

**INSIDE: Governor Jeb Bush ♦ Sen. John Sununu ♦ Sen. Susan Collins ♦ Sen. Olympia Snowe
House Majority Leader Tom DeLay ♦ Rep. Mark Foley ♦ Rep. Fred Upton ♦ Rep. Nancy Johnson
Saddam & al Qaeda ♦ Why Kerry Will Lose ♦ The Truth About MoveOn.org ♦ Remembering Reagan**

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The Ripon Forum



**PRESIDENT BUSH:
STATESMAN
OF OUR TIME**

By Paul Johnson

**Special
Convention
Issue**



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President George W. Bush waves as he walks toward Marine One on the south lawn of the White House May 14, 2004.

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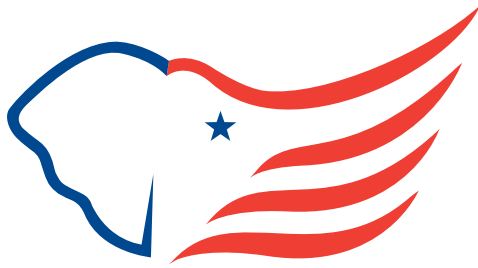
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Note From The Executive Director



On behalf of The Ripon Society, I welcome you to the 2004 Republican National Convention issue of *The Ripon Forum*.

A few things have changed since our last publication in June. We lost one of the greatest Republican presidents to a debilitating disease (see the article on President Ronald Reagan on page 30). We also lost a promising young Illinois politician to irony as the typically liberal press saw fit to chastise a man for allegedly “liberal” actions with his spouse. On the positive side though, Messrs. Kerry and Edwards experienced only a minimal “bounce” in the polls coming out of Boston. That should inspire all of us to increase our efforts to educate America about the accomplishments of the GOP and our President.

Speaking of Boston and New York City, read senior *Washington Times* journalist Julia Duin’s investigative piece on the plight of multi-ethnic diversity in Northern Iraq. There are as many ethnic backgrounds represented in NYC as there are taxi cabs, yet many countries in the Middle East continue to promote extreme xenophobia in the name of “ethnic cleansing.” This is wrong and it ought to stop.

The Ripon Forum is indeed a true forum where open debate is welcome. As an example, our previous issue extolled the virtues of protecting the First Amendment unconditionally. In this issue, Representative Fred Upton (R-MI) provides a counterpoint in defense of his recent legislation. Long live our unabridged freedom to debate!

I am particularly intrigued by nationally syndicated columnist Donald Lambro’s article, which details the flip-flopping nature of Senator John Kerry’s voting record. It seems very dangerous to have such a mercurial and indecisive person in the White House, potentially. Is America ready for a waffling, unpredictable President? We think not.

Our *Forum* continues to offer a strong mix of international politics, national issues, and deeply provocative reporting. To that end, *National Review Online* contributor Andrew McCarthy firmly displays the under-publicized links between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. Representative Nancy L. Johnson (R-CT) and Senator Olympia J. Snowe (R-ME), respectively, offer concrete reasons why drug discount cards and health coverage for uninsured Americans are positive Republican talking points. And, Dr. Grace Vuoto updates us on the ongoing Sudanese genocide.

Special thanks must go out to our member companies and those Forum subscribers that allow The Ripon Society its continued pattern of growth. In this pivotal election year when funds and time are at a premium, so many of you have chosen to support our educational mission, and even more have shared our messages with family and co-workers. That is truly gratifying. On behalf of our president and staff, thank you all for your continued dedication to The Ripon Society.

Best regards to you at the 2004 Republican National Convention and beyond.

Sincerely,

Elvis Oxley
Executive Director
eoxy@ripsonsoc.org

How Bush Can Win

President needs to get his message out – or risk losing



By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

President George W. Bush's greatest weakness is his inability to effectively communicate a coherent theme regarding his governing agenda. Despite numerous successes in domestic and foreign policy, the president thus far has been unable to translate these victories into soaring popularity ratings. The nation remains closely divided. Unless he starts getting his message across, he risks losing the election in November.

There is indeed a clear pattern to President Bush's policies during the past three and a half years. He has fashioned an original approach to governing, and has the potential to create a dominant GOP majority.

From the start President Bush has defined himself as a "compassionate conservative." On the surface, the term seems to be murky and contradictory. Conservatism, in theory at least, is anything but "compassionate." It champions the flinty virtues of small government, self-reliance and personal responsibility.

The president and his advisors, however, understand that if the Republicans are to remain the majority party they must also come to terms with a fundamental reality: most Americans support Big Government. Since Presidents Nixon and Reagan, Republican leaders have faced the dilemma of an electorate that likes the rhetoric of conservatism, but remains attached to social liberalism. This is why, despite Nixon and Reagan's desire to roll back many of the lavish programs of the Great Society, they succeeded only in nibbling around its edges.

Hence, the challenge facing the Bush administration is how to reconcile GOP values of limited government and individual responsibility with the realities of the modern welfare state. President Bush's answer has been to create an "ownership society," which will enable all Americans to become investors by attaining more control over their education, health care and pensions.

A case in point is Social Security. The centerpiece of the president's long-term domestic agenda is to partially privatize

Society Security, enabling workers to invest a portion of their payroll taxes in the stock market in order to accumulate more money for their retirement. He has taken a similar approach toward health care and education by advocating health savings accounts and education accounts. The objective is the same: empower individuals to have greater ownership over such basic needs as retirement, medical care and college tuition for their children.

The president's attempt to forge a nation of middle-class investors in combination with his large tax cuts is an economic strategy that has the potential to unleash a political revolution – one that could benefit Republicans for decades to come. By slashing marginal tax rates and instituting entitlement reform, the administration is laying the groundwork for broad-based economic expansion. This will provide new opportunities for Americans to become richer. As more citizens enter the middle and upper-middle class, they will likely vote for the Republican Party.

Furthermore, President Bush's strategy is more than simply a way to get additional votes for the GOP. It is a bold attempt to reconfigure U.S. politics. The administration is betting that Big Government can no longer adequately deliver social benefits. In fact, Medicare and Social Security will go bankrupt unless drastic action is taken. The solution, however, is not to repeal these popular programs — which would be political suicide — but to modernize them.

The president understands that the private sector can better serve the primary purpose of the welfare state — providing a social safety net — than the traditional mechanism of government. Statism, which entails a government monopoly on entitlement programs, is a 19th century concept. This is outdated in the 21st century world of economic globalization and flexible labor markets. Hence, the administration is seeking to use market reforms to preserve and strengthen the social protections demanded by most Americans. At the same time, the president is attempting to foster personal responsibility,

create wealth and provide smaller, more efficient government.

Compassionate conservatism, therefore, is the attempt to reverse the political trajectory of the past 70 years. Ever since the New Deal, the Democrats have been perceived as the party of reform and the Republicans are viewed as the defenders of corporate plutocracy. The administration is challenging this traditional perception. The Bush-led GOP is now the party of bold innovation, while the Democrats are protectors of the broken status quo; they are hostages to labor unions, public sector employees and trial lawyers.

It is well-known that the president considers Reagan to be his political hero. Although they have much in common, especially a shared ideology, Reagan is not quite the right role model for President Bush. Instead, he should look to another Republican giant: President Theodore Roosevelt. Like President Bush, Roosevelt governed at the beginning of a new century and in an emerging age of international conflict. (Then the problem was nationalism; today it is terrorism). The Rough Rider's response was to set forth a sweeping, reformist agenda both at home and abroad. Roosevelt curbed the power of emerging corporate behemoths, modernized government and transformed America into a military colossus. The result was nearly three decades of almost unbroken Republican rule.

Now, the Republicans have a chance to follow in Roosevelt's footsteps. They can again become America's dominant party. President Bush has embraced Roosevelt-style reforms. But he has failed to imitate Roosevelt in one important respect: using the Bully Pulpit to effectively communicate his message to the wider public. The Bush presidency has been one of the least rhetorical in history. If he should lose re-election, it will not be because of his character or his policies. Rather, it will be because he failed to understand that the modern presidency depends upon the power of rhetoric to transmit ideas and explain policy.

President Bush's reluctance to counter the Democrats' ceaseless attacks has left many voters confused about the goals, successes and future direction of his administration. Voters want to support a genuinely compassionate and innovative conservative. The president is their man. It's about time they realized this. ☞

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



The Bush Revolution

Some overlooked domestic policy daring

By Daniel Casse

This much is certain about this year's presidential campaign: it will not be defined by domestic policy disputes. Not since the Vietnam-era campaigns has foreign policy played such an all-consuming role in a presidential election. Over every political argument this year, Iraq is hovering, casting its long shadow.

To be sure, both President George W. Bush and Sen. John Kerry will offer what are now a well-rehearsed list of domestic policy differences between Democrats and Republicans on taxes, health care, Medicare and education. But is there anything deeper at stake? Is there anything new to be fought over?

From the Republican perspective, the answer is unquestionably yes. Although it has received little attention, even from his own White House, President Bush has over the past three and a half years, offered, in a fragmented way, a dramatic rethinking of some of our pressing public issues.

To both the president's critics and partisans, the thought of a revolutionary Bush domestic policy seems unlikely, if not risible. Both Democrats and Republicans have chastised the White House for its allegedly reckless pursuit of spending. The president's significant tax cuts are said to have produced growth but insufficient jobs. The compassionate conservative theme on which he rode to office is now barely mentioned, if remembered at all.

Yet the president's most significant forays into domestic policy have altered the way the country approaches certain ideas while simultaneously shifting Washington's priorities. In his proposals on education, immigration and global AIDS funding, he introduced an element of fundamental changes in vital, if not always prominent, national policies.

Start with the much-discussed No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law over two and a half years ago. Now, like then, the measure faces criticism. To be sure, the legislation was marred at birth by considerable congressional compromise. Still, the legislation insisted, for the first time, on testing every student in third to eighth grade in math and science. At a time when

the Chinese are getting ready to eclipse us in the number of math and science graduates, this sudden intrusion of accountability and published results in public schools is a significant shift.

Critics, Mr. Kerry among them, will complain that the legislation does not provide sufficient funding to schools — a predictable yet durable Democratic argument.

In the past, Republicans could only respond by trying to outbid their opponents. Under President Bush, the debate has started to change and in the years ahead, schools will be judged increasingly by performance, not exclusively by their annual budgets.

The president's most significant forays into domestic policy have altered the way the country approaches certain ideas while simultaneously shifting Washington's priorities.

A more powerful change in domestic policy can be seen in immigration. The president's temporary worker program, while far short of the amnesty program advocated by some, signifies the first time that a president has seen Mexican immigration as a major component of our cultural and economic life. As commentator David Frum recently pointed out, it seems inevitable that the Mexican and American economies will become far more integrated. However, until now presidents and presidential candidates have spoken almost exclusively of tightening borders and catching illegal aliens. President Bush's focus on how to deal with immigration — legal and illegal — as an economic reality will surely shape America's increasingly complex policy toward our southern border.

The president's initiatives towards those suffering with AIDS is still one more policy that breaks with past Republican priorities but, more importantly, redefines the way we think about this unprecedented crisis in health policy. All past debates were shaped by the demands of AIDS activists for more funding. In a single stroke, President Bush defused that attack by

proposing the largest American effort to tackle this global pandemic in his 2003 State of the Union Address (\$15 billion over the next five years).

What is important here is not just the funding level — although it dwarfs the global AIDS funding of any other Western nation. Rather, the policy is a bold assertion that the United States is determined to lead the war on disease, alone if necessary.

This message is a potent one at a time when the developed world uses its vast apparatus of price controls and regulations to discourage drug research and limit access to care in their own country. Today, every significant drug used to combat AIDS has been developed in the United States. The result is that U.S. citizens now subsidize the world in combating illness — a fact often overlooked by Canadians and Europeans who boast of lower prescription drug prices. By making the effort to combat and treat AIDS — both at home and abroad — a high priority, President Bush has established a policy that the United States will be the leader in taking on the global nature of health care crises that will be with us for some time.

These disparate policies don't fit neatly into a general theory of government. They have never been part of a single, thematic presidential speech. Yet all of them display a degree of boldness and a willingness to move the domestic policy debate into new arenas.

Without a doubt, the Bush administration has championed a number of poorly conceived domestic policy ideas that have robbed it of a consistent message — the 2003 Farm Bill or the now-reversed effort to apply quotas to imported steel come to mind. But at its more daring moments, the administration has created a few new benchmarks for policy that will shape the way certain issues are dealt with in the years to come. They are not yet part of any Republican campaign theme. Perhaps they ought to be. ☺

— Daniel Casse is senior director of The White House Writers Group, a strategy and communications firm.

Why Kerry Will Lose

Massachusetts liberal is a flip-flopper

By Donald Lambro

Sen. John Kerry's daunting political challenge in this election is to convince a majority of Americans that he is not the man who has been casting those far-left roll call votes in the U.S. Senate these past 20 years.

All those votes, he wants us to believe, were cast by another man who was hoodwinked, bamboozled and brainwashed into voting for measures he would not and does not support today.

If the Massachusetts liberal is successful in selling this New John Kerry to the voters, it would be a transformation of Dickensian proportions that would make Ebenezer Scrooge's metamorphosis pale in comparison.

No one who has followed Mr. Kerry's Senate career disagrees that he was a reliable voter for just about every liberal nostrum that came down the pike. He voted to slash defense spending, he voted to gut intelligence programs, he voted for every major social welfare spending bill that came before him, he rarely met a tax cut he liked, nor a tax increase he disliked.

But that was another era when it was politically fashionable to vote the liberal line, his supporters say. Yes, he probably went overboard in his votes during the Cold War, but he is a changed man, more of a centrist, a Kerry adviser told me. If you will just give me a chance, Mr. Kerry is now telling voters, I promise that as your president I will not gut the Pentagon budget and I have a much better understanding since 9/11 how critically important intelligence programs really are.

Still, how can one man be so spectacularly wrong on the major issues of our time? How is it possible to cast so many votes on the biggest issues and say now that he no longer holds such views?

Yes, he eagerly voted for the North American Free Trade Agreement that President Ronald Reagan envisioned in the 1980s and that President Bill Clinton championed in the 1990s. But now Mr. Kerry thinks these free trade agreements were bad for workers and if he had to do it all over again, he would vote against NAFTA — even though it has been one of

the most successful free trade expansion acts of the 20th century.

Yes, he voted for the Leave No Child Behind education accountability bill that President George W. Bush proposed and signed. Even Teddy Kennedy, the senior senator from Massachusetts, worked with President Bush to enact it. But now Mr. Kerry regrets that vote because President Bush refused to boost education spending to the maximum levels the teachers unions wanted him to.

Yes, Mr. Kerry voted for the resolution to give the green light to proceed with the military invasion of Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein's terrorist regime and liberate the Iraqi people, saying that Saddam posed a serious danger to the United States and to the world.

But now Mr. Kerry says he regrets his vote, that the administration lied to him about weapons of mass destruction, that President Bush was in "a rush to go to war," and that, besides, Saddam was not the gathering threat that he had once believed him to be.

It happens that Mr. Kerry began changing his position on Iraq in the midst of the Democratic presidential primaries when anti-war candidate Howard Dean was cleaning Mr. Kerry's clock in the polls and looked like he was on a fast track to the Democratic presidential nomination. Suddenly, pro-Iraq war Kerry became anti-war Kerry and his polls began to turn in his favor.

But Mr. Dean was still demonstrating remarkable political and fund-raising strength with the Democratic Party's large and noisy anti-war base and Mr. Kerry had to do something more to cut into his support. That's when he cast his vote against the \$87 billion military supplemental bill to defend our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan — after saying on "Meet The Press" that it would be the height of irresponsibility to vote to send U.S. soldiers into harm's way and then fail to give them the resources they needed to defend themselves and finish the job.

Add to all this, an anti-tax cut voting record and a tax-raising economic policy

that rejects the widely accepted notion, held by Presidents Kennedy, Reagan and George W. Bush, that across-the-board tax reductions spur business investment, new job creation and faster economic growth.

This is the dubious political record that Mr. Kerry takes with him into this election and all the liberal baggage that goes with it.

Just about every Democratic leader and strategist I have talked to in the past several months believe that Mr. Kerry's fate will be decided by the state of the economy and how voters perceive their economic well-being. Many, if not most, of these Democrats told me that they now believe Iraq will recede as an issue, while the bread-and-butter economic security issues will move to the forefront of the campaign agenda.

I think that will be the case, too. But I still believe that, in the end, Mr. Kerry's flip-flops on so many national security issues will be his undoing. Sensible people can change their minds on issues over a lifetime in politics, but the senator from Massachusetts has gone to that well once too many times for the sake of political expediency.

The result is that Mr. Kerry comes off as someone who doesn't have the courage of his convictions on the critical life and death national security issues of our times. Voters will give their president some slack to change his mind if and when circumstances warrant, but above all they respect and demand leadership that does not change with the shifting political winds or when the going gets tough.

Mr. Kerry fails this fundamental test and that's why President Bush is going to be re-elected to a second term. ☺

— Donald Lambro is a nationally syndicated columnist

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The Permanent Republican Majority

The GOP's agenda for America's future

By House Majority Leader Tom DeLay

The work of the United States Congress over the last two years has been especially productive for our security and prosperity. In that time, we have cut taxes twice, and we plan to cut them again. We have funded two of the most rapid, successful, and humane military campaigns in history. We have met our pressing needs to fight the war on terror and defend the homeland from our enemies.

And we have passed the first major entitlement-reform legislation in history, which — despite all the criticism we took for it — has already started to transform the way health care is delivered in this country and is on its way to bending the cost curve of the Medicare program. Ours is a policy agenda meant to protect America's security, prosperity, and families, and it's already working.

Now think back to 2001, when our economy was in trouble.

Recession and terrorism had leveled many of the economic gains we made in the 1990s, and corporate scandals had exposed many of those gains as having been hollow all along.

In response to these events, Congress worked with President George W. Bush to cut taxes, a move which economists now concede turned what would have been a terrible recession into one of the shortest and shallowest in history.

But we didn't stop there. We expedited many of the longer-term tax cuts in 2003, bringing immediate relief to millions of families and small businesses. Critics howled, but late last year, the Congressional Budget Office conceded the 2003 tax cuts had already paid for themselves.

Even more recent data shows that the deficit is shrinking at a clip faster than we could have hoped because of the increased revenues generated by the economic growth spurred by our tax cuts. In other words, Reaganomics still works.

We are now in the midst of what appears to be a massive economic expansion, with more than 1.3 million jobs created this year. From the manufacturing sector to high technology to the service indus-

try, the economy is growing and creating new opportunities for millions of American families.

This is the economy we need not only to create jobs and careers but to provide our country with the resources it needs to fight and win the war on terror and meet our emerging entitlement crises.

We Republicans have controlled Congress for 10 years now, and we have made many gains, but much more work remains to be done. That is why our agenda must not only look a year or an election ahead, but 10 and 20 years ahead.

We have the ideas on the economy, government reform, entitlements and welfare not simply to make a few fixes on the margins, but to fundamentally re-imagine the way the federal government does business for generations to come. We have the opportunity to make, after decades of Democrat domination, a truly Republican national government.

Our majority is only as strong as the common values all Republicans share and the bonds that unite us. Every success we have won over the last 10 years we have won together. And every success belongs equally to all of the diverse opinions represented by our party.

Conservatives sometimes get a bad rap for being intolerant of dissent, but consider our congressional delegation. Consider our presidential candidates from 2000 and our leaders around the country. Would an intolerant party really have as national leaders such diverse people as Tom DeLay, Rudy Giuliani, and Arnold Schwarzenegger?

There is a party today that is growing more intellectually narrow and less intellectually tolerant every day, but that party is the Democrats.

While we have a diversity of opinion on every issue under the sun, the Democrats' spectrum of opinion grows more and more narrow. While we welcome intra-party debate, Democrats stifle it. While we welcome Americans of all political persuasions, Democrats talk openly of writing off entire geographic regions of our nation.

Not us. We are a national majority and a national party, and we plan to stay that way.

Republicans from across the country and across the ideological spectrum — from libertarians to fiscal conservatives to social conservatives to moderates — have all been equally responsible for the things we have accomplished.

What we have done, from the 1994 congressional takeover to welfare reform to the balanced budget to the election of President Bush to our recent successes on tax relief and national security, we have done as a united party. And that is the only way we can succeed in the future.

That is the fundamental mission of The Ripon Society — to identify and hold fast to those principles that have brought our party to national majority status. Those principles of limited government, personal responsibility and peace through strength are the principles upon which we will build our victory this fall and our agenda next year. ☺

— U.S. Representative Tom DeLay
is a Texas Republican



Courtesy of Rep. DeLay's office

House Majority Leader Tom DeLay

**Building a
stronger economy.
Creating strong
new jobs.**



America's economic recovery is well underway. Prospects are bright for further gains if we adopt policies that create more jobs, unleash the American spirit of innovation, and help assure the sustained growth of our economy. To maintain economic growth we must:

Encourage investment and innovation.

Our obsolete tax system should be reformed. It should create incentives for new investment and research & development that enable U.S. businesses and workers to be leaders in the worldwide economy.

Improve education and training.

America's school children must graduate from high school prepared for college and the workplace. The No Child Left Behind Act is providing more choices for parents, more resources for teachers and new accountability for schools. Job training programs must also be strengthened to give today's workers the skills for tomorrow's jobs.

Promote trade.

New U.S. trade agreements to open up foreign markets are catalysts for economic growth. They facilitate trade and encourage new investment and exports, increasing income and creating jobs here at home.

Growing the economy. Our most important job.

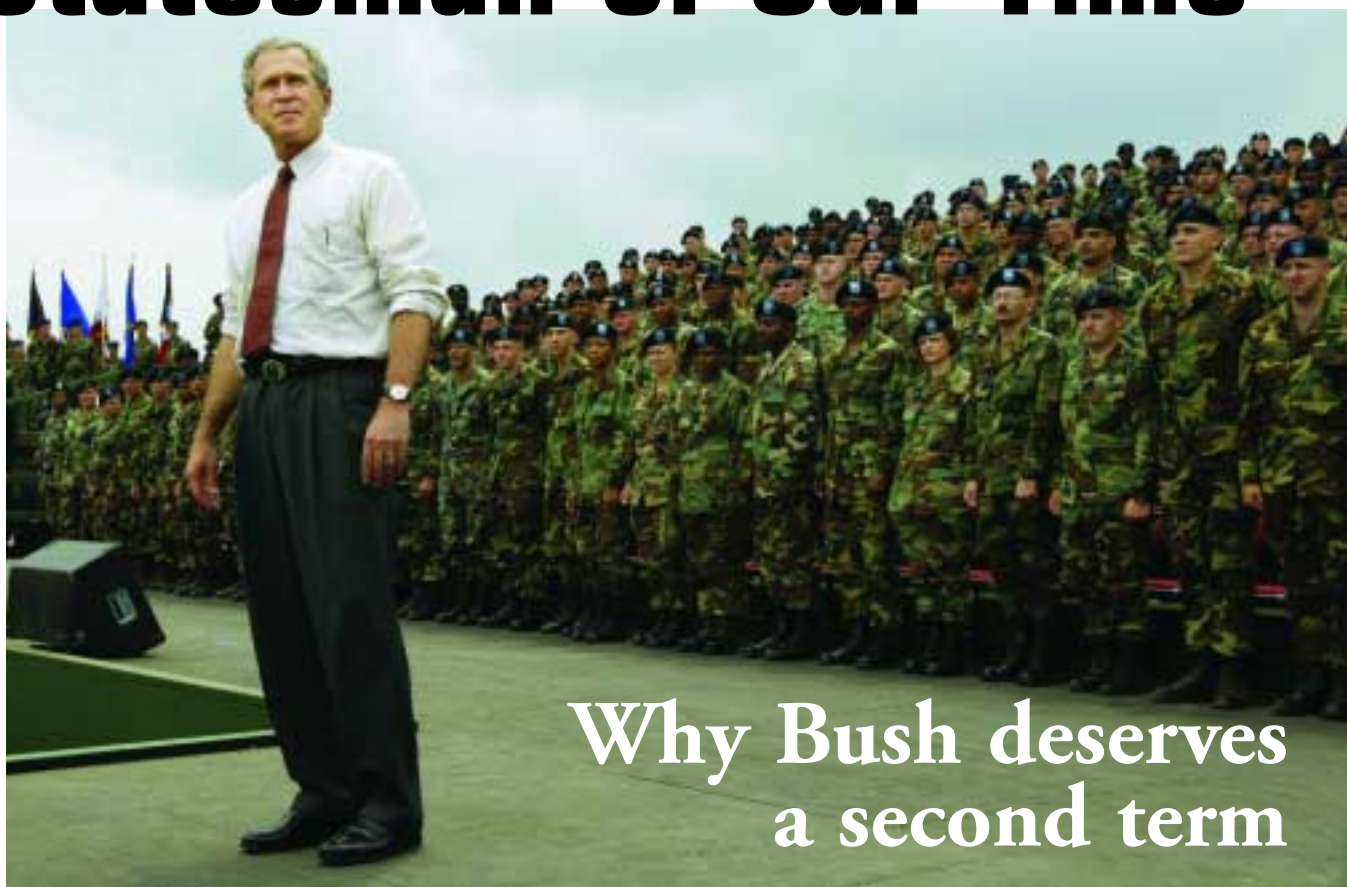


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Statesman of Our Time



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Why Bush deserves a second term

President George W. Bush and soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, NY. The Division was the main fighting force on the ground in Afghanistan in search of Taliban forces after September 11th.

By Paul Johnson

Until the September 11th atrocity the presidency of George W. Bush lacked apparent shape or purpose. He appeared to be a man who had run for supreme office for hereditary and dynastic reasons, who had scrambled into it on a minority vote (due it was said to a quirk in the U.S. Constitution), and who, now that he was in the White House, did not know what to do with the power he exercised.

The attack on the World Trade Center changed that. It gave President Bush a role in life, his presidency a purpose, and his administration a program of action. At once he knew exactly what he was in the White House for: to alert America and the world to the dangers of a world-wide conspiracy to subvert order by violence and to destroy the international rule of law.

This was a threat just as dangerous as the Nazi project for a “thousand-year Reich” and the Japanese “co-prosperity

sphere in Asia,” or the Soviets’ plan to establish communist regimes throughout the world. And the size and spread of the terrorist threat, and the targeting of the United States as the chief enemy, left no doubt that America had to arm and respond with all its forces — military, diplomatic, financial and psychological — anywhere and if need be everywhere in the world.

President Bush has responded in full measure since that terrible day. He has been ultra-determined, single-minded, courageous, resolute and decisive. He has disregarded his personal popularity, at home and abroad, in order to do exactly what is required to meet the terrorist threat. It has become the only object which really mattered in the whole of the administration’s foreign and military policies. If concentration on a single goal is the mark of a statesman and the test of a first-

class government, then the Bush regime is a winner.

What about the results? President Bush (and his allies) have fought two successful lightning campaigns in Asia against what were once regarded as formidable enemies. In both cases, allied casualties were light and the military objects were secured in record time. As a result, the United States is firmly established as the major military power in the heart of Asia, with all the bases, refueling stations, overflight rights and local allies it needs for any foreseeable military operations. This is a remarkable achievement, for which President Bush has received too little credit.

It is true that guerrilla activity continues in Afghanistan and that in Iraq terrorists are numerous and active. What did anyone expect? It may be that President Bush and his team underestimated the dangers which remained after they won an

outright military victory in Iraq. But they are plainly learning the lessons and, meanwhile, Iraq is progressing painfully toward democracy and the rule of law.

President Bush has never wavered in his determination to bring this about. He has shown patience and long-term courage in pursuing his aims. Nor should we underestimate his success in fighting the terrorist threat itself. It can no longer mount major operations on the lines of 9/11, especially in the United States itself. It now aims at soft targets, usually in Third World countries. Nor can it operate at will from any sovereign states, as it once did in Afghanistan. No state on earth now dares to give open or avowed support to terrorism. To that extent the Bush policy of pre-emptive action has succeeded completely. And, throughout the world, most states are taking steps to root out terrorist cells and bring the killers to justice. Many thousands of terrorists are now behind bars awaiting trial, on trial or serving long-term sentences. Large numbers have been killed.

The Bush administration has been weakest on the propaganda front. It has been ineffective in putting its case to the world. The administration has not explained exactly what it is doing and why. It has failed to present President Bush as a statesman who is doing for the world what the world is too weak, divided and irresolute to do for itself. In Europe, in particular, President Bush is consistently underrated, caricatured, demonized and hated.

Now it is worth remembering — I certainly remember it vividly — that there was a time, in the early 1980s when President Ronald Reagan was similarly caricatured, derided as “a second-rate movie actor” and labeled a dangerous man who foolishly used provocative expressions like “the Evil Empire.” Now he is hailed as one of the great historical figures, the man who won the Cold War. I have little doubt that, in time, President Bush will be hailed as the man who won the war on terrorism. In the meantime, however, something effective must be done to present him fairly and accurately to the world. Unlike President Reagan he is not and never will be the Great Communicator. But what he personally lacks in articulation and charm can, and must be, supplied by the resource of professional skills. Here, the administration has failed and a fresh effort must be made to repair the damage.

It is no accident that President Bush’s



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The remaining tower of New York’s World Trade Center burns after the first twin tower collapsed September 11, 2001. Three hijacked planes crashed into major U.S. landmarks, destroying both of New York’s mighty twin towers and plunging the Pentagon in Washington into flames, in an unprecedented assault on key symbols of U.S. military and financial power.

global standing is at its lowest in Europe, especially in what he has designated Old Europe. For in the criticism of President Bush there is a large element of envy. Old Europe has done badly in recent years, and the contrast with Bush’s America is blatant and growing. The Europe of the Euro is stagnant, old fashioned and increasingly left behind in the world. France has no growth. Germany is contracting. Productivity is low. Unemployment is high and growing. In some of the key European countries, population will soon begin to fall in absolute terms.

By contrast, Bush’s America has emerged strongly in the 21st century. Growth is high and continuing. Productivity is rising. Unemployment is low. New jobs are being created at some of the fastest rates in history. So far this year about 1.5 million new jobs have been registered — a surprisingly high proportion of them in manufacturing. The total by the end of the year may be as high as 3 million. To Old Europe, where net job-losses are

the grim normality, such figures seem incredible.

Above all, there is still hope, enthusiasm and faith in the future in Bush’s America. This contrasts strikingly with the pessimism and apathy of Brussels, Paris, Berlin and Rome. That America faces problems no one will deny — deficits and budgetary shortfalls being among the most severe. Yet President Bush has shown himself to be a man with vigorous responses to challenges, who will take bold decisions and pursue them with persistence and courage. He is beginning to look, in his own way, a formidable figure, just as, in a different way, President Reagan did in the mid-1980s. This is not a bad qualification for a second term. ☞

— Paul Johnson, noted historian and journalist, has written numerous books, including “Modern Times” and “A History of the American People.” His most recent work is “Art: A New History.”

Since 1969 Countrywide has been focused on reducing the barriers to homeownership and lowering costs. Fannie Mae shares this vision, and together we're working harder than ever before to make homeownership accessible to more Americans. "When we started, we offered one product; today we offer over 180, many designed with Fannie Mae, to make homeownership more obtainable for more people. Right now only 50 percent of minority families own homes. The task for companies like Countrywide is moving it from 50 percent to 80 percent. Fannie Mae is invaluable in helping to reach this goal. Our unifying mission is to close the gap in minority homeownership," states Angelo Mozilo, chairman and CEO.

As Mozilo notes, "You can't quantify the emotional impact of homeownership in people's lives." So as long as there is a gap in the homeownership rates, Fannie Mae and Countrywide will continue to make sure all Americans have the chance to realize the dream of homeownership. Because as the American Dream grows, so do we.™



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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

Restoring the Sunshine State

An exclusive interview with Florida Governor Jeb Bush

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner



Governor Jeb Bush

Courtesy of Governor Bush's office

Jeb Bush was born in Midland, Texas, on Feb. 11, 1953. After arriving in Florida, he helped start a real estate development company that today is one of the largest, full-service commercial real estate companies in South Florida.

Mr. Bush was elected Florida's 43rd governor in 1998. He was re-elected in 2002, thus becoming the first Republican to be re-elected governor in the state's history. Since taking office, his priority has been to create a world-class education system by emphasizing high standards and increased accountability. To achieve this goal, he has provided a record four-year increase of \$2.9 billion (26 percent increase) in K-12 funding.

Mr. Bush has also boosted the state's reserve funds while reducing the state's tax burden to its lowest level in a decade. He is determined to protect Florida's natural environment: he has made an historic \$2-billion commitment to save Florida's Everglades.

Mr. Bush is married and has three children.

The governor kindly agreed to an interview. We also wish to thank his staff for their cooperation and generosity in making the interview possible.

RF: Governor Bush, you have made education reform the centerpiece of your administration. What do you consider to be your administration's primary accomplishments?

Governor Bush: Our primary accomplishment is that we are seeing rising student achievement in our state. Florida is the only state to show significant gains in fourth grade reading on the biannual NAEP test, commonly known as the nation's report card. These results mirror what we're seeing on the FCAT, which is our statewide assessment tool. We are proud of these results, but we are not satisfied with them. Too many of our third graders cannot read on grade level, and the achievement gap among minority students is still too large. But the scores are rising and the gap is closing, so we are encouraged that education policies built on high expectations are working.

A related accomplishment is that we

have given parents and community leaders more information on the performance of both their schools and their students. Our new school report card provides a school's grade under Florida's A+ Plan for Education, along with information on which areas may need improvement under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The report card also compares student performance to resources spent at each school, thus measuring return on investment.

This information is not merely instructive to policymakers and education leaders. Over the past five years, we have seen communities rally around low-performing schools and help turn them around, and none of it would have happened without the information the state now provides to assess progress.

Lastly, Florida leads the nation in promoting school choice. We have three scholarship programs in our state, and we greatly support our charter schools and provide opportunities to parents who choose to home school their children. We believe that choices and competition enrich learning opportunities for all students in Florida.

RF: Florida's economy has recently rebounded following the recession of 2000-2001. Can you discuss your administration's economic strategy to stimulate job creation and attract domestic and international investment?

Governor Bush: Investment is the key to economic growth. We use state policy to encourage private investment in several ways. We have lowered state taxes by over \$8 billion. We have streamlined regulation. We have forged stronger business ties with our key overseas trading partners, solidifying our state's position as the Gateway to the Americas.

Florida also funds economic incentive programs to encourage private investment, especially in key high-growth sectors of our economy. These include the life sciences, information technology, aviation and aerospace, homeland security/defense, and financial/professional services. Most dramatically, Florida has become a major participant

in biotechnology research by securing the expansion of the Scripps Research Institute to our state. Our most widely used incentive, the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund, has helped induce more than 300 projects which have created over 74,000 high-wage jobs and secured \$6.1 billion in private sector investment since the program's inception in 1995.

RF: You established the Florida Office of Drug Control to address the problem of drug abuse in your state. Can you briefly describe the functions of the Office and discuss how successful it has been in stemming the flow and use of illegal narcotics?

Governor Bush: Prevention, treatment and law enforcement are the three pillars of our drug control strategy, and it is working. For example, ecstasy use among our youth is in decline, and youth smoking has dropped from 18.4 percent in 2000 to 11.5 percent in 2003. We are on pace to achieve our statewide five-year goal to reduce drug use by 50 percent by 2005. Our Office of Drug Control works under the auspices of my office to coordinate these efforts among the various federal, state and local partners who have made this success story happen.

Florida's Drug Court system is a perfect illustration of how law enforcement and treatment can be achieved simultaneously. Drug offenders under drug court supervision face very strong incentives to stay with the treatment program. ☞

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



The al Qaeda Connection Justified Saddam's Removal

Why President Bush was right to topple the Butcher of Baghdad

By Andrew C. McCarthy

Was there a connection between the now-deposed Iraqi regime and the al Qaeda terrorist network? The answer is a resounding “yes.” In fact, given the increasingly overwhelming evidence of ties, the more interesting issue is: Why is this a question at all? There are two principal reasons.

The foremost is political. President George W. Bush is not the favored candidate of the Left or the mainstream media. While these groups have attacked other post-9/11 national security measures with only mixed success, their relentless savaging of President Bush's Iraq policy — especially the failure to locate stockpiles of Iraqi WMD — has effectively cut into the president's election year approval ratings. Obviously, that trend would reverse dramatically if the American public was persuaded that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had been in league with al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, the architect of the 9/11 atrocities. So, unsurprisingly, the story has been buried and belittled.

In this, the president's opponents have an unexpected ally: the U.S. intelligence community. Our spy agencies, having failed to foresee 9/11 much as they missed telltale signs of the Soviet Union's collapse, have come in for immense criticism and calls for drastic reform. They are of a mind to avoid another embarrassing misread, and proof of Iraq-al Qaeda collaboration would be another example of their long line of intelligence failures.

Many analysts have maintained that there could be no connection because seeming ideological adversaries like Saddam's secular Iraq and fundamentalist al Qaeda would never collude against a common enemy. Historically, such a theory is frivolous — it is not for nothing that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” is a centuries old truism of foreign relations. But doctrinaire insistence on a lack of ties is plainly easier than

grappling with interactions that, though numerous, remain murky — in large part because they have not yet been adequately investigated.

Yet, a furtive connection does not mean an unserious one — quite the opposite. As Stephen F. Hayes recounts in his revelatory book on the subject, “The Connection” (HarperCollins 2004), both Iraq and al Qaeda had deep interests in keeping their relations secret — Saddam because he sought to thwart the United States but avoid a ruinous confrontation that open allegiance with al Qaeda might have provoked; bin Laden because he was trying to keep together a wary network of Islamic militants, including some Saddam skeptics.

Roots of the Connection

But though well concealed, the connection has been enduring. Its roots trace back to the early 1990's, when bin Laden moved the fledgling al Qaeda network from Afghanistan to Sudan, where Sunni Muslim radicals had seized control. Stridently anti-American Sudan had supported Iraq during the 1991 Gulf War, and Saddam, theretofore seen as an ardent secularist, responded by overtly embracing militant Islam: hosting international terrorist conferences, adding some elements of the Sharia code to Iraqi law, and even adding the slogan “Allahu akbar” (God is great!) to the Iraqi flag.

Al Qaeda saw the green light to collaboration. By 1992, according to Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) records recovered last year, bin Laden was already regarded as an IIS asset, while Ayman Zawahiri, the emir of Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) who would later become bin Laden's second-in-command, was being hosted in Iraq. By 1994, the two sides came to an understanding, which was later expressly alleged in the first (1998) indictment the Justice Department obtained against bin Laden: “al Qaeda

would not work against [Iraq] and . . . on particular projects, specifically including weapons development, al Qaeda would work cooperatively with . . . Iraq.”

More is continually learned about the early ties, thanks to the trove of records found after Saddam's ouster. For example, during the mid-1990's, Iraq broached with bin Laden the possibility of joint efforts against the Saudi regime, which was then hosting U.S. forces. Over the years, moreover, IIS provided al Qaeda with phony passports and desperately needed bomb-making tutelage. Iraq also set up secret training camps for terrorists — particularly at Salman Pak, outside Baghdad — where the IIS special operations division provided schooling in assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings and all manner of terrorist operations.

In the late 1990's, as both Iraq and al Qaeda became increasingly emboldened by weak-kneed U.S. responses to their provocative behavior, sympathetic contacts between the two also appear to have increased. In early 1998, as Saddam taunted the Clinton administration by mocking the U.N. weapons inspection process, Mr. Hayes reports that al Qaeda's number two, Zawahiri, was in Baghdad collecting \$300,000 from the IIS. Shortly thereafter, IIS records (found by journalists last year) indicate that Iraq was readying for a visit from another bin Laden envoy, which occurred in March — just after bin Laden issued his infamous fatwa calling for the murder of Americans all over the world.

Bin Laden, of course, wasn't kidding: on August 7, 1998, al Qaeda bombed the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing over 250. So certain was the Clinton administration about the Iraq-al Qaeda connection that it retaliated, in part, by cruise missile strikes against a Sudanese pharmaceutical facility that, it maintained, was a covert chemical weapons hub that combined bin Laden financing and Iraqi technical know-how. The embassy bombings, meanwhile, inspired Saddam's sadistic son, Uday, to publish in the state-controlled Iraqi press an editorial lionizing bin Laden as “an Arab and Islamic hero.”

Iraqi-al Qaeda Meetings

By late 1998, Iraq had ousted the U.N. inspectors, prompting another ineffectual round of cruise missile retaliation. Saddam responded on at least two fronts, although, yet again, lack of investigative interest has left us with only troubling outlines and unconnected dots. First, IIS officials were dispatched to Pakistan and Afghanistan (where al Qaeda had by then relocated) to meet with bin Laden. Second, an IIS operative under diplomatic cover in the Czech Republic was allocated funds to recruit terrorists for the bombing of an American target: Radio Free Europe (RFE) in Prague. The latter plot was stalled when the IIS operative was “flipped” by Western intelligence services, but fear of its revival surged in 1999 when the compromised diplomat’s replacement, IIS agent Ahmed al-Ani, was observed seemingly casing the target.

Given the extensive, historic and perilous nature of interaction between Iraq and al Qaeda, the most curious part of this story is why the Bush administration has not pressed harder for an aggressive investigation.

Al-Ani is crucial for present purposes because a watcher for Czech intelligence reported seeing him meet top hijacker Mohammed Atta in Prague on April 8, 2001 — just five months before the 9/11 attacks. Although naysayers have cast doubt on this rendezvous, the Czechs have stood by their account, and corroborating circumstances abound. An entry in al-Ani’s calendar indicates an appointment to meet with a “Hamburg student” (which Atta was known both to be, and to describe himself as, on official forms). Furthermore, Atta, who clearly had access to false travel documents, is known to have withdrawn \$8,000 in cash in Virginia on April 4, 2001, and no witness can place him in the United States again until April 11 — in other words, he had the means to make a secret trip, and although his cell phone, according to records, was used in Florida that week, that could easily have been done by his fellow hijacker, Marwan al-Shehhi.

Most significantly, in mid-2000, even the naysayers cannot deny that Atta made

two highly suspicious trips to Prague at a time when we know, because of the RFE plot, Saddam was promoting anti-American terrorism. The first, on May 30, was evidently so important that Atta could not delay for just a day for his visa to be ready. That is, although he had to know he would not be permitted to enter the country, Atta traveled to Prague just to sit in an airport transit lounge for six hours — managing to elude observation, which suggests a meeting with someone who knew the complex surveillance set-up — before heading back to Hamburg. Then, three days later (on June 2), Atta returned to Prague, this time by bus and with a visa. No witness has accounted for the 20 hours he spent there, but it is known that this was Atta’s last stop before heading to the United States. Did he meet with al-Ani? Why would he need to do that right before beginning his 9/11 preparations? Doesn’t this suggest that the April 2001 meeting happened? Why would the top hijacker take time to meet with a Saddam henchman in the middle of plotting 9/11? These questions have been deflected, but never answered.

Saddam Supported Terrorists

Equally interesting is the tale of Ahmed Hikmat Shakir, which seized records indicate was a lieutenant colonel in Saddam’s elite Fedayeen. In 1999, he got a job as a Malaysian airlines “greeter” (a functionary who helps arriving VIPs get through the customs process) through the IIS, which controlled his work schedule. The VIP Shakir was dispatched to help on January 5, 2000, was Khalid al-Midhar — an eventual hijacker of Flight 77 (which attacked the Pentagon on 9/11).

Shakir not only helped Midhar through customs but also escorted him to a three-day meeting, attended by al Qaeda operational leaders, that was plainly a planning session not only for 9/11 but, in addition, the October 2000 bombing of the USS Cole. Following the meeting, Midhar and fellow hijacker Nawaf al-Hazmi headed to the United States (via Bangkok) to begin preparing for the suicide hijackings; Shakir returned to work for two days and then never again — the purpose of his assignment having evidently been accomplished.

Six days after the 9/11 attacks, Shakir was briefly detained in Qatar, and found to be in possession of contact information for major al Qaeda-linked terrorists. Upon being released, he anxiously sought to return to Baghdad but was stopped at his connec-

tion in Jordan. There, he was held for several months and made available to the CIA, which concluded that he had sophisticated counter-interrogation training. Ultimately, Jordan caved to pressure from Saddam’s regime to return Shakir home to Iraq — the CIA reportedly agreeing in the Pollyannaish hope that he might be persuaded to become a double agent. He has not been seen since.

In the interim, Saddam was virtually alone among world leaders in celebrating bin Laden’s 9/11 attacks. Since the Iraqi tyrant’s toppling, moreover, additional terror ties have become manifest. For a decade, Iraq harbored and supported the likes of Abu Abbas (of Achille Lauro infamy) and Abdul Rahman Yasin (a fugitive from the 1993 World Trade Center bombing). More troubling, Iraq was especially hospitable to the world’s most dangerous al Qaeda-linked terrorist, Abu Musab Zarqawi: opening its doors so Zarqawi could receive medical treatment in 2002; permitting him to use Baghdad as a staging ground for his closest associates; and covertly supporting Ansar al-Islam, the ruthless al Qaeda-affiliate that once made Kurdish northern Iraq its home base and that has spearheaded, along with regime loyalists, terrorist resistance to the American-led coalition’s Iraqi occupation.

Given the extensive, historic and perilous nature of interaction between Iraq and al Qaeda, the most curious part of this story is why the Bush administration has not pressed harder for an aggressive investigation. It could only underscore the rightness of President Bush’s refusal, post-9/11, to leave in power so assiduous a terror promoter as Saddam.

The intelligence here is imperfect, and, after the WMD controversy, perhaps the administration senses that its Iraq policy could be further harmed if it presses the issue and fails to find anything more definitive. Maybe it perceives that the intelligence community’s manifest lack of enthusiasm for the task means it is best to leave well enough alone. But that would be unwise. National security is best served by getting to the bottom of this — for what it can teach us about al Qaeda’s quest for state sponsorship, for the legacy of what has been accomplished in Iraq, and to reaffirm the Bush Doctrine that terrorism’s friends will be America’s enemies, and will pay the price. ☺

— Andrew C. McCarthy, a *National Review Online* contributor, was the lead prosecutor of the 1995 terrorism case against Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman.



MoveOn.org: Don't Believe the Hype Liberal group has history of supporting losing causes

By Robert Stacy McCain

Perhaps the most promising omen for President George W. Bush's re-election campaign is this: MoveOn.org is campaigning against him.

The press has endlessly hyped the Internet-based liberal group, but never once has a reporter thought it newsworthy to mention MoveOn.org's well-established track record of failure.

Ron Brownstein of the *Los Angeles Times* proclaimed MoveOn.org to be "one of the most influential ... organizations in U.S. politics," and he credited them with "revolutionizing the political use of the Internet." But he left out the organization's losing legacy:

- MoveOn.org was founded in 1998 during the Monica Lewinsky scandal by California software developers Wes Boyd and Joan Blades as an online petition to stop the impeachment of President Bill Clinton. The group's name came from its stated objective, to have Congress "censure [Clinton] and move on." Instead, Mr. Clinton was impeached in the House on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice, then tried in the Senate.
- Next, MoveOn.org formed a political action committee (PAC) aimed at defeating Republicans in the 2000 election. Instead, Republicans maintained control of Congress for the fourth consecutive election and sent Texas Gov. George W. Bush to the White House.
- In 2002, MoveOn.org supported Democrats' efforts to re-take control of Congress. Instead, in a reversal of historic trends in mid-term elections, the GOP gained seats in both the House and Senate.

The group has since moved on, as it were, to other quixotic campaigns, including spending \$375,000 on radio and TV ads urging President Bush to dismiss Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld (who remains firmly ensconced in the Cabinet).

The yawning chasm between MoveOn.org's reputation and its accomplishments is largely the result of a press

corps too lazy to check the group's claims. It is routinely reported, for instance, that MoveOn.org has more than 2 million members. But having 2 million e-mail addresses (one of them mine) isn't the same as 2 million members. As of June 30, FECInfo.com reported that exactly 2,160 people had contributed to the group's political action committee, so 1.998 million MoveOn.org "members" are free riders.

BLUE STATE BUCKS
Contributors to MoveOn.Org PAC by state of residence.

State	# of contributors	% of contributors	2000 Election
1. CA	282	37.5	Gore
2. NY	101	13.4	Gore
3. MA	37	5.3	Gore
4. WA	37	4.9	Gore
5. FL	23	3	Bush
6. IL	21	2.8	Gore
7. CO	17	2.3	Bush
8. MI	16	2.1	Gore
9. PA	15	2.0	Gore
(tie) TX	15	2.0	Bush

Based on contributions for the 2003-04 election cycle, as listed at www.fecinfo.com, June 28, 2004.

(MoveOn.org's Washington PR firm did not return a phone call seeking information on the group's membership claims.) MoveOn.org's basic problem is that it is a "blue state" organization — overwhelmingly based in the states that Al Gore won in the 2000 election — at a time when what Democrats need most is a way to win in the "red states."

While MoveOn.org has plenty of supporters in San Francisco, Seattle and Boston, Democrats' hopes for 2004 depend on reaching out to middle-class swing voters in red states like Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee and Ohio — places where MoveOn.org is barely a blip on the political radar screen. A look at contributors to MoveOn.org's political action committee (see chart) shows that more than 60 percent are from four "blue" states: California, New York, Massachusetts and Washington state. Meanwhile the key 2004 battleground states of Florida, Michigan

and Pennsylvania account for just 7.1 percent of MoveOn.org's PAC donors.

MoveOn.org is dominated by affluent liberals. The group has many Hollywood supporters. A perusal of the group's PAC donors turns up left-wing comedienne Janeane Garofalo and Leonard Nimoy of "Star Trek" fame, along with numerous screenwriters, directors, producers and agents. Beyond Hollywood, the group attracts many lawyers and academics.

Overall, MoveOn.org's donors aren't exactly the kind of folks who spring to mind when the word "grassroots" is mentioned. Rather, they are the elite of Democratic Party liberalism. By soliciting their involvement in the political process, MoveOn.org does nothing meaningful to expand the Democrats' base.

Meanwhile, MoveOn.org has spun off a "voter fund," a separate soft-money group to run millions of dollars of anti-Bush ads — funded by an even more elite set of donors. Of the \$8.7 million given to the MoveOn.org Voter Fund in the past two years (through April), billionaire currency trader George Soros and Chicago insurance mogul Peter Lewis have contributed \$5.1 million. Hollywood playboy Stephen Bing, heir to a real-estate fortune, gave nearly another million to the fund, so that 70 percent of the money raised by this "grassroots" 527 came from just three very wealthy men.

MoveOn.org, with its deep pockets and media-hyped image, has kindled liberal hopes and Republican anxiety. But the millions MoveOn.org has spent on ads in 2004 seem to have had little effect on the presidential race, and there seems little likelihood that a group of elite urban liberals can produce the kind of messages that will reach into the suburbs and small towns of America's heartland and win over middle-class voters for John Kerry.

In the final analysis, the odds are that on Nov. 2, MoveOn.org will add another failure to its long list of liberal losses. ☹

— Robert Stacy McCain is an assistant national editor for *The Washington Times*.



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Losing the Kurds

U.S. needs to give more support to its ally

By Julia Duin

SULAYMANIA, Iraq - The biggest shock I had in crossing the Iraqi border from Turkey on July 11 was the sign: "Welcome to Iraqi Kurdistan." It did not read "Welcome to Iraq." Kurdistan is the emotional and physical center of the world's 25 million Kurds who spread across the mountainous and oil-bearing regions of Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran. The experience was like crossing from Mexico into El Paso and being greeted with a welcome sign to the Republic of Texas.

The common folks I interviewed during my two-week investigation do not trust the central government. They are equally wary of the United States. Kurds suffered horribly under the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. For example, during the late 1980s, in a campaign known as "Operation Anfal," Saddam's security forces unleashed a wave of terror that led to the deaths of more than 180,000 people, the deportation of 2 million Kurds and the destruction of 4,500 villages and towns. For their opposition to Saddam's iron-fisted rule, the Kurds have paid a terrible price.

However, this staunch American ally in the Middle East could slip away due to U.S. ineptitude. Americans do not seem to understand that Kurdistan is an unofficial nation: it has its own ethnic clothing, two main languages, its own flag, parliament, police force, supreme court and even its

own passport. Kurdistan even has one functioning airport in Erbil, the sprawling city on Iraq's north-central plains, and it is soon to gain another here in Sulaymania.

There is also an enormous police force stationed all over Iraqi Kurdistan. Known as "peshmerga," these soldiers are constantly checking cars, faces and ID. One cannot drive far here without getting pulled over by a group of unsmiling soldiers who demand to know who you are, where you are going and where you are from. All travelers from Baghdad or those who possess license plates from the Arab regions of the country are stopped and searched.

Feeling Betrayed

The local proverb here is: "The Kurds have no friends and only the mountains are their friends." Once U.S. troops leave, the locals have little confidence that the rest of Iraq will have any use for them. The Kurds believe that, without American and British overflights beginning in 1991, they would have long since been overrun by "the Arabs" (their term for all other Iraqis). Many Kurds want Americans to establish a military base here or at least to build a consulate in the region.

But the closest consulate is slated for Kirkuk, a city divided between Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens. More logical sites, such as Erbil and Sulaymania, which con-

tain many Kurds who are sympathetic to the United States, were not chosen.

The recurring theme of my conversations is that the Kurds feel betrayed. They have been close friends of America for decades. Since 1971, some Kurdish leaders have even gone so far as to suggest that Kurdistan be the 51st state. When Turkey refused to allow America to use its eastern region as a launching point to invade northern Iraq during last year's military campaign, the Kurds worked with U.S. Special Forces to offset that enormous setback.

Now it is time to reward the Kurds. Yet they are being shortchanged. During an interview with Mohammed Sadik, president of the University of Salahaddin in Erbil, he asked me why the United Nations Resolution 1546 passed on June 8 was extremely vague on the rights of ethnic minorities in Iraq. Most Americans probably have never heard of this document. However, for the Kurds the resolution was extremely distressing.

"Our blood was mixed with American blood in the fall of Saddam," said Kirmanj Gundi, a Kurd and a college professor present during the interview, "but the resolution has put doubts in the minds of Kurds as to the good will of the United States."

Kurds are asking why they bothered helping America in the first place. They argue that their arch-rival Turkey undermined the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Yet President George W. Bush traveled to Istanbul in June and praised Turkey. Kurds especially despised L. Paul Bremer, former U.S. presidential envoy to Iraq, whom they call "Lawrence of Arabia" and whom, they say, distributed favors to everyone except them.

"We feel Americans have bargained at the expense of the Kurds," Mr. Sadik said. "The worst person they brought here was Mr. Bremer, who didn't want to take any advice from the Kurds but who was willing to bargain with everyone else."

Americans do not seem to understand that Kurdistan is an unofficial nation: it has its own ethnic clothing, two main languages, its own flag, parliament, police force, supreme court and even its own passport.

During the 1980s, Saddam's security forces unleashed a wave of terror that led to the deaths of more than 180,000 people, the deportation of 2 million Kurds and the destruction of 4,500 villages and towns. For their opposition to Saddam's iron-fisted rule, the Kurds have paid a terrible price.

An Independent Kurdistan?

Kurds are eager to emulate Israel's strike for independence 56 years ago. This is possible if Washington would support Kurdish independence — as the U.S. supported Israeli independence in 1948. In order to do so, Americans must establish a base in northeast Iraq.

"That would send a clear message to everyone not to do anything to the Kurds," one of the guests at the interview said. "If America supports us, we'd be the most loyal friend in the region."

The major U.S. base in the region is in Incirlik, Turkey. But Kurds argue that it is a holdover from Cold War days when the United States needed a place from which to monitor Soviet Russia. Now, all the action has moved south into Iraq. If America is looking for a democratic, stable and reliable ally, it needs to look no further than the Kurds.

Also, in order to achieve independence, the Kurds must exert greater pressure in Washington — especially by establishing effective lobby groups and a competent office to deal with press inquiries. They must learn how to emulate the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Jewish lobbying group that has a strong influence on American foreign policy.

Kurds would like to have some dialogue with Jews, who used to live in their region until they were pushed out in the 1940s and 1950s. But Kurds are afraid of the political ramifications. There are similarities between the two peoples: both are pro-American democracies surrounded by hostile Arab states.

Kurds, however, are disenchanted with the leadership of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which they feel have no vision for ways to transform Kurdistan economically and politically. The PUK and KDP,

which have partitioned Kurdistan between them, have Mafia-like control over their populations. In order to publish a newspaper or establish a business citizens need the approval of one of the parties. It must be mentioned, however, that it was the PUK that told the Americans where to find Saddam — a fact reported overseas but not in the U.S. media. Still, Kurds are looking for a viable political party.

There is a danger that if U.S. aid is not forthcoming, the Kurds will look elsewhere for support. Businessmen are anxious to attract foreign investors. Kurds have had cell phones and the Internet for years, whereas many Iraqis are only now obtaining these items. Therefore, Kurds are more economically advanced than other ethnic groups in Iraq. Americans would be wise to seize the opportunity to nurture a rare instance of a fledgling democracy and burgeoning capitalist economy in the Middle East before the

Kurds turn to Chinese and German investors.

Kurds are also turning away from Islam, which many feel is the religion of the oppressor. Some are simply atheists, while others are dabbling in Zoroastrianism (the fire-worshipping religion that predates Islam) or looking into some of the new evangelical Protestant ministries functioning here. Kurds are therefore more susceptible to being influenced by Western religions.

Kurds are desperate for help, answers and support. Now is the time to reach out to these people who still love sporting American flags in their taxis and who thank those of us who venture here for coming. It is not true that the Kurds have no friends. They have us. But we need to start acting more like the allies we are. 🕊

— Julia Duin is a senior investigative journalist at *The Washington Times*.



Illustration by John Boone



Cutting Back Drug Costs

Drug discount cards save seniors money

By U.S. Representative Nancy L. Johnson

The verdict is in: Medicare's new drug discount cards *will* save people money.

In many instances, seniors will save hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars a year. For starters, any senior with an income of less than \$12,500 a year (\$16,800 for a couple) will get \$600 in drug costs paid free by Medicare this year and \$1,200 over the next two years. Seven million seniors in America will qualify for this free \$600 credit. "These people should run — not walk — to sign up," said Robert Hayes of the Medicare Rights Center.

Now, add to that the savings under the new Medicare discount card, and the benefits of the new and improved Medicare prescription-drug law become obvious.

Here are some examples for three commonly prescribed prescription drugs and the prices with and without the drug card at a pharmacy in my district in Connecticut. These examples are for a one-month supply of Zocor (cholesterol), Nexium (heartburn) and Vioxx (joint pain).

Drug	Danbury, Retail Price	Discount Card Price	Monthly Savings	Yearly Savings
Zocor	\$154.79	\$ 79.19	\$75.00	\$900.00
Nexium	\$159.99	\$106.20	\$53.79	\$645.48
Vioxx	\$110.49	\$ 78.11	\$32.38	\$388.56

A low-income senior who takes all three of the above drugs would save \$1,934 a year.

Those who suggest that such savings don't matter to seniors are either out of touch or insensitive to the financial hardships facing many of our older Americans. Shame on anyone who tries to tell a senior that \$1,934 in annual savings is meaningless.

The discount card program is part of the new and improved Medicare law I helped write last year. The cards, costing between \$0 and \$30 a year, provide average discounts of 20 percent off name-brand drugs and 40 percent off generic and mail order drugs. And in less than two years, the cards will be replaced with something even

better — a Medicare program that for the first time ever will cover prescription drugs for most seniors in the same way it pays for doctors' visits and hospital stays.

Until then, the discount cards will help all seniors cope with the high price of prescription drugs. Every senior, including those with drug coverage today, should look into the program because cards may offer even greater savings on one or more expensive drugs. To make sure seniors find the right card with the biggest discounts, Medicare is lending a helping hand.

Seniors can sign up for a card by calling Medicare's toll-free, 24-hours-a-day hotline (1-800-MEDICARE). Simply provide a list of your prescriptions and ask for the lowest cost pharmacy in the area and the Medicare operator will tell you the card that offers you the biggest savings.

The story of a senior citizen living in Woodbury, Connecticut, sheds important light on this issue. Although he asked that his name not be used for this article, he provided my office with details of his prescription drug needs.

He and his wife pay \$2,000 a year for drugs to treat a heart condition and osteoporosis, and at first he wasn't sure if the discount card

would save him money. After he called 1-800-MEDICARE and had a 20-minute conversation with a Medicare operator, this gentleman learned that the discount card would save him over \$600 a year on these drugs. Given the 30 percent savings, he promptly signed up for the discount card.

The Medicare operator "gave me a much needed education," he told me. "Now I understand how it works and there is a good savings."

In addition, the official Medicare Web site (www.medicare.gov) provides for the first time comprehensive information about drug prices at pharmacies under each card. This unprecedented price "transparency" and the competition for customers among cards will force prices down. The Web site



U.S. Rep. Nancy L. Johnson

Courtesy of Rep. Johnson's office

is a useful one-stop shopping resource for those comfortable using the Internet.

Once seniors choose the card that's right for them, they can present it to the pharmacist when filling a prescription and save money.

The biggest obstacle many seniors face is recognizing the misinformation coming from partisans in Congress who voted against adding \$400 billion to fund Medicare prescription-drug benefits. These opponents of the bill are now falsely claiming that the drug card will not offer savings to seniors, when the opposite is indisputable. Even the AARP, the nation's most respected seniors group, says these partisans "have gone off the extreme end."

With the discount card program in full swing, Medicare for the first time is helping seniors pay for the prescriptions they need to stay healthy. The cards are an historic first step in making prescription drugs more affordable for America's seniors — but only a first step. With the full program in place, Medicare will pay 75 percent of the cost of drugs for most seniors. This was a costly, but long overdue, expansion of the Medicare program. Our seniors are worth it. ♡

— U.S. Rep. Nancy Johnson is a Connecticut Republican and chairman of the House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee.



Canada's Broken Health Care System U.S. should not emulate its northern neighbor



By Pierre Lemieux

In the *New England Journal of Medicine* of August 21, 2003, Steffie Woolhandler et al. wrote, "A large sum might be saved in the United States if administrative costs could be trimmed by implementing a Canadian-style health care system." However, in the same issue, an editorial by Henry J. Aaron criticized the Woolhandler estimates, and pointed to "the virtual impossibility (during normal times in a democracy whose Constitution potentiates the power of dissenting minorities) of radically restructuring the nation's largest industry."

The Canadian public health insurance system is not only universal and "free," but it is also a government monopoly. Privately insuring publicly insured services (which include most medical and hospital care) is illegal, as are out-of-pocket payments to doctors who participate in the public regime. Virtually all hospitals are run by government. Since physicians who choose not to participate in the public health insurance scheme cannot practice in hospitals, where doctors cannot be paid by their patients, nearly all physicians are regimented.

As hinted by Mr. Aaron, there is some doubt that Americans would accept a Canadian-style public health care system.

Because it is a government monopoly, Canadian public health insurance is the worst model of socialized medicine. Among developed countries, it is only in Canada that no private parallel system exists. The main reason why health care costs more in the United States than in Canada is that Americans are not forbidden by law to pay more for more, or better, services.

Total health care consumes 14.6 percent of GDP in the United States, compared to 9.6 percent in Canada. But there is not much difference in the public portion of health care expenditures, which makes up 6.7 percent of GDP in Canada and 6.6 percent in the United States. Public health expenditures in the United States mostly cover Medicare and Medicaid, as well as some of the uninsured. Although the situation of the latter is no

doubt difficult, they rely on county hospitals, the so-called safety net providers.

Dr. Susan W. Walters, a Houston physician, wrote in the April 30, 2004 editions of *The Wall Street Journal* about the Canadian health care system. "[It] resembles the county hospital where I work," she explained. "Our patients pay little or nothing. They wait three months for an elective MRI scan and a couple of months to get into a subspecialty clinic. Our cancer patients fare better than the Canadians, getting radiotherapy within one to three weeks. The difference is that our patients are said to have no insurance (a term used interchangeably with no health care) whereas Canadians have 'universal coverage.'"

Thus, there is a form of public health insurance in the United States, although it is only for the poor and does not bear the name. It consumes about 6.6 percent of GDP to cover roughly a third of Americans. In Canada, 6.7 percent of GDP is used to cover the whole population. Guess which public system suffers the worst shortage of resources.

To public health expenditures, Americans add the equivalent of 8.1 percent of GDP (14.6 percent minus 6.6 percent, neglecting the rounding error) in private (insurance and out-of-pocket) expenditures. Canadians add only 2.9 percent of GDP (9.6 percent minus 6.7 percent), simply because they are forbidden to spend more. In Canada, private expenditures can cover only supplementary insurance and out-of-pocket payments for non-assured services like dental care, or single-bed hospital rooms, etc.

With a universal public system that creates entitlements and encourages overconsumption, and a public monopoly to run the delivery of medical services, the Canadian system combines the inefficiencies of government-run enterprises with the failures of monopoly. The result is not surprising: waiting lines. The Fraser Institute, a free-market think tank in Vancouver, Canada, has calculated that, in 2003, the average waiting time from referral by a general practitioner to actual

treatment was more than four months. Waiting times are high even for critical diseases: the shortest median wait is 6.1 weeks for oncology treatment, excluding radiation which takes longer. Extreme cases include more than a year median wait for neuro-surgery in New Brunswick. The median wait for an MRI in Canada is three months. Since 1993, waiting times have increased by 90 percent. A class action lawsuit has been recently launched against Québec hospitals on behalf of 10,000 breast cancer patients who, since October 1997, have had to wait more than eight weeks for post-surgery radiation therapy.

Quite interestingly, Canadians are not much more satisfied with their health system than Americans. An opinion survey reported in a *Health Affairs* article said that, in 2001, more below-average-income Americans (35 percent) than Canadians in the same income class (23 percent) are deeply dissatisfied with their health system, but note the small difference; and in the above-average-income category, there was no statistically significant difference in dissatisfaction between Canada and the United States. An older (1999-2000) survey showed that 40 percent of all Americans were satisfied compared to 46 percent of all Canadians. But dissatisfaction in Canada has been growing fast recently, and opinion polls now show that a majority of Canadians would like to see a parallel private system.

The American system is far from ideal, but the reason is that it is too socialized and regulated, not because it needs more government intervention. And at least the American system leaves room for free market competition, consumer choice and evolution. Moving toward the Canadian model would be moving in the wrong direction. ☞

— Pierre Lemieux is an economist at the University of Québec and a research fellow at the Independent Institute in Oakland, California.



Health Care for All

The right dose to cure our uninsured epidemic

By U.S. Senator Olympia J. Snowe

More than 43 million Americans live without health care insurance — one out of every seven people — with an additional 2.4 million individuals this year alone. These statistics are truly sobering.

We live in a time marked by rising health care costs and fragile economics, which continue to put a strain upon those who strive to maintain sufficient health insurance. At the beginning of the 21st century, health care costs account for nearly 15 percent of the nation's gross domestic product, and health care spending grew by an astounding 9.3 percent in 2002 alone. What is more disconcerting, those trends are not likely to decline in the near future.

Despite the efforts of past Congresses, little progress to date has been made. Uniting the strengths and determination of this Congress, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, Tennessee Republican, formed the "Senate Task Force on the Uninsured and Access to Affordable Health Care Coverage." I was honored to be asked to join and quickly jumped at the opportunity to take a leadership role in addressing this critical issue. I, along with fellow Republican Sens. Orrin G. Hatch of Utah, Charles E. Grassley of Iowa, Don Nickles of Oklahoma, Jon L. Kyl of Arizona, Jeff Sessions of Alabama, Michael B. Enzi of Wyoming, James Talent of Missouri and John Cornyn of Texas and under the Task Force Chairmanship of Sen. Judd Gregg of New Hampshire, were tasked to examine the depths of the health care insurance coverage crisis, and to craft legislative solutions that correct past deficiencies and prevent further devastation. Our mission is clear and motivated: to prescribe exactly the right treatment to cure this national ailment.

On the surface, the task at hand is daunting, with the statistic — one out of every seven — painting a grim picture. However, there are legislative opportunities available that can provide temporary and long-term relief to the men and women, families and children, employed and unemployed who struggle with the added

burdens of mounting medical bills or the extraordinary fear of an unexpected emergency. We simply must unlock their potential. It is our task, our obligation as a world leader to swiftly address the obstacles that keep over 43 million Americans from receiving critical health insurance coverage, and to ensure that future advances in science and medicine can benefit all Americans without prejudice.

One such opportunity, which I unequivocally support, is the legal creation of Association Health Plans (AHPs). As Chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have encountered scores of small business owners who are desperately balancing soaring employee health insurance costs with shrinking profit margins. In their defense, I have introduced the "Small Business Health Fairness Act" to give small businesses — the critical backbone of many communities throughout Maine and many other states — a collective strength when bargaining within the market, thus creating nationally structured health insurance plans for pools of small business owners and their employees. AHPs — as rightly highlighted by President George W. Bush during his State of the Union address — will help chip away at this vexing problem.

Additionally, I advocate health insurance tax credits for the uninsured, which is to be modeled along the lines of the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program which provides health care tax relief for workers and families displaced by shifts in consumer goods production overseas. As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, I recognize the vital role that the TAA health care tax credit plays in providing a fully refundable tax credit in advance that covers up to 65 percent of cost of a federally approved health insurance policy. With nine sanctioned tax credit options under the TAA expansion — including state employee programs, state-offered coverage, state pooling arrangements and the individual market — there are short-term remedies to assist in the long-term treatment of our nation's health



U.S. Sen. Olympia J. Snowe

Courtesy of U.S. Sen. Snowe's office

care insurance crisis. We must now simply utilize them.

We are making decisive strides to institute a real difference in the lives of millions of Americans who are uninsured. In the Congress, we are continuing to allocate increased funding for community hospitals and primary care centers — with particular focus towards rural states such as Maine — to aid in our relentless efforts to provide quality health care coverage to all Americans. We are examining proposals to safely import cheaper prescription drugs from Canada and other industrialized nations in order to combat the skyrocketing costs of medications that further weigh heavily on American consumers.

We are working with the Bush administration, with state governors and legislatures, and with private health insurance firms and pharmaceutical companies to improve the quality of health care for Americans and their families, without increasing the costs. The undeniable truth is that we cannot be successful in our quest for solutions if we do not comprehensively examine each and every alternative. And there are 43 million Americans depending upon our solutions. ☞

— U.S. Senator Olympia J. Snowe is a Maine Republican and chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business



Clearing the Air on Decency

Defending the FCC's crackdown on the public airwaves

By U.S. Representative Fred Upton

We are now entering the home stretch in our fight to clean up the public airwaves. Who would've known America's favorite sports ritual would set the stage for such an important issue. In mid-January, well before the Super Bowl (and Janet Jackson's infamous clothing "accident" during the halftime show), I introduced the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act to significantly strengthen the Federal Communication Commission's hand in its enforcement of broadcast decency laws. The House passed my measure in March by a vote of 391 to 22 and the Senate approved similar legislation 99 to 1 in June as part of a Defense spending bill.

I challenge the few detractors of the legislation to read the transcripts of those who have already been fined by the FCC for airing indecent material. It's more than a word or two — it's often page after page of hardcore triple-X smut that never should have been on the public airwaves to begin with. It's not political correctness that is being challenged or the First Amendment — every one of the 391 House members and 99 senators who voted for this measure wholeheartedly support the constitutional right to free speech.

Why target indecency? Just turn on the radio or television — it is inescapable. As a member of Congress and, more importantly, as a father, I am fed up with the smut and raw sex that has polluted the public airwaves. If one wants to find this trash, they can: perhaps on satellite radio, certainly on pay-per-view satellite or cable television, or some peep show.

It seems that some broadcasters and shock jocks are engaged in a "how low can you go?" mentality, constantly trying to outdo one another. The American public has said "enough is enough" and they are demanding change. The public has spoken, and we've heard them loud and clear.

Some critics and naysayers have raised the issue of free speech to divert attention from the real issue. I have tremendous respect for the First Amendment and want to make it clear that our bipartisan legislation does nothing to infringe upon free speech. The laws for indecency are on the



Courtesy of Rep. Upton's office

U.S. Rep. Fred Upton

books and they have been upheld in the courts. Our bill does not touch decency standards; it strictly raises the penalties, plain and simple.

What we are talking about is the public airwaves, which are owned by the U.S. taxpayers. Using public-owned airwaves comes with the responsibility to follow the FCC decency standards that apply to programming that airs during the family hours of 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. — the likeliest times that children may be tuned in. When a broadcaster applies for a license, they are agreeing to follow decency standards.

There must be a level of expectation when a parent turns on the TV or radio between the hours of 6:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. that the content will be suitable for children. A parent should not have to think twice about the content on the public airwaves. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

I commend FCC Chairman Michael Powell and all the FCC commissioners, Republican and Democrat alike, for their work to clean up the public airwaves. During a speech before the National Press Club in January, Mr. Powell lamented that the fines for indecency were too small and had no impact. He asked and we delivered.

I introduced our bipartisan legislation to increase the fines the FCC can levy for airing indecent material on January 21st,

the first day Congress was in session this year. We held our first hearing in the Telecommunications and Internet Subcommittee on January 28th and also received the support of the Bush administration the very same day. Our bill was already on the fast track. And then came the Super Bowl — bringing the issue of indecency directly into the living rooms of nearly 100 million homes nationwide.

Our legislation will significantly strengthen the FCC's hand in punishing those who peddle indecent and obscene material over our airwaves. Under current law, the maximum the FCC can fine per violation for indecency is \$27,500, which is hardly a deterrent. I am confident that by hitting broadcasters where it really hurts — in their wallets — they will start to think twice about putting indecency on the airwaves. Our legislation in the House raises that cap to \$500,000 per violation.

The legislation also mandates a license revocation hearing after the third offense by a broadcaster (the FCC currently has the authority to hold such a hearing after the first offense, but is not mandated to do so) and also institutes a 180-day "shot clock" for the FCC to determine if broadcasters were in violation of indecency standards. Additionally, the bill raises the amount the FCC can fine networks and entertainers who willfully or intentionally violate indecency standards from \$11,000 to \$500,000.

We have a great opportunity to deliver something of real value to American families, and I would like to think that we can deliver it swiftly. Although the Senate attached several amendments that are unrelated to indecency, it is my hope that we will come to consensus in conference and send a streamlined bill to the president to be signed into law. We passed a good, common-sense bill in the House. We are close to getting this filth off of the airwaves. ☺

— U.S. Rep. Fred Upton is a Michigan Republican and chairman of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet.



Perils of Internet Child Porn

By U.S. Representative Mark Foley

Today, we live in a new age and it is becoming increasingly apparent that our laws must meet the challenge of protecting our children in the face of new threats and new technology.

The Internet has brought new opportunities for education, commerce and self-empowerment to millions of Americans. But it has also provided a new window through which pedophiles and predators are reaching out to our children. Congress is working to close those windows to protect our children but faces the obstacle of keeping laws relevant in the face of continually changing technology while being able to pass muster with a reluctant U.S. Supreme Court.

According to Highlights of the Youth Internet Safety Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice, "one in five children (10 to 17 years old) receive unwanted sexual solicitations online." An even more alarming statistic from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children says, "1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys are sexually exploited before they reach adulthood, yet less than 35% of those child sexual assaults are reported to authorities." And, in 2002, the FBI cited online child pornography/sexual exploitation as the most significant cyber-crime involving crimes against children.

In 1996, Congress began taking a close look at the child pornography explosion on the then-new technology of the Internet. That year, Congress passed the Communications Decency Act to make it a crime to send obscene or indecent messages to minors via e-mails, chat-room messages and Web sites.

However, the courts have been dismissive of laws protecting children from sexually explicit images. In the name of the First Amendment the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Decency law in 1997, saying it was too vague and broad. As Congress attempts to take action to protect our kids, the Supreme Court continues to apply 18th century law to 21st century technology.

The Republican-led Congress responded with passing the Children's Online Protection Act in 1998, a law designed to prohibit the commercial distribution of obscene material harmful to minors. But, once again, the Supreme Court — striking



U.S. Rep. Mark Foley

Courtesy of Rep. Foley's office

two major provisions from the law in two separate rulings as infringements on the First Amendment — has gutted this law over the past two years.

The Internet has become an anonymous and convenient source for pedophiles to get materials they otherwise would not have access to. Not only are children being exposed to sexual material and perversion, but they are also being exploited as Web sites seek to make money off sexually provocative images of kids.

Under the guise of "child modeling Web sites," smut peddlers have designed Web sites that exploit children as young as four, five and six years old. For a fee, viewers can see photos and video clips of the children in sexually suggestive poses, can send the children provocative clothing and bathing suits to "model" and can converse with them via e-mail.

I introduced the Child Modeling Exploitation Prevention Act in 2002 to combat these Web sites which are nothing more than a way for sexual deviants to get their fix. Even as we wait for this legislation to move forward and continue to strengthen our laws in the face of First Amendment challenges, we have made several important and positive steps that have made our children safer.

One of our most successful victories in Congress has been AMBER Alert. As the co-chairman of the Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus in the House of Representatives, I worked closely with law enforcement and government officials to take the AMBER Alert system nationwide.

AMBER — the "America's Missing; Broadcast Emergency Response" plan — is a voluntary partnership between law enforce-

ment agencies and broadcasters to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child-abduction cases.

The system grew out of the January 1996 killing of nine-year-old Amber Hagerman after she was kidnapped from her Arlington, Texas, neighborhood. Although local radio and television stations covered the story in the regular news casts, she remained missing for four days until her body was found in a drainage ditch a few miles from her home. Her kidnapping and murder remain unsolved.

Afterwards, a concerned citizen contacted a Dallas radio station and suggested that area radio stations repeat news bulletins about abducted children just like they would severe weather warnings — they might help save the life of a child.

The Dallas Amber Plan was started in July 1997 to help safely recover missing children that police believe have been abducted. Now, the AMBER Alert is saving lives and protecting our children nationwide.

While we work in Congress to give law enforcement the tools to protect our children, the most important weapon of all is showing parents how to keep a watchful eye on the activities of their children; knowing the people who come into contact with their children in their neighborhoods, schools and online; and using plain common sense. ☞

— U.S. Rep. Mark Foley is a Florida Republican. He is the co-chairman of the Congressional Missing and Exploited Children Caucus and continues to be an advocate of child protection issues.



A few tips to protect your child

- Keep the computer in a central room like the living room or den.
- Make your child aware that many predators will pose as teenagers and kids in order to prey on unsuspecting or naive children.
- Instruct your child never to give out their real name or personal address to anyone they do not already know.

The Civil Rights Party

The GOP's forgotten legacy

By Stephen F. Manfredi

One of the most persistent, but completely unfounded political assumptions of the present-day is that the Republican Party is outwardly hostile toward civil rights in general and the interests of African-Americans in particular. Unfortunately, this political demonization has succeeded in drawing African-Americans from the party of Lincoln en masse despite the failed welfare, social and affirmative action policies championed by Democrats. In this 150th year since the Republican Party's founding, it seems appropriate to set the historical record straight and clearly define the Republican agenda for the future.

With the Grand Old Party currently poised to become America's new majority party, it is often difficult to recall the Republican Party's humble origins. The modern-day Republican Party was founded on March 20, 1854 in Ripon, Wisconsin (hence, the name of The Ripon Society). Outraged by the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which allowed "popular sovereignty" to determine the legality of slavery in the territories, 50 men and three women convened in the town of Ripon's Little White School House to create a new party dedicated to arresting the spread of slavery.

The young party's influence spread like wildfire, enabling Abraham Lincoln, who opposed any further expansion of slavery, to be elected president in 1860. Lincoln's principled leadership allowed for victory in the Civil War, the Union's preservation and the liberation of Southern slaves.

And Lincoln was only a moderate in the Republican Party. The "Radical Republicans" who controlled Congress after Lincoln's death passed a series of amendments to the Constitution which legally ended slavery, gave blacks citizenship and even conferred upon black males the right to vote. But they did not stop there. Congressional Republicans also created the Freedmen's Bureau to provide food and shelter for former slaves, set aside land for black ownership, and even passed the progressive Civil Rights Act of 1875, which guaranteed equal access to all public facilities.

Regrettably, Supreme Court rulings and the end of federal intervention in the South negated these reforms and allowed for a century of legal segregation and Jim Crowism in the Democratic-controlled "Solid South."

Yet the GOP continued to push for equal rights for African-Americans. Prevented by Southern Democrats from enacting civil rights legislation in the 1950s, Republicans nevertheless played a leading role in passing the monumental Civil Rights Act of 1964. While Democrats such as John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson must be commended for their contributions to the civil rights movement, the decisive role played by congressional Republicans in passing the Civil Rights Act should no longer be ignored.

Although they were the minority party at the time, Senate Republicans led by Sen. Everett Dirksen prevented the success of a Democratic filibuster led by Sen. Robert Byrd and forced a vote on the historic legislation. In both houses of Congress, Republicans outvoted their Democratic counterparts in support of the bill — with over 80 percent of Republicans endorsing the legislation. In the Senate, 21 Democrats voted against the Civil Rights Act compared to only 6 Republicans. In this way, Republicans helped lead the charge in passing the most significant civil rights legislation since the Civil War era.

With the legal equality of African-Americans and other minorities guaranteed, Republicans have been at the forefront of seeking equality of opportunity and economic prosperity for all. President George W. Bush has continued this fight not only by appointing minorities to major posts, but by pursuing what he has dubbed an "ownership society." Rejecting the condescension of affirmative action and government handouts, President Bush has put forth a bold initiative to reduce the dependence of minorities on government while establishing a society in which personal responsibility, private property and the dignity of employment are valued.

President Bush's agenda has concentrated on uplifting minorities in all areas of

life. His tax incentives for small businesses will go a long way toward helping minority entrepreneurs join the business community. In addition, his staunch promotion of homeownership among minorities through down payment assistance and support for affordable housing is already succeeding. Minority homeownership is booming and more than half of all minorities now own their own home. Recognizing the importance of education in promoting equality, President Bush made separate assessments of the success of racial minorities a key provision of his No Child Left Behind Act. As a result, schools with unsatisfactory minority test scores will be forced to reform even if their aggregate scores meet federal standards.

For too long the Democrats have taken the African-American vote for granted. The Democratic reforms of the past 40 years have failed to pull disadvantaged blacks from the crippling cycle of inner city poverty, drugs, inadequate schools and family breakdown. With more African-Americans joining the middle-class than ever before, it is only a matter of time before they return to the party of Lincoln.

Who says you can't go home again. ☺

— Stephen F. Manfredi is the policy research director at The Ripon Society

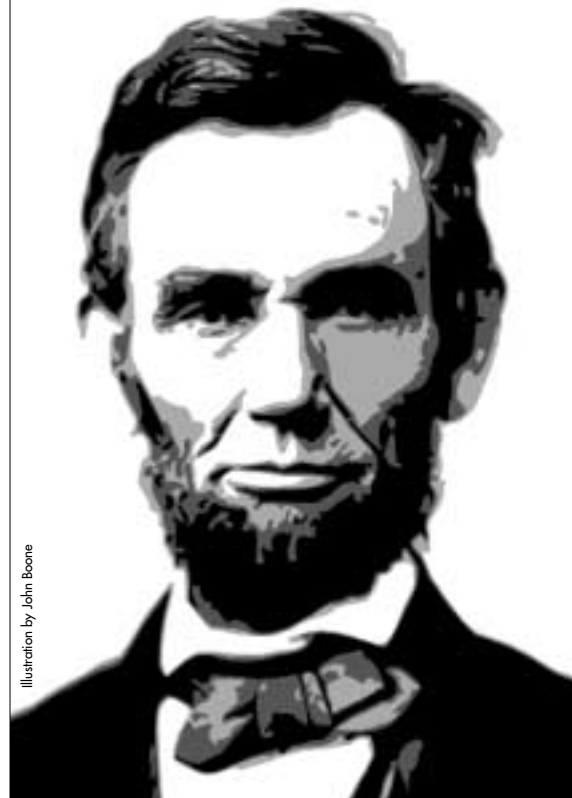


Illustration by John Boone



A New Republican Majority in California? Painting the 'left coast' red

By Roman Buhler

Almost 100 years ago in 1910, a progressive California Republican named Hiram Johnson overturned the state's political establishment, and with a series of reforms succeeded in reshaping California government and politics. For nearly 50 years, until 1958, Republicans in the Hiram Johnson tradition dominated state politics.

Today, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has a similar potential to transform the state.

Since 1958, the liberal wing of the Democratic Party has dominated California politics. Statewide victories by Republican Governors Ronald Reagan, George Deukmejian and Pete Wilson never changed the fundamental facts of life for California Republicans, who remained a minority within the state legislature and U.S. congressional delegation.

But the tectonic plates of California politics may be shifting again.

In November 2002, just after California Democratic Governor Grey Davis' crushing defeat of GOP candidate Bill Simon, two veteran political visionaries, Ted Costa, president of the anti-tax group Peoples Advocate, and longtime Bill Thomas political consultant Mark Abernathy, launched the idea of a gubernatorial recall. With grassroots enthusiasm, and eventual funding from millionaire U.S. Rep. Darryl Issa, the recall qualified for the ballot.

Mr. Schwarzenegger, declaring his candidacy for governor at the last minute, won an overwhelming victory. He and another GOP candidate, conservative State Sen. Tom McClintock, won over 60% of the combined vote, outpolling Democrats in 65 of California's 80 assembly districts.

But despite their party's loss, Democrats in the state legislature remained untouched by the Schwarzenegger tidal wave.

That is because a redistricting plan passed in 2001 by the Democratic-controlled legislature protected nearly all incumbents from defeat in general elections. Democrat incumbents, threatened by the dramatic rise in the Hispanic voting population in the state, sought Republican help to protect all incumbents from challenge. The

result was a bipartisan gerrymander giving incumbents safe seats, and which virtually ensures that Democrats will retain their overwhelming control of the state legislature and California congressional delegation.

The effects have been felt by Governor Schwarzenegger. This summer, after some initial successes he discovered the limits of his persuasive powers. In budget negotiations, the Democratic legislative leadership obstructed his calls for spending restraint and government reform.

In what may prove to be a serious miscalculation, California State Senate President John Burton boasted that "Even if the governor was elected God" he could not change the Democratic majority in the legislature.

This, however, may be a fatal miscalculation. Mr. Costa and Mr. Abernathy have a new project: a voter initiative to take the redistricting power away from the California legislature.

Under the provisions of the initiative, three retired judges selected by lot and who have never served in partisan office, would design a plan that minimizes the divisions of cities and counties.

Once adopted, the final plan would go into effect at the next general election. At that same election, the plan would be submitted to the voters. If the voters approve, the plan remains in effect until the next Census. If the plan is rejected, then a new panel of retired judges must be selected to prepare a new plan for the next election.

The initiative, dubbed "The Voter Empowerment Act" is now in circulation. If enough signatures are collected by the end of October 2004, Governor Schwarzenegger could call a special election in the spring of 2005. Passage would result in new and more competitive districts in 2006.

Polls show the California electorate is hungry for reform.

The same combination of Republicans, independents and reform-minded Democrats who voted for Governor Schwarzenegger's blend of social tolerance, efficient government and opposition to higher taxes, want to see an overhaul of

what they view as California's dysfunctional legislature.

In a recent survey nearly two-thirds of voters favor taking the redistricting power away from the legislature and giving it to retired judges. More than three-fourths want a redistricting plan that minimizes the fragmentation of California's cities and counties. Over 80% agree that the people, not politicians, should have the final say over the drawing of new districts.

The bottom line: over 70% of voters would support a redistricting reform initiative.

Redistricting reform has the potential to have a powerful impact due to an unusual confluence of events. Californians are dissatisfied with the legislature's performance and want change. They also like Governor Schwarzenegger's tough reform-minded approach to governance. California's economy is improving, and Governor Schwarzenegger's prospects for a strong re-election victory in 2006 appear bright.

If new, competitive districts are in place in 2006, the governor could carry with him to victory a whole new generation of legislative and congressional candidates, who would be far more responsive to the reform-minded majority of California voters.

The result could be a dramatic restructuring of California government. Reforms in education could be passed. Many bloated spending programs could be streamlined. In short, a more responsive and accountable legislature could significantly improve the state's quality of life and prospects for economic growth.

With growing support in the business community, a grassroots movement is now building to qualify the initiative for the ballot. If that movement is successful, and the governor calls a special election, as some anticipate, California's political establishment could be rocked to its foundations. ☺

Additional information about the California initiative is available at www.Fairdistrictsnow.org.

— Roman P. Buhler served for 14 years as Elections Counsel to the U.S. Congress' House Administration Committee. He currently has a lobbying and consulting practice in Washington, D.C. and California.



Terrorists Target U.S. Economy

Sen. Susan Collins addresses Sept. 11 report

By Rebecca Lamet, *York County Coast Star*

Note to readers: This article is reprinted from the July 29, 2004 edition of the York County Coast Star. U.S. Senator Susan M. Collins addressed a group of Maine Republicans at a Ripon Society outreach dinner event held on Tuesday, July 27 in Kennebunkport, ME.

KENNEBUNKPORT - Less than a week after "The 9/11 Commission Report" was published, Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine Tuesday spoke to her constituents in Kennebunkport about her role as chair of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. She also addressed its responsibility to responding to the Commission's numerous recommendations with sweeping legislation by Oct. 1.

The event was sponsored by the Ripon Society, a moderate Republican organization that has embarked on a nationwide outreach policy for members of Congress and their constituents. The Ripon Society was named for the city in Wisconsin where the Republican Party was first named in 1854.

"We want to give members of Congress the opportunity to meet with their constituents. This is our fourth event like this," said George McNeill, Ripon Society member and coordinator of the event.

McNeill explained that not only is this type of event important for Collins, but it also gives the people of Maine a comfortable opportunity to speak with their legislator.

"This is not a fundraiser," McNeill said, which makes it a unique political event especially this time of year.

Republicans from both ends of the spectrum gathered on Tuesday to mingle and meet Senator Collins.

Ruth Cooke of Kennebunkport attended because she has been active in Republican politics for many years and the Bush campaign this year. She said she thinks Bush carries with him the values we need and he sticks to his goals.

Michael Conway is the Republican Town Chair of Acton and said that, while not a member of the Society, he supports their message.



Courtesy of Sen. Collins' office

U.S. Sen. Susan M. Collins

"The potential loss of life could be catastrophic, but the terrorists' true target would be the American economy," Collins said.

Maine has two highly respected Senators who both draw support from their entire constituency, even across party lines.

The Ripon Society represents politicians who are "much more open minded than what people perceive as the standard Republican Party," said Conway. He said he has supported Collins and Republican Senator Olympia Snowe because they vote and speak their conscience.

The evening's dinner was also an opportunity for the Society to present three scholarship awards to Maine students. Liz Johnson of South China, Suzanne Shaw

originally of Ellsworth, and Jamie Carter of Portland each received \$1,000 toward their higher education.

The Society chose each recipient based on their academic record and merit.

"One important fact about these young women is they all worked for me," said Collins. Johnson attends St. Michael's College studying Spanish and Politics and Shaw attends the University of Maine Law School in Portland. Carter, still in high school looks forward to attending a university in Washington, D.C.

Following the award presentations, Collins spoke about her responsibility to legislate on the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, and determine the best way to protect "ourselves and our liberty, in this unprecedented type of warfare."

Collins is working with Senator Joe Lieberman and her committee to establish a National Counter-Terrorism Center and National Intelligence Director to unify intelligence operations.

Collins brought the realities of terrorism at a major seaport to the forefront as an element of security that would particularly resonate with her constituents.

"The potential loss of life could be catastrophic, but the terrorists' true target would be the American economy," Collins said.

Throughout her comments, Collins carried a desire to unite rather than divide, encouraging intelligence organizations to work together. She is acting on a need for unity by working across partisan lines with Lieberman.

Just as important as addressing the issues presented by the 9/11 Commission at a national level and implementing policies, is keeping the public, specifically Maine voters, aware of what processes and negotiations go into formulating national security policy.

The Ripon Society has been in contact with Senator Olympia Snowe's staff and hopes to plan a similar event with Snowe. ☞

Kerry-Edwards: The Next Smoot-Hawley

The Democratic ticket is wrong on trade

By U.S. Senator John E. Sununu

Over the last 25 years, world economic growth has been driven in large measure by two broad and fundamental forces: technological innovation and the free flow of goods and services across national boundaries. Yet, on the basis of campaign rhetoric and recent actions, a Kerry-Edwards administration would be openly hostile to current U.S. trade doctrine, placing in jeopardy thousands of American workers and the firms that employ them.

For the first time in decades, the presidential election presents a real risk that our greatest successes in trade policy will be set aside, new opportunities lost, and the U.S. economy relegated to second tier status as the rest of the world continues to broaden the global marketplace without America leading the way.

The economic benefits of free trade and the important principle of comparative advantage were well defined by economist David Ricardo nearly 200 years ago. Free trade and open markets allow workers in different parts of the world to focus on that which they do best and encourages capital to be allocated more efficiently; as a result, trade has helped to dramatically improve U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the real wages of workers and our overall standard of living.

Since 1994 when NAFTA was signed, U.S. exports to Canada and Mexico have grown from \$142 billion to \$263 billion, and total trade among the three countries has more than doubled. U.S. GDP has grown by 22 percent, and total employment has increased. An expanding global marketplace and lower barriers to exports allow U.S. firms and workers to demonstrate their superior skills and dominate in many high-skilled, high-wage sectors.

With few exceptions, the United States, under the leadership of Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, has consistently advocated for free trade and the elimination of global trade barriers. Moreover, the consistent push for open markets and greater trade liberalization worldwide has been a centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy.

These positions extend not only to spe-



Courtesy of Sen. Sununu's office

U.S. Sen. John E. Sununu

cific multilateral or bilateral trade agreements, but also to the renewal of presidential trade negotiating authority. Even President Clinton, against the wishes of many in his own party, was committed to free trade and continuing the trade policies of his predecessors.

Despite this consistent U.S. policy and documented record of success, Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry has shown a willingness to dramatically change course. He has flopped positions, and now opposes NAFTA, and pacts such as the U.S.-Central America Free Trade Agreement — a milestone for expanding trade throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. Kerry recently has stated his desire to create a 120-day review of every existing U.S. trade law. This would be done presumably with the option of suspending or retreating from our current commitments, leaving past beneficial agreements behind, creating economic uncertainty and undermining our credibility with future negotiating partners. Would the newly signed agreements with Singapore, Chile, Morocco, or Australia be refuted as a result of this policy review?

For his part, Democratic vice presidential candidate John Edwards has committed to revisiting and possibly rewriting major portions of NAFTA (Mr. Kerry echoed similar thoughts just last year when he argued in a debate that “if it were before me today, I would vote against it because it doesn’t have environmental or labor standards in it.”) In 2002, Mr. Edwards voted against legislation

to extend trade promotion authority — an approach provided to Republican and Democratic presidents for over 30 years and critical to negotiating and passing new trade agreements. Most recently, Mr. Edwards opposed the Singapore and Chile free trade agreements (FTA).

The misguided philosophies proposed by the new leaders of the Democratic Party would effectively leave all pending trade agreements languishing or essentially dead. We must correctly assume that any current negotiation or concluded deals not enacted before the November election would die under the weight of the protectionism promoted by Mr. Kerry and Mr. Edwards.

This dramatic turn would be in deep contrast to the rest of the world. The ever-expanding European Union continues to execute lower trade barriers and establish favorable trading zones for its members.

Perhaps the greatest impact of a retreat from pro-free trade principles is the lost opportunity that free markets could help create across the developing world. The benefits of a stable trade regime that promotes access to products and services would generate good will and help promote values of economic freedom and reform in economies that are emerging from decades of socialism, tyranny and oppression. For instance, last year President Bush announced plans to establish a Middle East Free Trade Area by 2013. While a Kerry-Edwards ticket would demand greater concessions from trade deals or impose obstacles to new agreements in order to placate big labor and other interests, the Bush administration is attempting to facilitate trade agreements that promote long-term economic vitality.

Economic freedom is a cornerstone of the wealth of liberties bestowed upon Americans. How best we promote economic freedom is the role of policy makers working on behalf of the American people. The right course of action is to push the boundaries of free trade and free markets, and to reject any calls to return to the isolationism and protectionism of the past. ☞

— U.S. Sen. John E. Sununu
is a New Hampshire Republican

Slaughter in Sudan

World silent in the face of genocide

By Grace Vuoto

While world leaders turn a blind eye, Sudanese President Omar El Bashir is waging a genocidal campaign in western Sudan. Since February 2003, the National Islamic Front government has been using Arab militias known as the Janjaweed, to systematically purge non-Arabs from the region of West Darfur. The victims of this slaughter are mostly African ethnic groups such as the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa. They are targeted by lighter-skinned Arabs in an attempt to render the region “Zurga-free” — or free of blacks.

At least 30,000 have been killed and 100,000 have fled to neighboring Chad. Human Rights Watch reports that women and children are being raped, villages are razed to the ground, and the people are deliberately stripped of essential resources. The United Nations estimates that 1.2 million Sudanese have fled their homes. The dislocation has precipitated a humanitarian crisis: men, women and children seeking refuge in rudimentary camps are finding only death by malnutrition, disease and starvation.

Bashir has repeatedly denied that a campaign of “ethnic cleansing” is underway. He insists that the Sudanese army is attempting to restore order following rebellions led by the Sudanese Liberation Army. The SLA, which emerged in February 2003, challenged the oppressive policies of the regime and demanded greater autonomy from the central government. In response, Bashir launched a campaign whereby his army and the Janjaweed collaborate to crush dissent and to decimate the population.

World leaders have been tepid in their response. The most vociferous calls for action have come from the United States. On April 7, 2004, President George W. Bush insisted that the Sudanese government “must immediately stop local militias from committing atrocities against the local population and must provide unrestricted access to humanitarian aid agencies.” During a telephone conversation, President Bush also relayed this message directly to Bashir. However, the killing continues and the Sudanese government is still impeding

humanitarian relief. The Bush administration has thus far been unable to provide effective leadership for it is too busy fighting its own war on terror and preparing for an impending election.

And it is no surprise that European nations are either passive or an obstacle to decisive action. The European Union has condemned the Sudanese government. However, none of the individual European governments have publicly adopted the cause or exerted their influence in the region. Worse still, many EU members prefer to keep the matter silent for fear that forceful denunciations of the NIF will sabotage existing peace negotiations — talks aimed at settling the conflict in southern Sudan. It appears that for European leaders, the genocide and ethnic cleansing that took place in their own backyard during World War II and in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990’s is already a distant memory. Once again, their first instinct is to turn to the facile and foolish policy of attempting to appease evil.

Likewise, leaders of African nations have not been stirred to passionate action by the suffering of their brethren. Individual African nations have made few if any public pronouncements. The African Union has indeed been involved in peace negotiations, but these have not materialized in a cessation of hostilities. The AU has thus far been ineffectual in securing the necessary resources to monitor a ceasefire agreement that was established on April 8, 2004 and which broke down shortly thereafter. They have pledged to send 60 ceasefire monitors and 300 troops — a token gesture not likely to succeed. Thus, the fighting continues unabated.

The crisis in Darfur must be addressed immediately by the international community. Bashir and many in his entourage should be condemned as war criminals, seized by Interpol and brought to trial. Relief agencies must enter the Sudan as quickly as possible. At stake in this conflict are not only countless lives, but also the very reputation of the United Nations as a viable institution for the preservation of international law. In 2003, the U.N.



appeared to be little more than a coffee-house for chatter amongst world leaders: it had issued numerous resolutions condemning Saddam Hussein prior to the Iraq war and yet still failed to take action. Since then, the international community has also been entirely ineffectual in halting the genocide in Chechnya. Can the U.N. survive another debacle?

Ultimately, however, citizens within Western societies must put pressure on their leaders to halt the Janjaweed’s murderous crusade. The African diaspora can be influential: they should imitate the Jewish, Irish, Cuban and Arab diasporas who consistently bring international attention to issues pertaining to their respective country of origin. After the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the nations of the world pledged “never again.” Yet a decade later, African blood flows profusely. How will we be judged by future generations for this colossal failure to prevent another humanitarian catastrophe in a continent whose inhabitants have already suffered too much? ☪

— Grace Vuoto is the foreign policy editor of *The Ripon Forum* and a professor of history at Howard University

Remembering the Gipper Ronald Reagan's lasting legacy

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

The death of President Ronald Reagan triggered an outpouring of grief among Americans. For ten days the media was saturated with countless talking heads and former Reagan staffers expounding on the reasons for his success as president. And, with a few notable exceptions, most of them were way off the mark.

After years of disparaging Reagan's policies, Liberal media types were at a loss to explain his enduring appeal. Many such as Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw and Peter Jennings credited the Gipper's popularity to his "optimism," his Irish "sense of humor" or his "comforting image."

Of course, he possessed these attributes — they were indeed part of his larger-than-life persona which captivated so many in this country and abroad. But Reagan's immense impact on the course of American and world history had little to do with his genial outlook or his penchant for witty remarks (although he could be devastating with a sharp quip, as Walter Mondale found out in the famous 1984 presidential debate). Rather, Reagan's political success was based on a more fundamental virtue: he spoke the truth on the seminal issues of his time. To Americans weary of the cynicism and lies of the post-Vietnam, post-Watergate era, his commitment to speaking truth to power made Reagan the preeminent statesman of the late 20th century.

Upon assuming office in 1981, Reagan set about reversing America's decline. His domestic agenda of tax cuts, deregulation and a tighter monetary policy were responsible for the economic boom of the 1980s. By the end of his second term, his policies tamed inflation, controlled the runaway growth of government and created nearly 20 million jobs. By 1990 the U.S. economy had grown by a third — literally, the size of Germany. It was this spectacular economic expansion that enabled Reagan to finance the military build-up that eventually bankrupted the Soviet Union.

The centerpiece of his economic program was slashing income tax rates. When he came to power, the highest marginal rate was 70 percent. When he left office, it was



David Hume Kemerly/Getty Images

U.S. President Ronald Reagan in Washington, DC, 1983.

28 percent. Like President John F. Kennedy before him, Reagan understood that tax cuts stimulate the economy; a rising tide does indeed lift all boats. Today, his legacy continues as members of both parties acknowledge that cutting taxes is crucial to rewarding hard work, encouraging creativity and attracting investment. Democrats and Republicans disagree about the types of tax cuts needed, how deep they should go and their targets. But they no longer argue about the basic merits of the policy.

Yet the Gipper's greatest impact was in foreign policy. Reagan's genius was that he understood the nature of the Cold War: Soviet communism was morally and ideologically bankrupt. Rotting from the inside and economically backward, it only needed to be pushed to collapse under its own weight. Reagan set about pushing it into the dustbin of history.

He assaulted the Soviet Union's moral foundations by denouncing its totalitarian political system and its domination of Eastern Europe. Despite being ridiculed by the liberal intelligentsia for his supposedly simplistic, binary view of the world, he per-

sisted in referring to the Soviet Union by its appropriate name: the "evil empire." Lenin and Stalin perpetuated the greatest system of mass murder in history — one which we now know slaughtered over 60 million people and imprisoned countless victims in slave labor camps.

Reagan rallied the West — along with Pope John Paul II and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher — to stand up to Communist tyranny: he challenged its claims of moral superiority. He therefore changed the course of history precisely because he was determined to change it. As early as 1981, in his famous speech at Notre Dame, he predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union. He called Communism "a sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages are even now being written." A year later he told the British House of Commons that "the march of freedom" and democracy "will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history."

Reagan harnessed America's might in order to put the economic and military screws into the Soviet empire. He sent vital assistance to the Afghan rebels (including Stinger missiles), thus bogging down the Russian invasion; he supported Nicaragua's anti-communist guerillas in their struggle against the Moscow-backed Marxist regime; he championed Poland's Solidarity Movement; he ordered U.S. forces to overthrow Grenada's communist government; he installed Pershing missiles in Europe in the face of massive peace protests, thereby shifting the balance of power on the Continent against the Soviets; and finally, he seized the opportunity to wind down the Cold War after Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev embraced *perestroika* and *glasnost*. The result was that in 1989, a year after leaving office, the Berlin Wall fell. A short time later the Soviet Union itself imploded.

Ultimately, the Gipper was a great president because he was a great man. He was a visionary who was not afraid to speak the truth about the evil nature of Soviet totalitarianism. His lasting legacy is that he expanded the sphere of human freedom and peace not only in America, but around the world. For this he will be remembered as the most consequential president of the 20th century. ☞

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