heart through a catheter, the same way that doctors presently insert stents into arteries to remove blockages.

Stem cells can be derived either from an individual's blood or bone marrow, or from embryonic stem cells. While the recently approved heart failure clinical trial relies on stem cells derived from bone marrow, not embryonic stem cells, a 2002 National Academy of Sciences study concluded that it is embryonic stem cells which may hold the greatest hope for progress in regenerative medicine.

And it is for those reasons that we must press forward on all fronts to evaluate how these very remarkable cells can take the place of damaged or missing cells.

At the same time that embryonic stem cells are seen as presenting some of the greatest promise in research, their use also represents an area of continuing controversy — and as a result, it is the one area that has been limited in scope with respect to federal funding for scientific research. In 2001, after much deliberation, President Bush authorized federal support for research in only a limited number of embryonic stem lines. Specifically, the president allowed federal dollars to be used

for research on a select number of cell lines which had already been established at the time of his announcement.

At that time, it was also thought that there were roughly 75 existing cell lines available for research. Since then, though, this estimate has been reduced, as some lines which were thought to have existed have been found to be contaminated or damaged. As a result, fewer than 20 such embryonic stem cell lines actually exist. This is a number that many of the most renowned researchers in this field believe is too small to support the kind of scientific breakthroughs of which a more robust policy of "stem cell" research would produce.

Consequently, while there is still much that can be learned from using existing stem cell lines if they are made widely available for research, the careful and ethical development of new stem cell lines should also be pursued. The National Institutes of Health is the world's greatest engine for advanced medical research. The NIH should be encouraged to establish a newer protocol for research in regenerative medicine; one that recognizes the existing dearth of stem cell lines actually available for study and increase this limited number of embryonic stem cell lines eligible for use in federally funded research projects.

An ethical and responsible solution to this challenge, I believe, already presents itself. It is estimated, as an example, that nearly 400,000 reserve embryos are presently stored in the private sector, largely the result of the process of in-vitro fertilization, in which many more fertilized cells are produced than will subsequently be used. Of that number, many, if not most, of these will ultimately be disposed. Allowing the use of no more than a very limited number of these cells for research — research that can benefit one of our loved ones — is, I would argue, a far more beneficial use for society than disposing of them.

As William Haseltine, the chairman and CEO of Human Genome Sciences and one of the leaders in this field has said, "The era of regenerative medicine is upon us." We must not turn away from it. Instead, we must embrace it in a way that is consistent with the highest standards of ethical conduct, which honors the dignity of all living things, even as it embraces the equally valid and universal human desire to labor nobly to end suffering. ☞

— U.S. Rep. James C. Greenwood is a Pennsylvania Republican and chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. He is also a member of the House Subcommittee on Health.

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The New Censorship Czar FCC crackdown threatens to chill free speech

By Nicholas Gaffney

At first blush, the recent ruling by the Federal Communications Commission that a rock star's live, on-air utterance of an expletive, described as a variant of the "F-word," violated indecency and profanity standards may seem like a common sense move to keep the airwaves clear of offensive language.

But the decision vastly expands the kinds of communications prohibited by the FCC, and threatens to seriously chill free speech.

A coalition of broadcasters, artists, and public and professional organizations is asking the FCC to reconsider its decision. The group took action citing language in the commission's decision indicating its aggressive intention to more vigorously police the airwaves.

The FCC should clearly reconsider its policy. As citizens of a society that benefits tremendously from freedom of speech, we should reconsider the FCC's role in overseeing content delivered via the public airwaves.

The current controversy stems from U2 singer Bono's reported use of the phrase, "f—ing brilliant" while receiving an award at the January 2003 Golden Globe Awards program aired by NBC. Though NBC deleted the offending word for many affiliates carrying a delayed version, the FCC nevertheless received complaints. In October, the commission's Enforcement Bureau found that Bono's utterance did not violate a statutory prohibition on indecency because the use of the expletive was fleeting and in a nonsexual context.

Granting a request by the Parents Television Council, the FCC commissioners reviewed and overturned the enforcement arm's ruling. In its March decision, the FCC determined that Bono's use of the "F-word" violated both indecency and profanity standards. The FCC further held that previous cases — which indicated isolated or fleeting use of the "F-word" was not indecent — are no longer good law.

The FCC emphasized that broadcasters are now on "clear notice" that they are subject to enforcement actions for any broadcast of the "F-Word" or variation thereof.

By ruling the epithet Bono used was profane as well as indecent, the FCC communicated its intention to regulate material

that extends beyond the indecency standard — which covers material with offending sexual connotations — to other types of "vulgar, irreverent or coarse language." According to its opinion, the Commission will not limit its use of the profanity standard to words and phrases that contain elements of blasphemy or divine imprecation. Failing to add much more specificity, the FCC noted that "[w]e will analyze other potentially profane words or phrases on a case-by-case basis."

The Golden Globe Awards decision was handed down as Congress is considering bills that would allow the FCC to increase its maximum fine for indecency to \$275,000 from \$27,500 per instance. The Senate version of the bill would extend liability to performers whose antics are ruled indecent.

Furthermore, the FCC has begun issuing fines for each instance that profanity is used, rather than levying one fine per profanity-spiked program. And while the FCC's jurisdiction only covers broadcast media, some would like to expand the Commission's authority to cable and satellite outlets.

It appears that Janet Jackson's Super Bowl performance, Bono's awards show ad-lib, years of Howard Stern, and the specter of a tight presidential election have combined forces to create the perfect censorship storm.

Chilled Speech

Already, there is plenty of evidence that the FCC's increasingly aggressive censorship is substantially restricting First Amendment-protected free speech. Local television and radio stations, fearing multimillion-dollar fines for broadcasting syndicated and network shows, are pressuring programmers to change content or drop programs.

Petitioners asking the FCC to change its course include CBS and MTV parent Viacom Inc., Fox Entertainment Group Inc., the Screen Actors Guild, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, the Recording Industry Association of America, Inc., and many others. This group points out that the FCC decision labeling the use of unplanned and unscripted expletives as indecent and profane has prompted broadcasters to abandon live programming — the vast majority of which is unquestionably constitutionally-protected free speech.

TV programmers are scrambling to edit or drop mainstream shows, including public television documentaries and several prime time hit shows such as "ER" and "NYPD Blue." Radio stations are scouring play lists and dropping or heavily editing songs that have been played for years like Pink Floyd's "Money." DJs are being required to sign contracts that hold them financially liable for FCC fines resulting from material aired on their shows.

These actions follow the news that Mr. Stern and other so-called "shock jocks" have been dropped from the Clear Channel radio network and other stations subject to the FCC's increasingly steep fines.

These chilling effects are exactly the types of behavior feared by our Founding Fathers.

The government's power to censor indecent speech is an anomaly that applies only to broadcasting. As radio and television evolved, the airwaves were considered a public trust, and from the beginning, broadcasters did not enjoy the same First Amendment rights as print media. Even today, government officials may not regulate the content of cable TV, DVDs, movies, the Internet or other non-broadcast media.

Although material labeled obscene falls outside of First Amendment protection in any context, material the FCC determines is indecent or profane is protected by the First Amendment. Courts have warned the FCC to interpret its authority narrowly. Hence, the FCC only polices the airwaves from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., the hours children are most likely to be tuning in.

Although many agencies are charged with regulating various public goods, the Golden Globe Awards decision underscores the undemocratic and authoritarian danger of ceding to one administrative body the power to make subjective content determinations.

What's the Harm?

Those suffering the most harm from the FCC's latest actions are those least in need of protection. Jacobs Media and Edison Media research recently released a survey in which radio listeners were asked about their views on indecency. Surveyors targeted listeners of classic rock, active rock and alternative programming — the music aired on many of the stations struggling most with the FCC's recent crackdown.

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of

respondents were happy with the programming they tuned in to, supported the rights of others to listen to programming that offended them and expressed a willingness to turn the dial when they've had enough. It would seem that radio stations are doing a good job of monitoring their audiences' preferences.

Yet the FCC has skirted the administrative rulemaking process to broaden its license to censor talk shows, political dialogue, and artistic endeavors on radio and television. This is nothing short of a paternalistic determination of content.

In this climate, stations across the country are adopting policies of "when in doubt, leave it out." So increasingly, television viewers and radio listeners won't know what they're missing — unless they turn to cable or satellite channels, which plenty of whom are doing.

The FCC's claim that its actions are being taken to protect children from an increasing decline of public morals rings hollow in a world where non-broadcast media options include cable TV, satellite radio, Internet content, DVDs, etc. Even

with the FCC's watchful eye, parents must be vigilant to create environments in which they feel comfortable raising kids.

Giving any government agency the power to censor whatever is deemed "patently offensive" or "indecent," is dangerous. When those with political authority — rather than our fellow citizens and consumers — determine what we as a public can watch, it's easy to see those with unpopular opinions being forced from the debate.

For example, Howard Stern has been closed off from several markets.

The FCC usually acts in reaction to public complaints — affording a minority of sensitive viewers, listeners and public policy activists leverage to threaten the programming choices of the majority of market participants.

The Marketplace of Ideas is not a new concept. However, it bears repeating today that the most effective way to ensure liberty and prosperity is to give members of society access to the full range of viewpoints. The First Amendment was drafted for the very purpose of protecting unpopular, controversial expression. We need

constitutional protection the most precisely when segments of society are offended by an idea.

Broadcasters air material in response to the demands of the market. The government cannot raise public morality by edict. The government can, however, threaten our liberty.

In the long run, our children are unlikely to benefit from the broadcast media's growing fear of being charged with "word crimes."

More than censorship, children are served by media literacy education, sex education and alternatives to mass-market, lowest-common denominator culture. The Founders understood the values required for a free, peaceful and prosperous society: individual liberty, economic freedom and limited government. Our children's future depends upon guarding these principles. ☞

— Nicholas Gaffney is a partner with Infinite Public Relations in San Francisco

Freedom's Music In defense of the First Amendment

Within the Constitution is a 45-word clause inhabited by a majestic simplicity expressed in spare, unadorned prose and absolutely barren of ambiguity. It is called the First Amendment.

Too many of us don't remember its words or haven't read it in years.

So listen carefully: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

That's it. Simple words marching in serried ranks. Compact, concise. To the point. Clear and pure. It's freedom's music.

It's not easy to be for the First Amendment. For you must endure that which you might count to be profane, meretricious, tawdry and vulgar. Sometimes you become so aggrieved that you want to call your congressman and demand that he pass a law to protect you from this slime.

But before you make that call, be cautious, be wary. You must remember that when a tyrant first appears, he comes as your protector.

The First Amendment is our shield against the seductive embrace of those, in and out of Congress who, in their periodic fits of public virtue, pronounce themselves the Guardians of Truth and Good, ready to combat unwholesome intrusions

which they both define and condemn.

These Guardians of Goodness are nimble footed. They leap from generation to generation and, like a gramophone, repeat and repeat the defunct mythology of the rigid-minded — that they and they alone speak personally to God, doubtless on a gold MCI card. Whenever I meet one of those Guardians of All Truth, I utter an old Texas prayer: "Dear God, let me seek the Truth, but spare me the company of those who have found it."

From the first day of my entrance into the movie world until this very hour I have had but one objective. It is to fortify the right of creative artists to tell their stories as they choose to tell their stories, with personal responsibility for what they create, but with no government intervention of any kind.

For me, it is all very clear and all very necessary. I want to stand with all other Americans who believe it is their solemn duty to preserve, protect and defend 45 simple words, to lay claim for generations of Americans yet unborn that the First Amendment remains for them as it does for us, the rostrum from which springs the ornaments and the essentials of this free and loving land. May God save the First Amendment.

— Jack Valenti is the president of the Motion Picture Association of America



Closing the Racial Gap GOP should push education reform

By Abigail Thernstrom

Republicans have a bad rap on civil rights — in part, a self-inflicted wound. In fact, they should be the true voice of racial equality. Certainly, the Democrats have left the high ground unoccupied.

Take the racial gap in academic achievement — the most obvious and critical of all civil rights issues today. The typical black or Hispanic 12th-grader now leaves high school with an 8th grade education. America still has a racially identifiable group of educational have-nots. It's a moral outrage, and the main source of ongoing racial inequality. It should prompt radical demands and grass roots mobilization.

And yet, cruise the Web sites of the mainstream civil rights groups and you find boiler-plate anti-discrimination rhetoric, accompanied by vague and tame remedial proposals. Thus, the NAACP education department talks about “preventing racial discrimination in education programs and services” and the need to “empower students, parents and local advocates...[to produce] substantive research on key educational equity issues.”

In 2004, discrimination is not a central problem affecting educational outcomes. Nor do we need more research; we need to act on what we already know. Moreover, “empowerment” is a good idea only if power is used for the right ends. The Urban League talks of “structural inequality” in education, but the structure it has in mind does not seem to include collective bargaining agreements that actually reward excellent teachers with better pay; changing the teacher licensing rules that attract few academically skilled, entrepreneurial, and idealistic young people; repealing the federal rules that keep disruptive children in a classroom in which others want to learn; or implementing real school choice, which is almost never available to low-income parents.

Republicans — in talking about structural impediments to educational equality — can tread where no Democrats dare to go. Principals with the authority and autonomy to hire and fire teachers, pay linked to student performance, charter schools and vouchers to provide impoverished families with the sort of choice that the middle class already enjoys: These are a

The racial gap in academic achievement is not an IQ story. It is a tale of children who need to acquire skills and knowledge, but who have been tragically and needlessly left behind.

few of the elements in a civil rights program that Republicans should naturally and enthusiastically embrace.

The racial gap in academic achievement is not an IQ story. It is a tale of children who need to acquire skills and knowledge, but who have been tragically and needlessly left behind. That gap — between blacks and Hispanics, on the one hand, and whites and Asians, on the other hand — is the main source of ongoing racial inequality in America. Equal skills and knowledge today mean equal earnings down the road. That point about a changed America is too often missed because “education” is measured by the number of years students spend warming a seat in school, rather than what they actually know.

The best source of data on how much American children know is the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), often called the nation's report card on education. NAEP, which is federally funded and mandated, samples large numbers of students at various points in their school careers, and the data can be broken down by race, ethnicity and other demographic characteristics. On the basis of NAEP, we know that at age 17, the typical black or Hispanic student is scoring less well on these reliable assessments than at least 80 percent of his or her white classmates. The result: The employer hiring the typical black high school graduate (or the college that admits the average black student) is, in effect, choosing a youngster who has made it only through 8th grade.

Here's another way of judging the magnitude of the gap. In five of the seven subjects tested by NAEP, a majority of black students perform in the lowest category — Below Basic. That means that a majority of black students do not have even

a “partial” mastery of the “fundamental” knowledge and skills expected of students in the 12th grade. Hispanics are doing only a tad better.

The news is no happier when we switch our gaze from students at the bottom to those who are at the top. Take math. In math, only 0.2 percent of black students fall into NAEP's Advanced category; the figure for whites is 11 times higher and for Asians 37 times higher. Again, Hispanic students are only slightly ahead of blacks. With so few blacks and Hispanics with superb academic skills by the end of high school, the pool of those ready to do the work at selective, demanding colleges and likely to become part of the American professional and business elite is inevitably very small.

Black students were of course even further behind three decades ago, when NAEP data first became available. But the modest progress that occurred through much of the 1980s has largely come to an end, and there are some indications that the racial gap is widening. Thus, current trends offer no grounds for complacency.

The Bush administration can justly celebrate the passage of No Child Left Behind, which (with all its flaws) does correctly name the racial gap as the central educational issue of our time. But that 2001 federal legislation will not, by itself, close the gap, the record of state-level reforms suggests. Nor is there any evidence that the other traditional bag of tricks — busing, more teachers with conventional licenses, higher per pupil spending — will have the desired effect.

Republicans need to speak loudly and clearly with a civil rights voice, and say that only Republican policies — with their emphasis on entrepreneurship, a bottom line (student outcomes), and markets — are likely to close the tragic racial gap in learning that is leaving so many non-Asian minority students unlikely to realize the American dream. ☺

— *Abigail Thernstrom is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and the co-author, with Harvard historian Stephan Thernstrom, of “No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning.” They previously co-authored “America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible.”*



Reforming the Tax Code

No real economic growth without AMT repeal

By U.S. Representative Phil English

As individuals and businesses filed their recent 2003 tax returns, frustration with the complexity and inanity of our tax code certainly resulted in at least a few filers banging their heads on their desks. One particular component of our tax code called the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) has forced many filers to pay excessive taxes, even as they suffer financial losses. We must fix this problem or undercut the pace of this country's economic growth and turn our backs on the middle class.

The 2001 and 2003 tax cuts have been successful in igniting the engines of economic growth, yet the stimulative effect of these cuts are being undermined by the AMT. Essentially, the tax code with the new cuts encourages business investment by offering expensing and depreciation incentives with one hand, while the law previously on the books pushes these same companies into the punitive AMT with the other. By the same token, the tax cut spurred spending by individuals though the child tax credit and relief from the marriage penalty, but allowed the old law to throw more families into the thrusts of the AMT keeping them from realizing their full benefits. Surely, this was not the intention of the AMT when it was enacted in 1986. Congress must act now to repeal the AMT and prevent further erosion of the previously passed tax relief.

When Congress created the AMT in the Tax Reform Act of 1986, it was envisioned as a stop-gap to prevent profitable companies and very wealthy individuals from dodging their tax obligations. Since then, the dollar amount triggering the AMT rate has not been adjusted for inflation, so more and more companies and individuals are being subject to the AMT.

That the corporate AMT is a job-killing tax is no longer in serious dispute. The tax is particularly harsh for capital intensive, cyclical industries — the very industries that tend to provide the best salaries for workers and their families. Indeed, in an increasingly global economy, intensive reinvestment in cutting-edge technology and equipment is essential for the survival of our nation's employers.



U.S. Rep. Phil English

This is why the issue of repealing the AMT is so urgent. I have heard many of my colleagues in the House and Senate express similar concern about the AMT, and I believe that a bipartisan consensus could be formed to take this obviously stifling and grotesquely complicated tax measure off the books. With the last two major tax bills, Congress had, and ultimately forfeited, a perfect opportunity to repeal, or at least knock some significant holes in the AMT. But with each missed opportunity, family earnings, real businesses and real jobs are put at risk.

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Indeed, in an increasingly global economy, intensive reinvestment in cutting-edge technology and equipment is essential for the survival of our nation's employers. Yet it is this critical investment which is threatened by the AMT.

It is no surprise then that the Bush administration has listed in its budget year after year that the AMT must be addressed by Congress. Yet, I am frustrated by the lack of movement on the AMT because it is widely viewed as bad policy and one that stalls economic growth and plagues middle-class Americans. Left unchanged, the AMT will affect increasing numbers of taxpayers. If the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts are made permanent, the number of taxpayers with increased taxes due to the AMT will grow from 3.3 million in 2004 to 16.2 million in 2005 and to 46.4 million in 2014. Some people say it's too expensive to address right now — \$20 billion for the repeal of the corporate AMT and up to \$300 billion for repeal of the individual AMT — but that cost will only increase over time. Meanwhile, if the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts are extended, by 2014 individuals' AMT payments will increase by \$28 billion to \$177.2 billion.

The AMT, in practice, does not guarantee the rich pay taxes; rather, the law raises taxes on many companies which are unprofitable, while pushing individuals of average means into a system designed for the "rich." The cost is paid in uncompetitive industries and unemployed workers. It's the ultimate kick-'em-when-they're-down tax, and a terrible way to raise money.

As the federal budget deficit looms over policymakers' heads, we must be responsible and forward thinking in our approach to the fiscal year 2005 budget. This means finding a balance between measures to keep our deficit from exploding and keeping our economy on a growth path. I believe that repealing the AMT would be sound tax policy for businesses and individuals now, and in the future. ☺

— U.S. Rep. Phil English is a Pennsylvania Republican and is a member of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Joint Economic Committee.



Keeping Americans Safe Bolstering local law enforcement

By U.S. Senator Orrin G. Hatch

Many federal officials were surprised to learn, in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, just how important state and local first responders are to our national security. That lesson was not news to me — I have spent a great deal of time and energy during my career in the Senate fighting against the Beltway preference for federal control and pressing hard for more resources and respect for state and local law enforcement. Unfortunately, some of Washington's most powerful and otherwise, prudent policymakers still won't acknowledge the plain and unmistakable truth: state and local law enforcement, properly coordinated with federal agencies, hold the key to keeping our nation safe.

The Bush administration and I seem to disagree on this. I support President Bush and think he has done a remarkable job responding to the challenges of post-9/11 America. But despite my high opinion of the president and his advisors, I cannot toe the line when it comes to their decision to cut severely the funding available for state and local law enforcement.

The war against terrorism has presented a brand-new challenge for the United States: securing our homeland not only from outside enemies, but also from internal, asymmetric attacks. In this way, the events of September 11, 2001 and the intelligence that we continue to gather about our enemies' plans and methods have forever changed the relationship between federal agencies and state and local governments. There has never been a time when our citizens rely so heavily upon the cooperation of federal, state and local law enforcement to protect them from physical harm.

I had the pleasure of seeing first-hand the amazing results that such cooperation can produce during the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. Only five months after the September 11 attacks, the awesome responsibility of protecting the world's athletes — not to mention the president and dozens of other heads of state — forced the many federal, state and local organizations to lay their turf fights aside and focus acutely on the enormous

task at hand. I believe the cooperation demonstrated in Salt Lake City should be a benchmark for law enforcement personnel who are facing day-to-day security and law enforcement challenges.

That's why I was tremendously disappointed to find the president's budget request for fiscal year 2005 did not include any money specifically for the Byrne Grant

those programs would be a severe blow to federal efforts to assist our communities in the war against terrorism — and would come at a time when federal policymakers are asking more and more from state and local agencies. That's why I must depart with the administration and have offered an amendment to the Budget Resolution to restore \$600 million to the Department of

Justice's budget for law enforcement and juvenile justice assistance.

Of course, the federal government has made extremely valuable contributions to the mission of combating crime and terrorism in the United States. Congress has passed, and the president has signed, new laws providing essential tools for the investigation and prosecution of criminals and terrorists. At President Bush's request, Congress created the Department of Homeland Security, which — although faced with enormous reorganization tasks — is working to prevent terrorist attacks, reduce our vulnerability to such attacks, minimize the damage that could be caused by an attack and prepare for recovery after any disaster.

But it is beyond question that we, as a nation, could not have attained the level of security we enjoy without heavy reliance on state and local law enforcement. They are our nation's first

responders. They are on the front lines of the war against terrorism, and much of the burden of securing our country rests on them. Our first responders, who selflessly put their lives on the line day after day, deserve more than our appreciation: they deserve our unqualified support.

If the federal government is to rely upon state and local law enforcement to fight crime and terrorism on our frontlines, then the federal budget should provide what is needed to ensure that state and local law enforcement have the necessary resources to get that job done. I urge the Bush administration to rethink its proposed budget and increase dramatically federal funding for state and local law enforcement. ☞

— U.S. Sen. Orrin G. Hatch is a Utah Republican and chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.



U.S. Sen. Orrin G. Hatch

Courtesy of Sen. Hatch's office

program or the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant (LLEBG) program. Rather, President Bush proposes to consolidate these programs into one — the Justice Assistance Grant Program — and, in the process, seeks to eliminate a number of components of these programs and slash funding for them. In addition, the budget proposes to reduce funding for the office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) at the Justice Department, thus slashing overall law enforcement assistance funding by 63 percent or just over \$1 billion.

Byrne grants, LLEBG grants and the COPS program are highly popular programs that provide needed assistance to state and local law enforcement for a wide variety of programs and services. Among other things, those programs have enabled local police and sheriffs departments to acquire much-needed efficiency-enhancing technology and equipment. Eliminating



Defending the Homeland Taking politics out of homeland security

By U.S. Representative John E. Sweeney

The panel investigating the September 11 attacks has put an intense spotlight on how we have gone about the business of safeguarding our nation since that terrible day nearly three years ago. While the panel has become politically polarized at times (to the detriment of its credibility), it has raised numerous valid issues, many of them regarding the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which is just over one year old.

DHS has played a significant role in making America safer. While the progress hasn't been as swift or sweeping as some would like, it is impossible to deny progress has been made. Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge has undertaken a monumental task, and has performed with the best interests of our nation in mind. We must also recognize that this is merely the beginning of a long-term struggle to protect our nation from experiencing again the horrors of September 11.

While we have achieved many successes since the creation of DHS, the defense of our homeland is still far from perfect. DHS is still in its infancy, and we must realize there will be growing pains associated with making such a large bureaucracy perform at the standards that ensure success in protecting our country from future terrorist attacks. Both Congress and DHS can help move us in the right direction, provided everyone puts politics aside and remains focused on the objectives at hand.

The most frustrating aspect of homeland security discussions is the increasingly partisan tone the debates have taken on during this election year. This is extremely detrimental to our ultimate goal of a safe, secure America. Politicizing such an issue will only serve to desensitize Americans to the real threats we face as a nation, which is trying its best to protect its citizens from evil forces that constantly strive to do us harm. Congress needs to once again work in the same spirit of cooperation we had in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, when, for a time, we were able to put aside petty partisan bickering and do our part to help a nation in crisis. Homeland security should not be a way to score cheap political points by alarming the public while not bringing solutions to the table. Our debates, and the



U.S. Rep. John E. Sweeney

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work of the September 11 Commission, must focus on striving to constantly improve our preparedness for and response to any future attacks.

In order to foster better working relations between Congress and DHS, two longstanding schools of thought must be torn down.

First and foremost, Congress needs to realize DHS is not just another source of pork. There needs to be a fundamental shift in the thinking of members of Congress away from viewing the agency as a vehicle to get funding for projects in their districts. It is of critical importance that funds are allocated based on where they are needed most, not because of the seniority of a particular representative. The reality is that not all fire departments will receive new fire trucks or chemical suits with DHS funding, nor should they. New York City has been the target of multiple terrorist

plots; most other U.S. cities cannot say with any certainty whether they have been targeted. More importantly, first responders themselves realize the importance of threat-based funding; the International Association of Fire Fighters, the National Troopers Coalition and the International Union of Police Associations have endorsed my first-responders reform legislation.

Some of my colleagues in Congress have been harshly critical of the Bush administration's handling of first responder funding when in reality it's the fault of Congress. Until we put aside partisan squabbling and pass my bill, HR 2512, and move toward threat-based funding of first responders, we will be unable to distribute money where it's most needed.

Second, DHS staff, at all levels, need to realize they are not part of just another bureaucracy. Because of both its infancy and its critical importance, Congress expects full cooperation at all levels of DHS, just as DHS deserves our full assistance. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case. Reports of turf wars within DHS and with other executive branch organizations are rampant, and have been brought to light as the September 11 panel continues its investigation. Just as Congress needs to change its way of thinking about funding for homeland security, DHS needs to change its workplace culture from that of a giant bureaucracy to one of cooperation and a sense of urgency to get things done.

The enemies of freedom will go to incredible extremes to inflict pain and suffering on our citizens and anyone suspected of sympathizing with our cause, as was shown by the Spain bombings and the recent wave of hostage taking in Iraq. To succeed, we must take politics completely out of the policy-making process of homeland security and the war on terror and focus on the bottom line: a safe, secure America. Nothing short of this is acceptable. ☞

— U.S. Rep. John E. Sweeney is a New York Republican and is a member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee.



Europe's New Fault Line Neo-communism is making a comeback on the Continent

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, American conservatives celebrated the defeat of communism. Confident that their victory was complete, they turned their guns on other issues such as Iraq, Bill Clinton and the rising threat of China. The prevailing assumption among conservatives is that the break-up of the Soviet empire signaled the death knell of Marxist-Leninist ideology throughout Eastern Europe.

Their assumption is wrong. Communism may be dead, but the prevailing communist mindset continues to live on.

President Vladimir Putin's re-election reveals an increasingly authoritarian Russia. The former KGB chief seeks to reconstitute a Great Russian Imperium composed of former Soviet republics. Belarus is ruled by Stalinist strongman Alexander Lukashenko, who has imposed a one-party police state.

Meanwhile, in Ukraine, Bulgaria and Serbia, neo-communist reactionaries have sought to derail their countries' efforts to enter NATO and become full members of the West. In all of these nations, the Red old guard continues to exercise a predominant influence over the media, the military and the political class.

The result is that the former communist bloc is slowly being divided into two camps: those who share the West's moral values and those who do not. Nothing crystallized this emerging geopolitical fissure more clearly than the recent war in Iraq. For while much of New Europe — Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Baltic States — supported the U.S.-led military campaign, crucial states such as Russia, Belarus and Serbia actively opposed it.

In fact, the dirty little secret of the Iraq war is that former communist die-hards in Moscow, Minsk, Kiev and Belgrade played a pivotal role throughout the past decade in supplying Saddam Hussein's regime with military and intelligence assistance. During the 1990s, Russia provided Saddam with vital missile technology.

Even Serbia's democratic ruling coalition was implicated last year in an arms-for-Iraq scandal. Jugimport, a Belgrade-based state arms export agency, was involved in brokering radar systems

and weapons to Baghdad from Bosnia, Ukraine and Russia. A report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) think tank concluded that close allies of Vojislav Kostunica, Serbia's current prime minister, visited Baghdad in 2001 for a conference aimed at undermining U.S. policy in the Balkans and the Middle East. "The conference resolution unanimously condemned 'American imperialism and hegemony,' and everything the United States was doing in Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq, and had done in Yugoslavia," the ICG report said.

What has been occurring in Eastern Europe is that a fault line is emerging separating Eastern, Slavic civilization from the largely — although not exclusively — Catholic civilization of Central Europe. The centuries-old divide between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Tsarist Russia is slowly reappearing.

This civilizational chasm, however, has now taken a modern guise, pitting democratic capitalism versus authoritarian pan-Slavism. The Westernizers tend to be pro-American, reform-minded and eager to join institutions such as NATO and the European Union. The Slavophiles, on the other hand, champion an anti-American, anti-Western foreign policy and long for the return of communism.

Yet there is nothing inevitable about the unfolding division taking place on the European Continent. The Bush administration should foster closer ties with reformists in the Balkans and Ukraine, and provide them with assistance to dismantle the old communist structures and implement real democratic reforms.

Moreover, the United States needs to provide greater support for pivotal democratic allies, such as the new conservative government in Croatia. A good first step is the administration's commitment to support Croatia's fast track entry into NATO.

Croatia, however, will never become a full member of the West as long as its dogmatic neo-communists continue to occupy positions of power. An obvious example of this is the country's ambassador to the United States, Ivan Grdesic.

The former Titoist apparatchik has been undermining Zagreb's bid to join



Illustration by John Boone

NATO. At an official reception at the Croatian Embassy in Washington in February, Mr. Grdesic, in a speech in front of numerous dignitaries that included State Department officials, proclaimed that Croatia's desire to enter NATO was an "impossible dream," according to a Croatian Embassy official present at the meeting. "The entire embassy staff was shocked and deeply disturbed by the fact that the ambassador was openly disparaging our efforts to promote Croatia's entry into the Western military alliance," the official said on the condition of anonymity.

In fact, Mr. Grdesic has made no secret of his contempt and hatred for his own country. At a recent banquet reception in Chicago sponsored by the Croatian American Association, Mr. Grdesic denounced Croatia as a "strategically irrelevant" country, which "has nothing" to offer the United States.

His outrageous comments should come as no surprise. For decades, Mr. Grdesic and his leftist allies were nurtured by communist propaganda to despise NATO, the democratic West and Croatia's legitimate national aspirations. The real scandal is not that the ambassador has betrayed his country and violated his public office, but that many in Zagreb's media and diplomatic corps share his reactionary brand of neo-communism.

The sooner that Washington's conservatives realize that Eastern Europe remains rife with consequential individuals such as Mr. Grdesic, then the sooner they can begin helping those nations overcome the crippling legacy of communism. ☞

— Jeffrey T. Kuhner is the editor of *The Ripon Forum*.



Balkan Tinderbox Rise of Islamic extremism in Bosnia

By J.P. Mackley

Last November, former Ambassador Richard Holbrook, the architect of the 1995 Dayton Peace accords that ended the inter-ethnic fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina, noted in a speech that the post-war Bosnia experience would be a fine model for the United States to follow in rebuilding Iraq. Since the speech was delivered in Sarajevo, the applause was minimal, and it left people who generally view Dayton as a badly failed policy — namely, the country's Croats, Muslims and Serbs — speculating about just what he meant.

Mr. Holbrook, who is John Kerry's foreign policy guru and a likely candidate to be secretary of state under a Kerry administration, led a largely U.S. taxpayer funded experiment designed to impose utopian democracy on Bosnians who were used to totalitarian communism. What Mr. Holbrook's project did succeed in providing was plenty of utopian salaries for thousands of United Nations employees and humanitarian contractors. The peace accords also left plenty of room for the unchecked spread of Islamic fundamentalism.

Under communist strongman Josip Broz Tito, one could be both a Muslim, albeit a secular type, as well as a loyal Yugoslav. After Mr. Holbrook decided to "democratize" the country, Bosnian Muslims openly embraced the Iranian Shias, and began attending new mosques and schools erected by Wahhabi fundamentalists. Certain Muslim politicians, vetted by the United States, already had long relationships with Libyan dictator Moammar Ghaddafi, the PLO and Osama bin Laden.

What we should have learned from Bosnia, and then Kosovo, is how not to encourage the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. Unfortunately, this lesson has eluded us, as is evidenced by the uninhibited flow of terrorist traffic across the thousand-mile land border of Bosnia today. This is a serious failure, since the very same fundamentalists who we know are linked to al Qaeda now exert broad influence in Bosnia and Kosovo, and they appear to be unifying opposition against the United States in Iraq.

Since the war in Iraq began, U.S. troops have been dying at a rate of about five per day. But during one day in early

April, 12 U.S. Marines were killed while battling guerrillas in al Fallujah. It meant that the insurgency in the Sunni Triangle had been rekindled. It also signaled something worse: Sunni guerillas are collaborating with Shias, their traditional adversaries. This happened at the same time the new American-built Iraqi Army reportedly refused to fight alongside U.S. forces against other Iraqis.



Illustration by John Boone

Iraqi insurgents are no longer fighting to support the totalitarian regime of Saddam Hussein — they are fighting as members of a unified, radical Muslim force, whose mission is to drive out the Infidel, and to establish a totalitarian Islamic theocracy. Every day, this force becomes more organized, and more international, and that is not by chance. Islamic radicals are traveling freely across the Middle East and throughout Europe, orchestrating an offensive that is gathering power and speed.

Islamic fundamentalism breeds best in countries already broken to some form of totalitarianism. Absent any social or political template for democracy, Bosnian Muslims were unable to resist when the Iranian Shias, the Afghani Sunnis and Saudi Wahhabis quickly moved in and filled the political and cultural void left by the West.

The fact that Bosnian Muslims have turned to international Islamic interests for

support bodes ill for the West. But no one who looks at the massacres of Muslims in Bosnia during the 1992-1995 war, when these people were supposedly under the protection of the United States, the European Union and the United Nations, can argue that their growing alliance with fundamentalist Islam is surprising.

By 1998, when President Bill Clinton finally decided to end Serb strongman Slobodan Milosevic's genocide, Islamic fundamentalism had already gained a firm foothold in Bosnia, and its adherents were spreading to Kosovo and beyond. A number of Bosnian passport holders were captured fighting with the Taliban against U.S. forces in Afghanistan, and, undoubtedly, there will be a number of Bosnian passport holders found among the guerrillas in Iraq.

After 9/11, graffiti supporting the attacks on the United States materialized on walls in East Mostar, Sarajevo and other places. The Bosnian news media suggested the 9/11 attacks were part of a continuing Israeli conspiracy to disparage Muslims. Six months later, State Department security officials uncovered an al Qaeda plot to launch an attack against the U.S. embassy in Sarajevo. The individuals arrested for the plot were of Algerian origin, but they held Bosnian passports.

After the March 11 train bombings in Madrid, Europe realized it had also become a target. Several connections were made between the al Qaeda bombers in Madrid and the Muslim community in Bosnia. Spanish police are currently holding a Bosnian Muslim from East Mostar. Press reports in both Italy and Bosnia claim that the Madrid bombers received at least some of their training at the fundamentalist Muslim stronghold of Zenica in Bosnia.

The United States and Europe continue to face a dilemma of unknown proportions. Although we confront a new threat, we are not new to the need to defend ourselves or unfamiliar with the need to contain enemy forces. Today, Bosnia is a passageway into the heart of Europe, and it appears, a training ground for increasing numbers of Islamic radicals. It is imperative that we take steps to secure Bosnia's porous thousand-mile border, to identify foreign traffic into and out of that country, and by doing so, to disrupt and dismantle the organization on which Islamic terrorism depends. ☞

— J.P. Mackley is a former congressional staffer who has traveled in Iraq and worked in Bosnia, Kosovo and Saudi Arabia.

Iran's WMD Build-Up U.S. policy adrift on rogue state

By Michael Rubin

On April 1, 2004, Iran's Islamic Republic turned 25. But, more than a quarter-century after the Islamic Revolution, U.S. policy remains in flux. After three years of interagency wrangling, there is still no agreement on a National Security Presidential Directive governing U.S. policy toward the Islamic Republic.

The result is policy chaos. One year after President Bush labeled Iran part of the "Axis of Evil," Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage called Iran a "democracy." Current and former National Security Council officials engage not only with diplomats, but also with members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

A bipartisan group of senators and congressmen led by Sen. Arlen Specter, Pennsylvania Republican, has dined with Mohammad-Javad Zarif, Iran's United Nations ambassador. In April 2004, Mr. Specter explained, "We need to establish a dialogue with Iran... We need to have a line of communication to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons." Other Republicans agree, arguing that dialogue with Tehran will foster a move toward human rights and democracy. Unfortunately, engagement comes at a cost both to U.S. national security and to Iran's internal reform. The Islamic Republic uses the space created by engagement to further its weapons program and demoralize democrats.

The European Union has engaged with Iran for more than a decade, doubling bilateral trade. Iran's hardliners have used their access to bolster Tehran's weapons of mass destruction programs. The Islamic Republic has incorporated components purchased from Swiss, German, Italian and Spanish firms into its biological weapons program. In March 2000, the Islamic Republic contracted with the German company Salzgitter Anlagenbau to build a 1,450 kilogram-per-hour phosgene generator. When weaponized, phosgene causes fatal lung damage.

Iran's nuclear program has also benefited. Michael Eisenstadt, senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, wrote in his 1998 study, "Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions," that, in addition to overt Russian assistance, Iranian government front companies purchased centrifuges and calutrons from Switzerland and Germany. In March 2001,

President Mohammad Khatami signed a \$7 billion deal to buy weapons from Russia. A year later, Mr. Khatami boasted, "Today our army is one of the most powerful in the world... It has become self-sufficient, and is on the road to further development."



Reform has withered as dialogue has legitimized the Islamic Republic. Since Mr. Khatami's 1997 call for a "Dialogue of Civilizations," capital punishment has doubled, the Islamic Republic has shuttered 80 newspapers, banned private internet service providers, seized thousands of satellite dishes and staged the largest trial of dissidents since the Islamic Revolution. On April 13, 2004, Mr. Khatami formally withdrew two reform bills from Iran's parliament, even as U.S. and British officials sat down with Iranian colleagues to discuss Iraq. Dialogue proponents argue that engagement encourages internal reformers, but their partners are often insincere.

During his tenure as minister of culture, for example, Mr. Khatami himself banned more than 600 books and 90 publications. An August 2002 telephone survey (randomized by exchange) of 505 Tehran residents found that only 33 percent believed Mr. Khatami had delivered on his reformist promises. On May 9, 2004, a judge in the Western Iranian town of Hamadan suggested that the United Nations Human Rights Commission "should pray for God's forgiveness for not issuing any resolution against Iran." Family members of imprisoned dissidents say that Iranian interrogators use published reports

of U.S.-Iranian dialogue to deflate and demoralize political prisoners.

Iranians are increasingly becoming convinced that reform cannot resolve fundamental problems in the Islamic Republic's ideology. Many Iranians have concluded that elections are meaningless. Iranians visiting Iraq in the wake of the February parliamentary elections estimated voter turn-out to be no more than 10 percent in many districts. In 1953 and 1979, Washington supported an unpopular Iranian government against the will of the people. The United States should not make the same mistake three times. Moral clarity has its rewards. There is a direct correlation between President Bush's condemnation of the Iranian regime and the frequency of pro-democracy demonstrations in Iran.

Dialogue with Iran also comes at a tremendous cost in Iraq. Iranian intentions are belied by the appointment of Hassan Kazemi Qomi to be their charge d'affaires in Baghdad. Mr. Kazemi is not a diplomat, but rather a member of the Qods Force, an elite unit of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps dedicated to exporting the revolution. Asking Iranian assistance to quell Iraqi unrest is akin to asking an arsonist to extinguish a fire. Dialogue legitimizes Iranian activities that have led to the death of American servicemen. An April 2004 Italian military intelligence report submitted to the Italian parliament concluded that the Qods Force is subsidizing firebrand cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and Iraqi insurgents to the tune of approximately \$70 million monthly. Arabic newspapers report that captured Iranian operatives in British custody have supported the Italian accusations as have Iranian journalists.

Nevertheless, Bush administration National Security Council officials have recently engaged Iranian counterparts in Iraq. Iranian journalist Ardeshir Moaveni suggested discussions focused on trading Iranian assistance in ending the Shia uprising in exchange for mitigation of U.S. pressure on Iran's nuclear program.

Herein lays the trouble: The Islamic Republic is nearing nuclear weapons capability. Not only will this shift the strategic balance in the Middle East, but it will also seal any hope for meaningful reform. A nuclear-capable Iran needs not fear retaliation if it cracks down on its own dissidents or sponsors terrorist attacks against Americans and our allies. Time is ticking. Engagement, however well-intentioned, may allow Iran to run out the clock. ☞

— Michael Rubin is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.



Roll Back North Korea Regime change needed in Pyongyang

By Frank J. Gaffney, Jr.

The Roman Emperor Nero has been vilified for over two millennia for madly playing the fiddle as his capital city was consumed by fire. The question occurs: Will history accord the Clinton and Bush administrations a similar, dubious distinction for having negotiated while one of the planet's maddest despots systematically pursued a goal that threatens to inflame the world?

The despot in question, of course, is North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-Il. Although isolated by Kim's paranoid attachment to Stalinist totalitarianism and impoverished by that failed ideology's commitment to a ruinous economic system and a succession of natural disasters, North Korea has, nonetheless, found the means to get into the nuclear weapons business.

For Kim Jong-Il, it truly is a business: On the one hand, he literally has on offer not only ballistic missile delivery systems but also the nuclear know-how and technology to arm them. Nations with the cash — or commodities, like oil — find North Korea a ready and reliable purveyor. Thus, over the years, Pyongyang has forged strategic partnerships with other rogue states like Iran, Syria, Libya, Pakistan and Yemen.

Of ever greater concern is whether Kim's regime has already acted on a threat to which its spokesman alluded a while back — namely, to enable the nuclear ambitions of sub-state actors like Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda network. Even if Pyongyang has not done so to date, chances are good that — left to its own devices — terrorist groups will be able in due course to “go nuclear” with North Korean help.

Unfortunately, given the murderously capricious nature of Kim Jong-Il, little comfort can be taken from what would appear to be — at least in relative terms — the “best case,” i.e., that North Korea might choose to wield nuclear threats itself, rather than proliferate them. Already, we have seen the fruits of Pyongyang's efforts to parlay its violation of successive international obligations and acquisition of a nuclear arsenal into tangible political, financial and strategic concessions.

During the Clinton years, the upshot was a so-called “Framework Agreement,” whereby the United States, Japan and South Korea pledged to give North Korea billions of dollars worth of nuclear reactors and fuel oil in exchange for the latter's

promises to abjure nuclear weapons. The Bush administration's skepticism about this accord was vindicated when Pyongyang confirmed intelligence that it was pursuing a covert, uranium-based weapons program.

The Bush team, nonetheless, has been persuaded that, in light of the unattractiveness of the option of using force, it has no choice but to pursue the path of negotiations that proved so futile for its predecessor. It has made much of its success in broadening the participants to include, in addition to the Framework Agreement states, the North's two principal sponsors — Communist China and, to a lesser extent, Russia.



China's inclusion reflects a hope as well as a possibly fatal conceit: The belief that Beijing shares our opposition to a nuclear-free North Korea and is prepared to use its considerable economic and political leverage on Kim Jong-Il toward that end.

The reality is quite different. Without China's sustained technical and financial support, it is unlikely that North Korea could long remain a going concern, let alone have become a nuclear power.

It has served Beijing's interests for North Korea to be seen by the United States as a problem that the Red Chinese are uniquely positioned to ameliorate. Just as China has parlayed America's desire for a partner in the war on terrorism into Washington ignoring mounting evidence of the PRC's ominous emergence as a “peer competitor” (and attendant trade, military and intelligence benefits), Beijing is now in the driver's seat on the Six-Party Talks.

Never mind that China has used North Korea and its other proxy Pakistan as cut-outs for nuclear proliferation. It is viewed as the best, and perhaps only brake on the North's nuclear misconduct, so the Chinese are being allowed extraordinary latitude in convening the negotiations and setting their agenda.

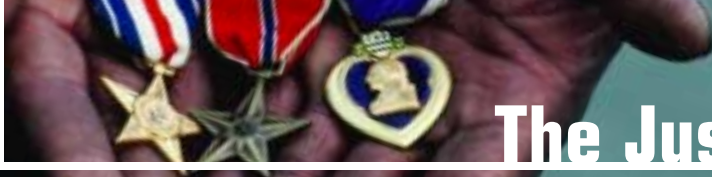
All the while, the North Korean nuclear program apparently continues apace. U.S. intelligence recently increased the number of weapons in Pyongyang's arsenal from two to perhaps as many as eight. And, since no one outside the Hermit Kingdom knows for sure either the size or disposition of this stockpile (not even Kim's Pakistani supplier, A.Q. Khan), this is just a guess that could well be in error on the low side. Alternatively, it could be accurate as far as it goes but fails to account for transfers overseas that might already have been completed. In short, the North Korean nuclear time bomb is certainly ticking but we do not know when it will go off.

Fortunately, as President Ronald Reagan demonstrated two decades ago, there is an alternative to appeasement or open warfare with such a monstrous regime. Shortly after he came to office, President Reagan mapped out — and ordered the implementation of — a comprehensive strategy for destroying what was at the time the planet's most brutally repressive and threatening dictatorship, that of the Soviet Union.

This strategy involved the coordinated application of military strength, economic and financial coercion, export controls and various forms of strategic pressure (notably, via information operations such as freedom radios beaming into Soviet territory and that of its client states). At its core was an essential ingredient: the truth.

Like the Soviet Union, North Korea's regime is evil incarnate and must be treated as such. And like President Reagan a generation ago, President Bush must reject new deals with today's most evil regime. The strategy should once again be one of roll back, aimed at ending this blight once and for all, not signing agreements that will permit it to persist and become still more dangerous in the future. ☞

— Frank J. Gaffney, Jr. formerly held senior positions in the Reagan Defense Department. He is currently the president of the Center for Security Policy in Washington.



Lies About Vietnam U.S. was right to have fought in Southeast Asia

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

In his presidential campaign, John Kerry is using his distinguished Vietnam War record to bolster his credentials on national security. Furthermore, his subsequent opposition to the Vietnam War now serves as a basis for his criticism of President Bush's conduct of the war in Iraq. The presumptive Democratic nominee is convinced that the Middle East threatens to become another "Vietnam-like" quagmire.

The myth about the supposed "tragic legacy" of Vietnam has been at the core of the liberal worldview since the 1960s. This is a false and dangerous idea that even today undermines our resolve to stay the course in Iraq. The underlying assumption of Mr. Kerry and his liberal allies in the media is that the conflict in Southeast Asia was a strategic defeat and national humiliation for the United States; it was a colossal error in which nearly 60,000 Americans lost their lives for an unwinnable and immoral war.

"We saw America lose her sense of morality," Mr. Kerry said in his 1971 testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?"

However, fighting the war in Vietnam was not a mistake; abandoning the war was our mistake. The withdrawal of American power from the region resulted in the imposition of a Marxist-Leninist police

state upon the people of Vietnam.

The communist regime committed numerous atrocities. Over 200,000 South Vietnamese military and government officials were deported to slave labor camps, where many of them were systematically starved to death. Also, several million Vietnamese — urban capitalists, non-communists, human rights dissidents, priests and monks — were sent to uncultivated, usually barren areas in the countryside, called New Economic Zones (NEZ). It is not known how many citizens perished in the NEZ's, but most of the deportees considered their assignment to be a death sentence.

Furthermore, Hanoi unleashed a massive campaign of ethnic cleansing against the country's minorities. During the 1970s, nearly 1.5 million ethnic Chinese were expelled and their property and businesses confiscated. Vietnam's hill tribes were nearly wiped out. The most famous victims were the Hmong, who faced savage retribution for having fought with the United States during the war. Using chemical and biological weapons, Hanoi deliberately targeted innocent civilians. Entire villages were destroyed.

Moreover, Red Vietnam waged wars of aggression against its neighbors. In 1979, Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia,

installing a brutal puppet dictatorship in Phnom Penh. The Marxist regime of the odious Heng Samrin launched a terror famine against small farmers that led to the deaths of 700,000 Cambodians.

It has been nearly 30 years since the communist takeover of Vietnam. Yet it is remarkable how little the country has changed since U.S. forces pulled out. Vietnam remains mired in poverty, corruption and government repression. The country's per capita income is little more than one-tenth that of nearby Thailand.

Seeking to join the modern societies of Asia, Hanoi has abandoned economic collectivism in favor of "Market Leninism" — the attempt to fuse capitalist reforms with authoritarian rule. The irony is that this is very similar to the kind of socio-economic model that South Vietnam possessed prior to 1975. It is obscene that countless Vietnamese have been sacrificed in order for the country to return to the level of development it had reached 30 years ago.

Liberals, however, continue to insist that the anti-war movement in the United States was correct in opposing American intervention in Southeast Asia. This demonstrates the moral obtuseness at the heart of modern liberalism. The communist victory in Vietnam resulted not only in the slaughter of millions of innocent Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, ethnic Chinese and Hmong, but in the savage conquest of Cambodia and Laos, the establishment of an extensive system of concentration camps and the subjection of an entire generation to the miseries of Marxist rule. Rather than being an unjust war, America's fight in Vietnam was one of the most just in history.

Nor did U.S. troops sacrifice their lives for a "mistake." The struggle in Southeast Asia was integral to the larger battle against Soviet communism. Scholars now claim that Marxist-Leninism was responsible for the mass murder of over 100 million people. The war demonstrated to Moscow and its proxies around the world that the United States was willing to sacrifice immense blood and treasure to curtail the spread of totalitarianism. This was pivotal to America's victory in the Cold War.

Nazi propagandist, Joseph Goebbels, proclaimed that if a statement is repeated often enough, even if it is a lie, it will be eventually accepted as true. This axiom is especially pertinent with regards to the conflict in Indo-China. We were right to have fought in Vietnam. It's about time someone told Mr. Kerry. ☞

—Jeffrey T. Kuhner is the editor of *The Ripon Forum* and communications director at *The Ripon Society*.



AP/Wide World Photos

John Kerry, 27, former navy lieutenant who was wounded three times in Vietnam and who has won the silver star, speaks to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., April 22, 1971.

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