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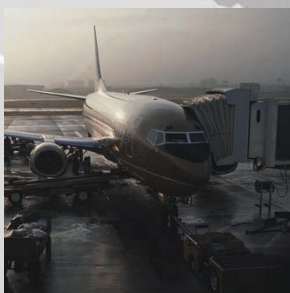
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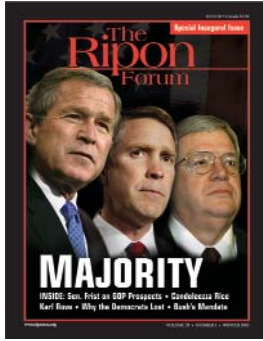
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Contents

VOLUME 39 • NUMBER I • WINTER 2005

4 **Note From the Executive Director**

POLITICS

5 **The Permanent Republican Majority** - by Richard S. Kessler

6 **Personnel Strategy for the Second Term**

- by Les T. Csorba

7 **Why the Democrats Lost** - by Robert Stacy McCain

COVER STORY

10 **Bush's Mandate** - by Donald Lambro

12 **Sex, Lies and the Democrats** - by Patrick M. Garry

14 **Condi Rice: An American Triumph** - by Grace Vuoto

17 **Karl Rove: The Architect** - by Stephen F. Manfredi

INTERVIEW

18 **The Upcoming Republican Agenda**

- Interview with Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist

CAPITOL FORUM

20 **Saving Social Security** - by Rep. Mark Foley

21 **The Great Civilizer** - by Sen. Chuck Grassley

22 **Increasing Our Oil Supply** - by Rep. Joe Barton

23 **Republican History Lights the Way** - by Rep. Tom Petri

PUBLIC POLICY

24 **The Growing Hispanic Vote** - by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

25 **Why I Left the Democrats** - by John Marino

26 **Make Use of Prison Labor** - by Robert D. Atkinson

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

27 **Angry Canucks** - by Rachel K. Ayerst

29 **After Arafat** - by Frederick Krantz



Note From The Executive Director



On behalf of *The Ripon Society*, I welcome President George W. Bush to his second term of office over our fair land. Likewise, *Ripon* is pleased to announce the swearing in of the 109th Congress. We are hopeful that these forthcoming years will be marked by efficient compromise and forward progress.

When asked if he would rather be Achilles or Homer, ancient Athenian soldier and statesman, Themistocles, responded rhetorically: “Which would you rather be – a conqueror in the Olympic games, or the crier that proclaims we are conquerors?” *The Ripon Forum* staff is far from Olympian, but we are very pleased to proclaim our extremely accurate 2004 election predictions – kudos to election issue contributors Donald Lambro, John Hood, Stephen F. Manfredi, and Rep. Tom Reynolds (R-NY) for their educated wagers. To review our picks, read previous issues of *The Forum* at www.riponsoc.org. And, for a post-election retrospective, enjoy University of South Dakota law professor Patrick Garry’s piece on why the Democrats lost in November and their party’s current state of crisis.

Three articles with particular relevance to *Ripon* grace this issue. First, Rep. Tom Petri (R-WI), whose district encompasses the birthplace of the GOP in Ripon, Wisconsin, offers his support of the party’s enduring principles first set forth in 1854.

Second, Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Joe Barton (R-TX) discusses the need to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) for domestic oil drilling. Yes, conservation of natural resources is a *Ripon* hallmark. But, this relatively small drilling project, which will bear millions of gallons of home-grown oil if managed correctly, will provide for domestic energy reserves while having minimal impact on the environment. Just ask the burgeoning elk and moose populations one sees huddled around the warm Trans-Alaskan Pipeline. Disagree? Visit independent surveyors at www.tapseis.anl.gov.

Third, Cuban-born Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) discusses harnessing the emerging power of the Hispanic vote in our country. By casting 8 percent of the votes in the 2004 election, Hispanics ranked strongly between the African-American (11%) and Asian-American (2%) voting populace. Both African-American and Hispanic voters increased numbers by one percent over 2000.

Growing our party’s diversity through educational efforts at an even faster pace is a mandate for *Ripon*. Thus, the first in our four part series called “Why I’m a Republican” debuts in this issue. Four regular people from four different ethnic backgrounds have been asked to share their reasons for associating with the GOP in an effort to demonstrate the rarely reported (and rapidly growing) diversity of our party. Part One: an Italian-American gentleman chronicles his conversion from labor union Democrat to pro-business Republican.

An exciting vision for *The Ripon Society* is beginning to come to light. During 2005 we are determined to continue to grow our general membership throughout the United States. So often we find that regular people identify with our conservative fiscal politics and our moderate social agenda. In fact, it’s truly the only area for potential growth within our party – the Right has a lock on the Republican vote, and likewise, the Democrats control the Left. The moderate middle is the home of *The Ripon Society*, and the hope for the GOP’s continued growth.

Let’s increase the size and scope of our “Big Tent.” Become a member of *The Ripon Society* today at www.riponsoc.org.

Best regards,

Elvis Oxley
Executive Director
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The Permanent Republican Majority

Only a 'Big Tent' party can control Congress

By Richard S. Kessler

President George W. Bush's re-election victory gives Republicans a unique opportunity to forge a national majority coalition for decades to come.

President Bush not only defeated his Democratic challenger, Senator John Kerry, by a decisive margin, but the GOP widened their majorities in the House and Senate. Clearly, the Bush team, along with the Republican National Committee, ran an effective and highly disciplined campaign. Karl Rove, whom the President has dubbed the "architect," executed a brilliant strategy aimed at mobilizing voter turnout. Also, Republican candidates returned to an old-fashioned "door-to-door" style of campaigning.

Yet Republicans need to make sure that the victories of 2004 are not simply the product of a one-time, well-executed ground game, which is followed by a succession of defeats. This is why Republicans need to understand the fundamental reason for their triumph in November: They are the party of the "Big Tent." President Bush won by reaching out to a broad range of voters – corporate America, farmers, blue-collar workers, Hispanics, Jews, African-Americans, urban ethnics, suburbanites and so-called "security moms."

Although much has been made in the media about the importance of "moral values" and the evangelical Christian vote in 2004, the fact is that the GOP could not have won by relying only on one segment of the electorate. More importantly, the Republicans cannot hope to win future elections, or maintain their grip on Congress, if they become a single-interest party.

Moreover, it is only by maintaining their broad coalition can the GOP deliver on President Bush's key initiatives for his second term. The President has proposed a sweeping agenda, such as Social Security reform, overhaul of the tax code and bringing democracy to Iraq. If implemented, these initiatives will transform domestic politics and the Middle East.

In order to achieve these goals, however, President Bush will need the support not only of moderates in his party, but of

"It is important for Republicans to remember that the party's greatness, going all the way back to Lincoln, lies in its openness and diversity. The GOP has become a national party precisely because it represents a broad array of regions, ideas and interests."

centrist Democrats. Hence, he cannot – and should not – veer too far to the Right. Any such move risks polarizing the political process. President Bush would be wise to appeal to major Republican constituencies led by the likes of California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rudy Giuliani and Senator John McCain. By gravitating to the political middle, the administration will be able to garner the necessary votes in Congress (especially, in the Senate, where legislation often gets bottled-up) for private pension accounts and some kind of simplification of the tax code.

The President needs to continue being bold. His political base may be on the conservative end of the ideological spectrum, but he needs to appeal to the majority of the electorate, which is closer to the center. Voters have given President Bush and his party a strong mandate because they want, and fully expect, pragmatic solutions on key issues affecting their lives. Polls consistently show that Americans are mainly concerned with the economy, national security, education and health care. The Republicans need to stake their claim on these bread-and-butter issues. And there is no better way to do so than to pass meaningful legislation, which has the support of most Americans.

The stakes could not be higher. A major reason why Congressional Democrats suffered heavy losses in November is because the electorate is fed up with obstructionism. Democrats would be wise to remember this, especially regarding the President's judicial appointments. Moreover, the Democratic Party is ill-defined and unable to connect with ordinary voters.

Voters recall that, for much of the 1990s, Republicans in Congress were able to pass some major pieces of legislation even though a Democrat, Bill Clinton, occupied the presidency. The most consequential was welfare reform, which contributed to the decade's economic boom and transformed the federal government's relationship with the states. Now that the GOP controls both the White House and Congress, the electorate rightly expects results.

If Republicans are able to pass the President's agenda, voters will richly reward them – just as they rewarded the GOP the last time it was the country's majority party during the era of William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt and Calvin Coolidge. However, if Republicans get mired in legislative paralysis or political extremism, then voters will punish them in the 2006 midterm elections. In short, for the GOP, it is all or nothing.

Hence, it is important for Republicans to remember that the party's greatness, going all the way back to Lincoln, lies in its openness and diversity. The GOP has become a national party precisely because it represents a broad array of regions, ideas and interests. Its strength is that it is an inclusive party, which is truly a "Big Tent" for those committed to the Republican principles of limited government, equality of opportunity for all and a vigorous foreign policy. By sticking to this strategy of strength through diversity, Republicans will ensure that they remain America's party for decades to come. ☞

— Richard S. Kessler is the president of *The Ripon Society*



Personnel Strategy for the Second Term

Bush assembles principled and cohesive team

By Les T. Csorba

As with ships, so with men; He who turns his back to the foe gives him an advantage; whereas our ribbed chests, like the ribbed bows of a frigate, are as bulkheads to dam an onset.

Herman Melville, *White Jacket*

At a summit of leaders held in Chile soon after the Republican Party’s historic victory last November, President George W. Bush pulled his lead Secret Service agent away from stubborn Chilean security officials, straightened his agent’s shirt cuffs, and calmly returned to business. It was hard to miss the symbolism of the moment. Great leaders do not stand by and allow chaos on their watch.

Remarkable leaders throughout history have often been transformational, not transactional. They have been “leaders with chests” as Melville might have phrased it. For example, President Abraham Lincoln was steadfast in unifying the nation and signing the Emancipation Proclamation; British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was determined to safeguard Western civilization from tyranny; and President Ronald Reagan was indomitable in his quest to bring the Soviet empire to its knees and to secure victory in the Cold War.

And now President Bush has assumed the mantle of audacious leadership. He is resolute in advancing democracy and freedom in the Middle East; cornering, suffocating and killing terrorists around the globe; and building an “ownership society” at home.

The media elites and Beltway pundits who thought (and perhaps hoped) that the President might coast, sell-out, pander, or simply revel in his electoral triumph, are still not acquainted with the man. For President Bush is intensely competitive and determined to achieve his goals. Here is a president who is not enamored by pomp and circumstance.

Instead, President Bush’s sole satisfaction comes from rising to the challenges of the moment and securing results. The President’s personnel strategy for his second term reflects this. Counseled by students of history – such as senior political advisor Karl Rove and the elder President George H.W. Bush who served by President Reagan’s side – our current leader knows that second-term presidents have little time to act. Perhaps they have a year, or maybe two.

Yet, the demands upon President Bush continue to increase: Iraq, nuclear tension in Iran and North Korea, genocide in the Sudan, the War on Terror, transforming Social Security, making changes to Medicare and enacting tax reform. The President must therefore act quickly.

In order to fulfill his goals in the time allotted, the President needs a reliable team. President Bush has correctly grasped that people are policy. Some of his most trusted counselors have therefore been appointed to new positions in the Cabinet. Alberto Gonzales is going to the Justice Department; Condoleezza Rice to the State Department; and Margaret Spellings to Education. President Bush also implored his steady Chief of Staff, Andy Card, to remain in his service.

Some conservatives have expressed concern that none of these confidants are ideological and, are perhaps, too enamored with the President. However, President Bush’s selection reflects his eagerness to accomplish great things – and fast.

President Bush possesses the two most important elements of transformational

leadership: a sound moral compass and organizational skills that produce tangible results. In order to implement his ideas, President Bush has ensured that his advisers share the overall direction of his domestic and foreign policy.

Furthermore, like any CEO of a corporation, President Bush – who has earned an MBA – knows that cohesiveness is indispensable to performance-oriented leadership. He has therefore assembled a well-integrated team, without sacrificing the unique contributions that each individual can make. Contrary to the skeptics, each of his strong-minded advisors will differ, and are indeed close enough to him to speak their minds freely.

My advice to the elite chattering classes who are hoping that the President sell-out his conservative principles: Don’t hold your breath. Unlike his recent political opponent, this man shows none of the double-mindedness that results in perpetual vacillation. President Bush will reach out, but not outside the strictures of his compass.

Instead, due to wise appointments of personnel, his second term may prove to be even more remarkable than the first. After all, ideas remain abstractions, unless of course, one has trusted friends in high places who can help convert these principles into reality. President Bush has the organizational pragmatism of a leader who can get things done; he also has the “ribbed chest” – or moral steadfastness – of a commander who knows he can count on the allegiance of his crew as he steers his frigate to dam the onset. ☞

— Les Csorba, a former White House senior advisor in the George H.W. Bush administration, and partner with the world’s largest executive search firm, is the author of “TRUST: The One Thing that Makes or Breaks a Leader” (Nelson, 2004)



Why the Democrats Lost

Kerry snatched defeat from the jaws of victory

By Robert Stacy McCain

Nov. 2, 2004, was an Election Day that the media elite had declared would be a referendum on “the wrong war at the wrong time” in Iraq and “the worst economy since Herbert Hoover.” But to the mortification of liberals everywhere, the Republicans secured the presidency and won majorities in the House and Senate.

Liberal pundits immediately went into crisis mode. The Culture War was back, they assumed, and Democrats were on the losing end. Garry Wills and *New York Times* columnists Thomas Friedman and Maureen Dowd even united in declaring that America was in the grips of a fundamentalist “jihad.”

As panic gave way to despair, liberals were in denial about the meaning of their defeat, or even the reality of defeat. Denial led some to claim that Democrats were victims of a diabolical scheme involving electronic voting machines (the same machines Democrats had insisted on after the “hanging chad” mess of 2000).

Many Republicans watching this hysterical Democratic meltdown must have been tempted to intervene and add a few words of sane analysis about the problems and prospects of the Democratic Party, but

• An election in which the winner gets 51 percent of the vote to the loser’s 48 percent share is hardly a disaster for the loser. It only seemed that way to Democrats because polls in the weeks leading up to the election had indicated some hope of a Kerry victory. This hope had intensified on Election Day when early exit polls falsely forecast a Democratic surge. As those few Democrats who weren’t completely traumatized by the election pointed out, a shift of less than 70,000 votes in Ohio — out of the nearly 120 million Americans who went to the polls — would have been enough to put Senator John Kerry in the White House.

• John Kerry actually did better than might have been expected, given that he challenged an incumbent president who had been commander-in-chief during military victories in Afghanistan and Iraq, at a time of general economic prosperity. Of course, the Kerry campaign was largely based upon distorting the Bush record, suggesting that Iraq was “another Vietnam” and that the economy was moribund, but neither of these claims

was entirely inappropriate. And while economic growth was not as robust as many might wish, the unemployment rate on Election Day 2004 was the same as it had been when President Bill Clinton won re-election in 1996. To win in 2004, Democrats had to convince Americans that victory was defeat and that recovery was recession. President George W. Bush had the natural advantages of incumbency, and it simply was not a good year for the challengers.

• Despite a political situation that generally favored the incumbent, the Democrats still might have defeated President Bush had it not been for Mr. Kerry’s intrinsic limitations as a candidate. All candidates commit goofs and gaffes, but Mr. Kerry was a gold mine. He touted his status as a decorated Vietnam War veteran as a major qualification for the presidency, and Democrats made his service aboard Navy “swift boats” the centerpiece of their convention. But if this was to have been Mr. Kerry’s trump card against President Bush — whom

Democrats derided as a pro-war “chicken hawk” who had never seen combat — it backfired in the most spectacular fashion when a group of Mr. Kerry’s fellow veterans denounced him as a liar and a traitor. Especially because of his anti-war activities in the 1970s, Mr. Kerry’s Vietnam record proved to be far more of a

liability than an asset.

And while Mr. Kerry turned in strong performances in his three debates with President Bush, the Democrat otherwise ran a lousy campaign. He had a knack for providing sound bites that were useful to his opponents, as when he famously declared that he voted for an \$87 million military funding bill before he

“To win in 2004, Democrats had to convince Americans that victory was defeat and that recovery was recession.”

bit their tongues lest they violate a basic rule of politics: When your opponent is in the process of destroying himself, get out of the way. Yet now that Democrats are recovering from the debilitating psychological condition that some therapists in November labeled “Post-Election Selection Trauma,” it might not hurt to observe that as bad as the Democrats’ 2004 defeat was, it wasn’t as bad as they imagined:

was true — and most voters knew it. From the first shot of the Iraq war, it was only three weeks before Americans watched live on TV as U.S. Marines toppled a statue of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in downtown Baghdad. Although postwar attacks in Iraq by regime holdouts and foreign terrorists had been deadly, sensible voters could see that the Vietnam analogy

“The Great Panic of ‘04 was good while it lasted, but by Thanksgiving, Democrats were showing signs of rationality. For one thing, they jettisoned Terry McAuliffe as head of the Democratic National Committee. Mr. McAuliffe was always an exceptional fundraiser, but as a political tactician he seemed tone-deaf to the concerns and sensibilities of Middle America.”

voted against it. His wealthy, eccentric wife was a campaign liability. Also, Mr. Kerry blundered into a “Dukakis in a tank” moment when he suited up in camouflage for an Ohio duck hunt that gun-owners (who were the object of this photo-op ploy) immediately recognized as a shameless political stunt.

Had the Democrats chosen a candidate with a more personable wife, a less troublesome record, and better political instincts, it might have made a difference in an election where the popular vote margin was just 3 percentage points.

- Finally, despite hallucinations of a Christian fundamentalist “jihad” in the minds of op-ed pundits, the fact that 22 percent of voters told pollsters in exit polls that “moral values” were the most important issue is not quite the cultural earthquake it has been made out to be. The term “moral values” is vague. It is certainly unlikely that 22 percent of Americans voted to impose a right-wing Christian theocracy on the nation, as the likes of Maureen Dowd, Tina Brown and Garry Wills suggest. Honesty, fairness, patriotism — these are all moral qualities, and it may be that some voters meant to tell pollsters that they considered these criteria in evaluating the candidates. But whatever “moral values” means, and despite its spot atop

the list of issues that swayed voters, 78 percent cited other issues as more important to them. So pundits’ panicked cries about an incipient GOP Taliban regime were an irrational reaction to a single statistic in an exit poll.

Despite these rational arguments against Democratic despair, Republicans kept quiet. After all, what is dearer to the hearts of Republicans than the sight of defeated Democrats in abject panic? That panic took many forms:

Contempt - “If militant Christian Republicans from inland backwaters believe that secular liberal Democrats from the big coastal cities look upon them with disdain, there’s a reason. We do, and all the more so after this election,” declared left-wing cartoonist Ted Rall. “By any objective standard, you had to be spectacularly stupid to support Bush.”

Nostalgia - Democrats have “no alternative but to return to the idealism, boldness and generosity of spirit that marked the presidencies of FDR and JFK and the short-lived presidential campaign of Bobby Kennedy,” ex-GOP member Arianna Huffington declared in *Salon.com*, without even hinting what sort of policies this might involve.

Style - “Vision without details beats details without vision,” explained *Slate.com*’s Chris Suellentrop, one of several

analysts to see Mr. Kerry’s defeat as largely a matter of tone and style. His colleague William Saletan suggested that Mr. Kerry was just too nuanced for stupid American voters: “Think about the simplicity of everything Bush says and does. He gives the same speech every time. His sentences are short and clear. ... What Kerry lacked was simplicity. Bush had one message; Kerry had dozens. Bush had one issue; Kerry had scores.”

Exile - “I’m going to apply for an Irish passport,” novelist Jay McInerney told *Salon*.

The Great Panic of ‘04 was good while it lasted, but by Thanksgiving, Democrats were showing signs of rationality. For one thing, they jettisoned Terry McAuliffe as head of the Democratic National Committee. Mr. McAuliffe was always an exceptional fundraiser, but as a political tactician he seemed tone-deaf to the concerns and sensibilities of Middle America.

Confronted with the spectacle of Democrats in disarray, it might be tempting for Republicans to write off the opposition as permanently doomed to defeat. It is a dangerous temptation. The Democrats could mount a major comeback, if only they would....

Oh, never mind. Let’s not give them any extra help. It’s too much fun watching them try to figure it out on their own. ☹

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

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Bush's Mandate

President proposes ambitious agenda

By Donald Lambro

President George W. Bush has charted an ambitious, precedent-setting domestic agenda for the country over the next four years that, even if he is modestly successful, would assure his place as one of the most influential presidents in modern history.

At the top of this far-reaching agenda is a proposal that dwarfs virtually any economic or social issue since the Great Depression: partially privatizing the last pillar of the New Deal welfare state, Social Security.

To say this is a bold, high risk, visionary idea is a vast understatement. It would begin a sweeping restructuring of the federal government's largest program, replacing its Ponzi scheme financing with a self-financing system based on real capital assets that Americans would own, control and could leave behind to their heirs.

President Bush's proposal is something conservatives and diehard libertarians have pushed for decades, but without success: letting younger workers voluntarily invest a portion of their payroll taxes in highly diversified stock and bond funds that would provide them with a much higher yield than the paltry 1 to 2 percent returns most get now. Over time, this reform would turn tens of millions of lower and middle income workers into owners of the nation's economy, providing them with a huge stake in America's growing wealth.

In the past, even suggesting the idea was politically suicidal. But when then-candidate George W. Bush ran on it in 2000, millions of younger voters were drawn to it and the Texas governor emerged victorious. Losing little time, President Bush appointed a bipartisan presidential commission, headed by then-Democratic Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, to come up with options for implementing the plan. The idea suffered a temporary setback in the wake of 9/11. But the idea proved to be a winner again when President Bush campaigned for it even more vigorously in the 2004 election, winning by nearly four million votes. Now he could say that he had a mandate for change, and Social Security reform immedi-

ately became the No. 1 priority on his domestic agenda.

No sooner were the election results in, than the White House began a series of briefings and strategy sessions with reform advocates from the Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institution and a broad range of business and industry leaders who have banded together to lobby for the idea.

Personal Retirement Accounts

Several developments have come out of these closed-door meetings, according to advisers who have participated. First, senior White House officials want to move quickly while President Bush has plenty of political momentum coming out of his re-election victory. Second, people who have attended these meetings tell me that the President's advisers are looking into Social Security personal retirement accounts that would be larger than the puny 2 percent plans usually linked to President Bush's idea, perhaps up to 4 percentage points of payroll taxes.

"The mainstream media is not clued in on this yet; they're still talking about having 2 percent accounts. I think there is a strong possibility that the White House is considering larger accounts," said Michael Tanner, the Cato Institute's Social Security analyst who has been in on the meetings.

"I think it would be a larger account than 2 percentage points [of the 12.4 percent payroll tax] up to a certain dollar amount of income," said another think tank official who has briefed administration advisers.

The plans being discussed are still fluid, but glimmers of what they may look like when the White House sends up its proposals in early 2005 are beginning to leak out.

"They're talking about a Social Security personal retirement plan carved out of payroll taxes whose structure will be similar to the federal retirement system," said another participant in the meetings.

It isn't widely known, but all federal workers, including every member of Congress, many of whom oppose President Bush's idea, are allowed to choose from a

variety of retirement plans that invest in stocks, bonds, fixed-interest funds and even overseas securities.

It is unlikely that the President will send a full-fledged plan to Capitol Hill, preferring instead to submit a detailed outline of what he wants and then let Congress work out the details.

What are its chances? They are pretty good, if it is done quickly. But any plan of this magnitude is going to have to appeal to some Democrats, especially in the Senate, to overcome a filibuster that would require 60 votes to cut off.

GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who is pushing a plan of his own, tells me he has talked to a handful of Democrats who tell him that they are open to President Bush's idea under the right financing circumstances.

Another reason to be optimistic about its chances: Polls show strong support among a majority of workers, especially younger ones, and that support crosses just about all political, income and racial lines. Even the AARP, the nation's largest senior citizens lobby group, does not oppose the idea of investment accounts as long as the transition costs do not come out of the Social Security system.

The chairmen of the House and Senate tax-writing committees previously have supported partial privatization plans. Rep. Bill Thomas, California Republican and chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, has sponsored legislation that would have allowed workers to invest half of their payroll tax. Sen. Charles Grassley, Iowa Republican and chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, has co-sponsored a 2 percent personal retirement plan.

The biggest hurdle will be solving the transition costs which range from \$1 trillion to \$8 trillion over 30 years or more, depending on the size of the accounts. But whatever the costs, they will in the long-run be far cheaper than the \$27 trillion in unfunded liability that taxpayers will have to pay if nothing is done to change the system which faces bankruptcy in 15 to 30 years.

Mr. Graham wants to raise the \$87,900 income cap on payroll taxes to \$150,000 which would cover its transition costs, an idea that the White House opposes right now. The President, Mr. Graham told me, "is going to have to accept non-traditional Republican concepts to solve this problem."

"It's like paying off your credit card. You are a lot better off if you pay down your cred-

it card debt. You save a lot of money in the long run, but of course you have to come up with the money today and that's not always easy," said Derrick Max, executive director of the Alliance for Worker Retirement Security, a business coalition lobbying for the President's plan.

Speed will be of the essence, say reform advocates. "We've got a six month window here to do this, because after that everyone will be focusing on the 2006 [congressional] elections. We need to be bold and we need to be quick," Mr. Graham said.

Tax Reform

After tackling Social Security, tax reform should be a piece of cake. The question is: can you do both in the same year? No, say the administration tax reform advisers. "I'm not sure you can do both in the same year but you can do both in the same term," said Stanford University economist John Cogan, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution who has been the administration's fix-it man on a broad range of economic and fiscal issues.

President Bush, looking to flesh out his campaign agenda, announced relatively late in the election year that he would simplify the federal tax system in his second term. His advisers said that this could include structural changes in the IRS tax code to make it more pro-growth. That could mean eliminating corporate tax loopholes – otherwise known as "corporate welfare" – so that by broadening the tax base, President Bush could seek deeper tax reductions to encourage more personal savings, investment and economic growth.

Unlike Social Security, where full-blown reform options produced by a bipartisan presidential commission are already on the table, President Bush doesn't have a plan ready to go on tax reform. He is expected to appoint a blue ribbon panel to examine what changes are needed to simplify the code and make it more pro-growth. But recommendations will not be ready for another six months at best, possibly not until the end of the year.

Could President Bush propose something more radical such as replacing the tax code with a flat tax or a national sales tax? Unlikely, say top advisers who helped President Bush craft his 2001 tax cut plans. They do not believe there is the kind of political support out there to pass either idea.

"He'd be better off going for a broader tax base and reducing the tax rates even fur-

ther, no matter how much more complex that makes the code," said Martin Anderson, a Hoover Institution analyst who was President Ronald Reagan's chief domestic adviser and served on President Bush's 2000 tax reform team.

The emerging timeline suggests that tax reform will not be tackled until 2006 at the earliest, just as President Reagan did two years after his 1984 landslide reelection victory. President Reagan was less interested in simplifying the tax code than in lowering the tax rates. A lot of special credits, deductions and other loopholes were cut and President Reagan got a revenue-neutral reform bill that brought the top personal income tax rate down to 28 percent.

That could be President Bush's goal as well. President Reagan had the help of Democrats like Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri and Sen. Bill Bradley of New Jersey, both of whom also wanted lower rates to spur economic expansion and new business formation. But President Bush has stronger Republican majorities in the House and Senate that will make getting a bill through Congress that much easier.

Health Care

President Bush will push for the expansion of health care savings accounts and seek tax deductions for insurance premiums for high-deductible plans, regardless of whether taxpayers itemize or not. He wants assistance, up to \$2,000, for low income families to help pay health insurance premiums and up to \$1,000 for health care savings accounts to help with out-of-pocket expenses.

The heart of his health care reform plan, however, is limiting malpractice lawsuits. This reform still faces huge procedural hurdles in the Senate where Democrats, who were heavily supported by the trial lawyer industry in last year's campaign, will fight it tooth and nail.

Yet none of these health care proposals on President Bush's agenda come close to matching the long-term political, social and economic impact of his Social Security reforms, which would mark the end of an era in central planning.

From the Democrats' point of view, the growing popularity of President Bush's Social Security plan "is the most frightening, if people no longer believe Democrats when they say that Social Security will be there for you and a collective government program is the best way to provide for your future," Walter Russell Mead, a senior fellow at the Council

on Foreign Relations, told the *San Francisco Chronicle* late last year.

"When you find more and more younger voters thinking that individual accounts and the stock market — and this is after the tech bust — offer more security than a government program ... Democrats might be losing the economic argument as well as the social policy argument," Mr. Mead said. ☞

— Donald Lambro is a nationally syndicated columnist

SCORING BUSH'S AGENDA

Social Security Reform

Opinion polls show letting workers invest part of their payroll taxes in stocks and bonds gets strong majorities among younger workers, cutting across just about every demographic group. Democrats, however, are overwhelmingly opposed to touching the Holy Grail of their party's New Deal agenda, though a handful of defections seem likely in the Senate.

Chances of passage:
Good to excellent

Tax Reform

Everyone in Congress condemns the insane complexity, huge compliance costs and inherent unfairness of the tax system. President Bush has said he seeks to simplify the tax code and make it more pro-growth. The President's call resonates with many taxpayers. But it is likely he will also include structural changes as well in the tax rates as part of a revenue-neutral overhaul, just as President Reagan did in his second term.

Chances of passage:
Excellent

Health Care

Everybody wants to broaden accessibility to health care, but outside of limiting malpractice lawsuits, this was not a central feature of President Bush's campaign agenda. Even larger health care savings accounts sought by the administration could get shot down in the cross-fire of competing health care agendas.

Chances of passage:
Not good



Sex, Lies and the Democrats

Party no longer represents mainstream America

By Patrick M. Garry

Senator John Kerry does not deserve all the criticism he has received from fellow Democrats. The loss in November was not entirely his fault. It was not the result of a failure to communicate Democratic ideas or values. In fact, there was no way Mr. Kerry could communicate the Democratic ideology because over the past three decades, that ideology has diverged sharply from the values of mainstream America.

Unlike the average American, the average delegate to the Democratic convention believed that: the United States was as much to blame for 9/11 as were the terrorists; gay marriage should not only be protected but encouraged; the United Nations is a more enlightened body for determining matters of national defense than is Congress; the Christian religion is a repressive superstition; Americans are inherently racist; Abu Ghraib is more reflective of the military than is the liberation of Afghanistan; and when it comes to truth and morals, everything is relative.

Given this disconnect in ideology, the Kerry campaign could hardly express a central message that would be palatable both to the party faithful and the independent voter. Instead, Mr. Kerry relied on an endless tirade of gripes about outsourcing, flu vaccines and the number of troops in Iraq. The pundits claim that the Democrats lost on two issues: values and national security. But both those issues stem from a common core – a Democratic ideology that is incompatible with the values of most Americans.

Liberalism in Crisis

Liberals view America through a lens of blame. Since the 1960s civil rights movement, Democrats came to see America as pervasively racist, rather than as a nation whose Constitution could heal the injustices of the past. During the Vietnam War, they maintained that America was a dangerous imperialist power rather than a defender of freedom for the South Vietnamese. And during the Watergate scandal, many liberals accused America of being as corrupt as Soviet-style dictatorships rather than as a democracy capable of holding its president accountable to the law.

In their speeches about 9/11, the Democrats rarely mention the terrorists. They talk about the failures of the FBI, the CIA, and of course President George W. Bush. But they cannot bring themselves to blame fanatical terrorists who hate the American way of life. Perhaps, this is because liberals themselves loathe that way of life. Singer Rickie Lee Jones expressed these sentiments when she said that the public displays of patriotism following 9/11 made “her skin crawl,” and that all the people waving flags resembled a mob of Nazis. Michael Moore conveyed similar thoughts when he remarked during a speech in France that Americans are the “dumbest” people on the planet. This single comment speaks volumes about liberal Democrats – people who are more at home in France than in America.

Mr. Kerry’s actions have long reflected this discomfort with America. In protesting the Vietnam War, he compared

American soldiers to Genghis Khan. In his 1971 testimony before the U.S. Senate, Mr. Kerry said that Asians feared American “imperialism” more than they did communism. During the 1980s, he claimed that President Ronald Reagan’s support of the democratic contras in Nicaragua displayed America’s moral weakness. And at the 1988 Democratic convention, he characterized America as a nation in “moral darkness.” But the most telling revelation of his view of America is the glowing introduction he wrote for a book of poetry by Langston Hughes, a Stalinist who described America as full of “rape and rot of graft and stealth, and lies,” and as a place where the “mighty crush the weak.”

Because of their harsh view of America, the Kerry Democrats were willing to inflict injury upon the nation’s institutions and credibility. And they were willing to do so merely for the sake of a political campaign. They continually discredited the very foundation of American democracy — the electoral system — by making unfounded allegations of voter discrimination. Democrats treated the voting process not as a communal civic act, but as a mere stage in the quest for power. They consistently predicted widespread electoral breakdown. In fact, the party announced weeks before the election that it would have “10,000 lawyers out in the battleground states on Election Day.”

‘Welcome to Ukraine’

To Democrats, the election was about promoting discontent, rather than fostering

national unity. A Kerry spokesperson said the campaign was prepared to fight “a scorched-earth World War III recount battle.” A party official vowed to “send SWAT teams out to fight these wars.” But contrary to all the accusations of disenfranchisement, the election occurred without any such problems. Even so, Democrats continued their assault on the integrity of America’s electoral system. A month after the election ended and their candidate had conceded defeat, the Kerry campaign sued for a recount in Ohio, alleging that various “irregularities” had robbed Mr. Kerry of the state. “Welcome to Ukraine,” said one Democrat at the announcement of the lawsuit.

Contrary to all their vociferous concern for electoral integrity, Democratic groups terrorized their opponents in ways usually seen only in underdeveloped democracies. Violence occurred at Republican campaign offices throughout the country: there were burglaries in Seattle and Spokane; break-ins at Flagstaff and Cincinnati; shots were fired into offices in Tennessee, West Virginia and Florida; offices in Montana, Ohio, Alaska and Illinois were vandalized; a swastika was burned into the lawn of a Wisconsin Bush supporter; a Republican chairperson was assaulted in his office in Gainesville; a group of Democrats stormed the Bush headquarters in Orlando, injuring several campaign workers; the tires of 30 cars were slashed at a Wisconsin GOP headquarters; and a mob of vandals broke windows and left vulgar messages at a North Carolina Republican office. Such was the result of the liberal promise to do “whatever it takes” to win the election.

The protests at the Republican Convention typified this liberal determination to resort to extreme measures to counteract their electoral rivals. Over 1,800 arrests were made – 1,300 more than occurred during the violent World Trade Organization protests in Seattle. Protestors jeered at police and called them “pigs.” Marauding protestors taunted convention delegates at restaurants and on sidewalks.

They tried to take over hotel lobbies. They even shut down traffic in Times Square. In one altercation, protestors brutally beat a police officer.



Photo by Rick Friedman/Corbis

John Kerry’s concession speech at Faneuil Hall in Boston.

Some Democrats were also willing to attack the very sovereignty of the United States. It should have disturbed Democrats when Europeans tried to interfere in the election by hinging their willingness to support America in Iraq on who won the presidency. Instead, Democrats actually welcomed this interference. They proudly repeated these European threats as if such statements bolstered Mr. Kerry’s credentials.

Loss of Moral Values

Liberalism has become a divisive ideology. During the campaign, Senator John Edwards spoke of 1950s-style segregation as if it was still a threat to contemporary America. He implied that nothing has changed since the days of the KKK night riders. And speaking to the Congressional

Black Caucus, Mr. Kerry said that President Bush was returning America to a segregationist age in which African-Americans would be greeted by a “Do not enter” sign on the White House door.

For decades, liberals have attacked the nation’s customs and moral values. They advocate a moral relativism, in which the question of what is moral or immoral becomes a matter of convenience or personal opinion. As Irving Kristol once poignantly noted, a liberal is someone who thinks it is permissible for an 18-year-old girl to perform in a porn film as long as she is paid the minimum wage.

Democrats often appear to be clueless regarding the meaning of moral values. Since they are often reluctant to admit a religious component, they sound like some shallow New Age guru – as Senator Bob Graham of Florida did when he said that Democratic values included “love” and a “concern for others.” Similarly, when Democrats criticized President Bush’s “values” during the campaign, they referred to how much vacation he took and to the slowness of the government’s prosecution of former Enron CEO Ken Lay.

Liberals often portray “moral values” as the bigoted intolerance of religious fanatics. They therefore cannot understand such larger issues as the continued coarsening of our culture. Some liberals are baffled at the public’s reaction to Hollywood celebrities. Mr. Kerry even referred to Hollywood as the “heart and soul of America.”

In their crusade against American traditions, Democrats demonstrate a staggering contempt for American citizens. The Democratic Party therefore harms its chances of securing electoral success. Moreover, this insensitive and disrespectful campaign against the values of many Americans assaults the very social bonds needed to sustain a nation as diverse as the United States. ☞

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“In their crusade against American traditions, Democrats demonstrate a staggering contempt for American citizens. The Democratic Party therefore harms its chances of securing electoral success.”



An American Triumph

Condi Rice is a success story – despite liberal attacks

By Grace Vuoto



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais

President Bush, right, looks on as National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, left, speaks to the press, after Bush announced that Rice was his choice as Secretary of State. Bush turned to his most trusted foreign policy adviser, Rice, to lead U.S. diplomacy during his second term, replacing Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Americans have cause to rejoice at the recent announcement that Condoleezza Rice, current national security adviser, is President George W. Bush's choice to be his Secretary of State in his second term. Democrats, Republicans and all ethnic groups can take tremendous pride at this historic breakthrough. Black females were forced to endure the humiliation of slavery, segregation and the dual stigma of gender and race; they are now penetrating the upper echelons of power.

Once her nomination is confirmed by the Senate, Ms. Rice will be the first African-American female to be appointed to the highest diplomatic post in the country. As the most prominent Cabinet member of the only superpower left on the globe, she will thus be the second most influential person in the world. This is a staggering achievement for a people who, just over a century-and-a-half ago, were often consid-

ered by their slave masters to be “less than human.”

Liberal Assault

However, many liberal pundits have acknowledged this historic moment only in tangential statements. Instead, writers for *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The New Statesman*, and many other publications have expressed dismay at the President's choice. They lament the end of the moderate and multilateralist influence of Collin Powell in Cabinet deliberations – even if his counsel was often ignored. In contrast, Ms. Rice is a fervent unilateralist. She is accused of being one of the prime culprits in the failure to forestall the 9/11 attacks. She is also portrayed as a pushover – one who will implement the President's dictates blindly, who cannot stand up to Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald

Rumsfeld and whose only criteria for office is that she appears to be a sycophantic mouthpiece for the President's ideas.

For example, in an article in *The New Statesman*, Andrew Stephen insists that she is “demonstrably incompetent” and has only one outstanding quality: “a fanatical devotion to Bush.” In *The Guardian*, former Clinton aide Sidney Blumenthal questions her credentials altogether when he writes that Ms. Rice has “failed at every important task as national security adviser.” William Pfaff writes in *The Charleston Gazette* that Ms. Rice “is weightless in Washington.” The liberal pundit seems to have lost all reason when he states that Ms. Rice is “a specialist in an academic subject no longer of interest, the Soviet Union.” He even implies that she has great difficulty distinguishing between deposed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and former Soviet strongman Joseph Stalin.

Many of these dismissive remarks do not withstand scrutiny. The responsibility for the failure to anticipate the 9/11 attacks must be borne by the nation as a whole (shortcomings of the previous administration, intelligence deficiencies, etc.). Furthermore, after the attacks on America, Ms. Rice showed the same steely resolve as President Bush; she was one of the most steadfast allies of the President at a time of national crisis. Nor is she a mindless groupie: Ms. Rice tutored President Bush in foreign policy during the 2000 campaign. Moreover, after 9/11, she demonstrated much flexibility and creativity; she reassessed her previous strictly realist view of foreign affairs and embraced new ideas for bold change in the Middle East. She helped to fashion and repeatedly reinforced the “Bush Doctrine” – the very winning strategy that has been endorsed by the nation in the last election.

The charges of “incompetence” and “docility” do not resonate. Ms. Rice was one of the most visible and articulate members of the administration in promoting the Iraq war. Americans saw time and again on national television that her knowledge of

contemporary events and her arguments in favor of the President's policy were both heartfelt and the mark of an independent, strong and intelligent woman. In fact, those who know her best within the administration call her the "Velvet Hammer."

These wild accusations about Ms. Rice's incompetence are perhaps an attempt to obscure how effective President Bush has been at surpassing the Democrats at their most cherished strategy: championing the cause of minorities. Since the 1960s, Democrats have used self-righteous rhetoric to portray themselves as the only party that cares for oppressed groups. It is nonetheless the GOP who has stolen the thunder for two of the most significant advances for African-Americans in the last quarter-century: the appointment of the first black secretary of state, Mr. Powell, and now the first female African-American secretary of state.

By nominating Ms. Rice, President Bush is ensuring that the GOP will continue in the tradition of Abraham Lincoln as being at the forefront of advancing the cause of African-Americans. Henceforth, every American textbook will have "Republican" alongside the explanation of how Mr. Powell and Ms. Rice rose to acclaim. If she should run for president – or even win the presidency in the future – it will be on the shoulders of a visionary President who placed her talents in the national spotlight.

Running for President in 2008?

During President Bush's second term, Ms. Rice will indeed face a plethora of mammoth challenges that will test her mettle. Foremost on the list: she must fight the war on terror, help ensure that democracy takes root in Iraq and find a way to gradually withdraw American troops. She must deal with the attempt to curtail the nuclear ambitions of Iran, Syria and North Korea. She may also have to revise her foreign policy slogan, "Punish France, ignore Germany, forgive Russia." The latter power is moving in an increasingly autocratic direction; her expertise in this area will be an invaluable asset.

We have seen that Ms. Rice can be an unflinching defender of the national interest, but in President Bush's second term she must now demonstrate that she can be a bridge-builder too. Early this year, President Bush has called for a meeting of European leaders: this will be an opportuni-

ty to address the tarnished relationship of the last four years. Also, negotiations on the Israel-Palestinian conflict will resume at a conference scheduled to occur in October: the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat presents an opportunity to bring stability to the region. Ms. Rice has the chance to make a lasting impact on issues that have overwhelmed many of her predecessors.

If Ms. Rice forges a legacy as a formidable secretary of state, she will be catapulted into the front ranks of contenders for the Republican nomination in 2008. As the shrewd analyst, Dick Morris, declared on *Fox News*, she has all the attributes to win both the nomination and the presidency in 2008. In fact, her candidacy can potentially be a nightmare incarnate for Democrats: Ms. Rice can appeal both to the evangelical and hawkish Republican base, to the moderates in the nation, to all minorities, to women and to business groups. Even the most idealistic liberal citizens will vote for her. They are not likely to squander the chance to elect both the first female and the first black as U.S. president; such opportunities occur perhaps once in a generation.

During the next four years, all eyes will therefore be on this new star on the horizon. Many Democrats are already sharpening their knives in an attempt to destroy her reputation before her momentum becomes unstoppable.

Is Rice a 'Race Traitor'?

While Ms. Rice is an outstanding choice as secretary of state, Republicans must nonetheless take heed of a potentially powerful assault on her character. Despite the historic and potentially long-term impact of this nomination, Ms. Rice is often lambasted by African-Americans. The chairman of the NAACP, Julian Bond, expressed his approval of a cartoon that depicted Ms. Rice as a "murderer." And the *Black Commentator*, a weekly magazine, labeled her as "the purest expression of race traitor." The latter is a charge that has consistently plagued Ms. Rice in her meteoric rise. Most African-Americans have not relished her success for she is perceived as one who is inattentive to their concerns and who may even be ashamed of her heritage.

It is difficult to imagine other minorities – such as Jews or Hispanics – being as merciless in their partisanship as African-Americans have been in assessing Ms. Rice. In similar circumstances, other minorities have exercised more restraint. For exam-

ple, regardless of their particular political convictions, Jews celebrated the appointment of Henry Kissinger as the first Jewish secretary of state. Furthermore, Catholics, both Democrat and Republican, rejoiced at the victory of John F. Kennedy when he became the first Catholic president of the United States. And Poles around the world were jubilant when Zbigniew Brzezinski was appointed as President Jimmy Carter's national security advisor. Many of those who have been persecuted understand that the triumph of one – even if offered as a token or a representation – marks progress for all within the oppressed group because the road is thereby paved for more radical future change.

Yet, Ms. Rice is resented by many African-Americans because in their view, her success is garnered by selling-out their culture to a "white establishment." This establishment, they maintain, refuses to fully acknowledge the historic wrongs inflicted on blacks. Moreover, blacks believe that the majority of Americans regard African-American culture as inferior. According to African-Americans, Ms. Rice has risen not in spite of being black, but because she is constantly in denial of it. Hence, her success is perceived as a shallow victory.

These "sell-out" charges are excessive and harsh. Individuals should have the right to cultivate their talents, regardless of whether the skills acquired advance the interests of their ethnic group. And, every individual is not morally obligated to assume the mantle of redressing historic wrongs. Ms. Rice and all African-Americans ought to be entitled to define themselves as they see fit – without being ostracized by those who disagree. Such constant pressure to conform simply amounts to a lack of tolerance and a violation of individual freedom – the very principles African-Americans so fervently champion.

Affirming African-American Culture

There is nonetheless a grain of truth to charges against Ms. Rice. If Republicans wish to win a larger portion of the black vote, they must open their hearts and minds to some of the criticisms of Ms. Rice. It cannot be denied that she does not appear to affirm her culture nor has she risen to high office based on promoting the interests of African-Americans. Rather, she is a specialist on foreign affairs and her emi-

Cover Story: An American Triumph

nence is due to her command of both the arts and history of the West. In short, her status is exquisitely her own – rather than that of the collectivity from which she emanates.

Ms. Rice grew up in segregated Alabama within a Republican household. Her personal formation came at a time when it appeared that one of the best ways to mitigate racial tensions was to adopt the color-blind philosophy advocated most vociferously by Martin Luther King Jr. Her father, Rev. John Wesley Rice, taught her to disregard color and to cultivate her skills. She therefore took up ballet, figure skating and piano lessons – excelling in these endeavors.

This was matched by an outstanding academic record. She graduated from Denver University at the age of 19. She then completed a PhD in international relations and is an expert on the former Soviet Union. She consistently achieved distinction: at age 38, Ms. Rice was the youngest provost of Stanford University; she was the first female to serve as White House national security adviser; and now at age 50 she is slated to become the next secretary of state. This is indeed impressive. But, her African-American heritage has not been a visible part of her ascension.

Many Americans might view this as the achievement of an increasingly color-blind society and as the fulfillment of a great dream. Yet, many African-Americans disagree: they regard the color-blind philosophy as outdated. To be color-blind, they argue, obscures the reality that African-Americans have been and continue to be persecuted based on their skin color. Furthermore, it is an attempt to abnegate their unique history and culture.

Finally, the color-blind philosophy means that, despite the fact that for centuries African-Americans have been denied equal individual rights and have been persecuted based on stereotypes of their collective identity, they must now suddenly embrace the doctrine of individual rights and pretend that the last few hundred years did not occur. In their view, to be color-blind is to ask them to be just plain blind to reality. They are not like other minorities who voluntarily came to these shores, they insist. Instead, their unique collective persecution shaped their history and culture. This cannot suddenly be erased.

African-Americans do not wish other Americans to ignore that they are black –

just as Jews, Hispanics and women do not wish their history or their distinctive characteristics to be suppressed. This does not mean that African-Americans are self-pitying victims, who are looking for government hand-outs. Instead, their deepest aspiration is to be treated with dignity and to be accepted on their own terms. This means not telling them to overlook their color (their color is plain for all to see and is beautiful); not constantly asserting the superiority of European culture over theirs; not remaining ignorant of their contributions to American history and of African contributions to world history; not being oblivious to the problems in their communities (as both candidates were during the campaign); and not regarding all things white as good and all things African or black as inadequate. For, in the final analysis, it is unfair and impractical to tacitly ask African-Americans to be some kind of “blank” Americans who abnegate who they are and where they come from in order to be fully accepted.

Ms. Rice is resented because she appears to adopt an individualist ethos and seems to be willing to sweep the African-American heritage under the rug. For example, there is a well-known anecdote related to Ms. Rice's undergraduate days. In confronting a professor who implied that blacks were intellectually inferior, she replied: “I speak French; I play Bach. I'm better at your culture than you are.” This is a telling statement: Is the path to acceptance to adopt the culture of one's previous oppressors without affirming one's own cultural heritage? Today, this attitude of Ms. Rice persists. It is widely known that President Bush is especially fond of Ms. Rice because they share a similar faith and a passion for football. She is a frequent dinner guest at the Bush household and a dear family friend – but, on what terms?

The close personal relationship that the President and Ms. Rice share is indeed lovely. However, there are still profound limitations within the Republican Party when it comes to understanding and embracing their fellow African-American countrymen and countrywomen. An analogy will prove the point.

In a well-known 1967 movie, entitled “Guess Who's Coming To Dinner?” Sydney Poitier plays a black doctor who falls in love with an upper-class white woman. Her parents, played by Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy, are at first not willing to

acknowledge this inter-racial relationship. The movie nonetheless ends with the young man being admitted into the household; even his parents are welcomed to dinner. However, these “black people” are acceptable to the upper-class family only if they appear to make no mention of their own heritage; they must simply be generic, bland, homogenous Americans who have a different skin tone.

That is akin to telling a woman she is equal to a man except for the fact that she has motherly traits – which many women believe are fundamental and often undeniable aspects of their daily existence. Hence, Ms. Rice has been welcomed to dinner. But at the presidential table, does she affirm her culture and use her influence to bring attention to the many issues dear to African-Americans?

Essentially, African-Americans want to be recognized as distinct without pity or condescension: they are black and proud of it. The GOP therefore faces a colossal challenge: if Republicans wish to attract more black voters, they must devise policies that appeal to African-American sentiments and concerns without forsaking the party's cherished principle of personal responsibility.

An American Milestone

Regardless of this admonition, there is the danger of having an entirely a-historical and unrealistic assessment of Ms. Rice's career. “Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?” was a landmark film in its time. Similarly, it is ungracious to view the American glass as always only half full. Ms. Rice's nomination brings glory to African-Americans, is a fulfillment of the deepest aspirations of the Constitution and is living proof that the American Dream is accessible to all. Moreover, the door to the White House is now wide open and African-American prospects will only continue to improve. Hence, Ms. Rice must be celebrated as a pioneer at the President's table – both literally and metaphorically. The next African-American who rises to high office will dictate the menu.

For now, let us take heed of the lessons that emerge from this debate while joining in national jubilation at a remarkable American triumph. ☞

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The Architect

Karl Rove and the new GOP coalition

By Stephen F. Manfredi

If there is one thing that all good political strategists understand, it is that winning elections requires alliances. Great political strategists can tell you whom to befriend and how. Enter Karl Rove.

While the entire nation eagerly awaited the results on Election Night 2004, Mr. Rove had already informed the President of his re-election. Confined to his self-described “batcave” for most of the evening, Mr. Rove spent the night alone, crunching precinct returns and matching actual votes to his projections.

Before any television network could predict a winner in the decisive swing states, Mr. Rove had confidently notified the President that Florida and Ohio were Bush country. In his victory speech, President George W. Bush dubbed Mr. Rove “the architect” of his re-election victory.

Mr. Rove has over 30 years of political experience on behalf of Republicans and now, two presidential election victories under his belt. This student of Republican strategist Lee Atwater and admirer of President William McKinley’s political advisor Mark Hanna can legitimately claim for himself a place in history. But he won’t. The adopted Texan lacks the Texas-sized ego that one would expect from Washington’s most powerful political strategist.

This is probably because Mr. Rove has more of a historical outlook than your average political operative. While winning elections is his expertise and livelihood, he does not think in increments from November to November. Instead, Mr. Rove thinks in terms of generations and political movements. He is a big picture guy. And it is this sense of history that makes him unique, and distinctly successful, in the world of politics.

Mr. Rove understands that successful political movements require a broad coalition, and that they take decades to ensconce their motivating ideals. For this reason, his ultimate goal is to create an enduring Republican majority, one that will last for

the next 30 to 40 years. Today’s political victories are just battles won in a larger campaign to entrench a conservative agenda and a Republican majority.

Politics is the art of the possible. And building a network of allies is vital to any movement’s success. Mr. Rove looks to history for affirmation. McKinley’s strategist Mark Hanna forged an alliance between wealthy industrialists and urban workers based on tariffs and the gold standard. In doing so, McKinley defeated the populist William Jennings Bryan in the 1896 campaign, creating a Republican majority that lasted until the Great Depression. The economic collapse of the 1930s allowed FDR’s Democrats to weld together a broad coalition that lasted for nearly 40 years.

But with the New Deal coalition fractured beyond repair, what will take its place? The success of the modern conservative movement and Republican majorities in both chambers of Congress suggest more than a tilt to the Right in American politics. Mr. Rove intends on making sure that this rightward turn is institutionalized by creating an enduring Republican majority. If President Ronald Reagan can be credited with giving Republicans power, President Bush and Mr. Rove can be credited with trying to make Republicans dominant.

Though committed to certain core Republican principles, Mr. Rove realizes that policy and politics must be carefully coordinated. For Republicans to hold power and enact their agenda, they must not only get their base to the polls, but also make alliances with strange bedfellows.

Attempting to strategically amputate segments of the Democratic coalition, Mr. Rove has been an avid supporter of many policies that aren’t usually associated with conservatism:

- The Bush administration’s \$190 billion farm bill, considered a prime example of government pork by budget hawks, greatly expanded subsidies to farmers while firming up support for President Bush in the Midwest.

- In violation of his free trade policies, President Bush levied tariffs against foreign steel producers. Though unpopular with his base, President Bush’s policy undercut the Democrats’ support among union workers – especially in key industrial states like Ohio and West Virginia.
- Despite calls from Congressional Republicans for a tighter immigration policy, Mr. Rove’s Hispanic outreach effort has led him to become an unabashed champion of an open border policy with Mexico.
- The Medicare Modernization Act, a \$534 billion program, angered much of President Bush’s base, but increased his share of the seniors vote while inoculating Republicans from Democratic attacks.

In the November election, 4 million Christian conservatives, who previously did not vote in 2000, went to the polls and voted overwhelmingly for President Bush, and for the Rove-endorsed gay marriage ban referendums on 11 state ballots. Mr. Rove reached beyond the Republican base as President Bush saw gains among senior citizens, blacks, Jews and women. President Bush also increased his share of the Catholic vote by an impressive 5 percent and captured over 40 percent of the Hispanic vote.

In the end, President Bush beat Senator John Kerry by 3.5 million votes and received 8.5 million more votes than he had in 2000. Republicans also increased their majorities in both the House and Senate. These results speak for themselves. Mr. Rove’s strategizing is paying big dividends for the GOP.

One question remains: If Mr. Rove succeeds in creating an enduring Republican majority, just how conservative will it actually be? ☞

— Stephen F. Manfredi is the political editor at *The Ripon Forum*

The Upcoming Republican Agenda

An interview with Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist

By Stephen F. Manfredi

First elected to the U.S. Senate on November 8, 1994, Bill Frist, Tennessee Republican, was the only challenger to defeat a full-term incumbent in 1994 and the first practicing physician elected to the Senate since 1928. Dr. Frist was re-elected to a second term in 2000 in the United States Senate by the largest vote total ever received by a candidate for statewide election in the history of Tennessee.

Dr. Frist was born and raised in Nashville. He graduated in 1974 from Princeton University where he specialized in health care policy at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. In 1978 he graduated with honors from Harvard Medical School and spent the next seven years in surgical training at Massachusetts General Hospital; Southampton General Hospital, Southampton, England; and Stanford University Medical Center. He is board certified in both general surgery and heart surgery.

Dr. Frist has risen rapidly through Senate leadership. In 2000, he was unanimously elected chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee for the 107th Congress and in December 2002 was unanimously elected Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate. He also currently serves on the following committees: Finance; Rules; Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

Dr. Frist is married and has three children.

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

RF: Will a larger Republican majority have the effect of “changing the tone” in the Senate?

Frist: I’m optimistic that we can restore to the Senate the bipartisanship that will help move America forward. We must pull together to put the good of the country ahead of partisanship and in-fighting. I’m



Courtesy of Sen. Frist's office

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist

hopeful that obstructionists will take note of the November elections and let the will of the American people hold sway.

RF: Should Democrats regard the defeat of former Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle by GOP challenger John Thune as a referendum on their obstructionist tactics?

Frist: The November elections sent a clear message to all senators: Americans are tired of obstructionism. They want results. I will do everything in my power to move legislation that will improve the lives of all Americans.

RF: Will Senator-elect John Thune’s reputation as a “giant killer” influence the role he plays in the Senate?

Frist: Certainly we are excited to have John Thune join us in the Senate. He ran a hard-fought and principled campaign, and

has earned his right to be in the chamber. However, I think it would be inaccurate to claim that his mere reputation will earn him any preferential treatment or influence. One of the reasons the Senate is regarded as the “world’s greatest deliberative body” is that each of its members has a voice and a vote, and each wields equal and significant influence in the legislative process.

RF: Many experts believe that pro-life social conservatives played a decisive role in getting President George W. Bush and Republicans elected to office on Election Day. Will there be any specific legislative action in the Senate to ban abortion and move towards overturning Roe v. Wade?

Frist: Since becoming a majority 10 years ago, the House and Senate have moved legislation to ban partial-birth abortion, Laci and Connor’s law that amends federal law to allow a separate penalty when an unborn child is killed in the commission of a violent crime against his or her mother, and parental notification. I expect that the Congress will continue to pursue common-sense and mainstream American values like those embodied in these laws.

RF: What are the three most important pieces of legislation you hope to bring to a vote in 2005?

Frist: There are a number of priorities. In the next Congress we will continue to work to strengthen the economy, improve health care for all Americans and bolster our homeland security and military to ensure our safety here and abroad.

RF: Is there enough support in the Senate for a major overhaul of the tax system, and what specific reforms – a flat tax, a national sales tax, a federal consumption tax – should such a bill feature?

Frist: It is too early to tell. We will have to see what the Bush administration puts forward and if they put together a commission

to recommend proposals. That said, Congress has not reformed the tax code since 1986, and therefore the time is ripe for an overhaul.

The Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) is something that will likely force reform as well. Too many Americans are becoming subject to this tax. Although the AMT was originally designed to prevent high-income taxpayers from escaping their “fair” share of the income tax burden, there will be a significant increase in the number of middle to upper-middle income taxpayers affected by the AMT. In 1999, about 1 million taxpayers were affected by the AMT, but estimates indicate that by 2013, if the tax reductions contained in the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 are not made permanent, then 41 million taxpayers will be subject to the AMT.

RF: President Bush has made privatizing Social Security a centerpiece of his “ownership society.” Are the American people going to get a modernized Social Security system during the 109th Congress and what will it look like?

Frist: Again, this is a hard issue to predict. But it is one we must tackle. The basic premise behind Social Security is simple: we pay into the system during our working years, via the payroll tax, and receive benefits when we retire or become disabled. I remain committed to protecting this important program. Unfortunately, however, the Social Security Trust Fund is facing insolvency. The impending retirement of the baby boom generation, projected increases in life expectancy and declining birth rates contribute to longer-lasting imbalances in the system. In fact, the number of workers per recipient is predicted to fall to 2.3 in 2025. If no reform is enacted, the trust funds will be exhausted in 2042. By 2018, the system is projected to run a cash flow deficit. Structural change is necessary if Social Security is to exist for our children and our grandchildren.

RF: Many fiscal conservatives have been critical of what they see as out-of-control spending by Congressional Republicans. What steps will be taken by Congress to reduce budget deficits in the coming year?

Frist: We have already taken some positive steps this year to control spending when we passed the final spending package. It fully complies with the spending targets agreed to by the Congress and the administration, totaling \$821.9 billion in FY05 discretionary spending. This represents a freeze or zero percent growth in non-defense discretionary spending. In the next Congress, we will have to work very hard to enact a budget resolution that puts us on a path to cut the deficit. I am sure the President’s 2006 budget proposal will propose a dramatic reduction in the deficit as well. With his leadership, I believe we can cut the deficit, but it will require hard work and extensive cooperation among all branches of government.

RF: As Majority Leader, what will you do to protect the American people from the grave threat posed by terrorism?

Frist: The United States must employ all components of its national power — intelligence, law enforcement, diplomacy and the military — to defend the nation and defeat the terrorists. We must continue to improve our homeland security, reform the intelligence community, and remain on the offensive against terrorists. It is always better to fight terrorists abroad rather than here at home. The President is doing all of these things and more. I intend, as Majority Leader, to keep the American people safe and protect our great nation by providing the President with the authorities and resources he needs, ensuring the Senate performs its constitutional role as we wage this global war, and offering my own ideas and initiatives as appropriate to ensure success.

RF: How should America address Iran’s nuclear program? Is military intervention a viable option?

Frist: Iran’s nuclear activities are a grave concern and a threat to the United States. They have violated their obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and have failed to live up to other commitments they have made.

We must work with our friends and allies to convince Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions. Failing that, we must consider other means, such as multilateral sanctions and embargoes, to impede their efforts and

pressure them to relent. Iran’s nuclear activities, coupled with their efforts to build long-range missiles, will present a major threat to U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf region, our friends and allies in the area, and to the United States itself if their ambitions are realized. We must not allow Iran to get to that point. We must keep the international spotlight on their activities, push the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency to take a more aggressive posture, and engage the Iranians on multiple fronts. With regard to military intervention, such considerations are premature but should never be taken off the table.

RF: You have been outspoken in your opposition to the continued filibustering of Bush judicial nominees by Democrats. If this issue arises again, will you change Senate rules to prevent such filibusters or go through more traditional channels, such as the 35 hours of continuous debate that the Senate held last year to draw public attention to Democratic obstruction?

Frist: It is critical that the unprecedented Democratic filibuster of the President’s judicial nominees be stopped. Never before has a judicial nominee with majority support been denied an up-or-down vote due to a filibuster. The Senate traditions must be restored so the Senate can do its duty, our government can function, and America can move forward.

RF: Are you considering running for President in 2008?

Frist: I’m not sure what I’ll do after I leave the Senate, but I’m pretty certain that whatever I do it will involve medicine. I’m honored to serve in the Senate and I’m proud to be a part of a number of efforts to truly improve the quality of life for millions of individuals. I’m focused on my work now and will give greater thought to my future as my departure from the Senate grows nearer, whether that be serving in a medical mission, working at a medical college with students or some other role in public service. ☞

— Stephen F. Manfredi is the political editor of *The Ripon Forum*



Saving Social Security Reform is needed now to fix program

By U.S. Representative Mark Foley

Currently, for every three workers contributing to Social Security there is one retiree receiving benefits paid for by those workers. In the coming years, as the 79 million “baby boomers” begin retiring in 2008, there will be nearly twice as many older Americans as there are today – reducing the worker-retiree ratio to less than 2 to 1. This means that in the very near future, eventually there will be more people in need of benefits than there will be workers to pay for them. That math just won’t add up.

Social Security is one of the greatest achievements of the American government, protecting our elderly against poverty and assuring young people of a more secure future for more than 60 years.

Mistakenly, many people believe that the Social Security taxes they pay are held in interest-bearing accounts earmarked for their own future retirement needs. The fact is that Social Security is a pay-as-you-go retirement system – the Social Security taxes paid by today’s workers and their employers are used to pay the benefits for today’s retirees and other beneficiaries.

That system will only work if there are more people paying into the system than receiving benefits from it. Unfortunately, America’s demographics are changing and placing this system’s future in jeopardy.

Managers of the Social Security Trust Fund predict that, unless current law is changed, Social Security will be bankrupt



Courtesy of Rep. Foley’s office

U.S. Representative Mark Foley

in 2042, when payroll taxes collected for Social Security will be insufficient to cover the program’s costs.

Unfortunately, too many people have decided that Social Security is the “third rail” of politics – that is, who ever touches the issue to fix the problem will be politically killed in the process. That mindset has allowed precious time to slip away as the oncoming problem only gets closer.

A stronger Republican majority in Congress and a President coming off an impressive victory in November, however, may allow us to finally confront this problem.

This upcoming Congress offers our nation the opportunity to strengthen the retirement security of all our citizens by providing common-sense reforms.

In taking up these reforms, we must protect the seniors who have already paid into the system and ensure that their benefits are not reduced or put in jeopardy. No reforms should change any of the benefits of those currently receiving them.

By educating the public about the real need for reform and the intentions of Congress, we can clear the biggest hurdle to creating momentum behind these reforms: fear.

All reforms should minimize risk, ensure freedom of choice and enable Social Security to continue its role in protecting America’s families if a breadwinner retires, suffers an injury or dies.

President George W. Bush has made reform to the New Deal-era retiree safety net a priority. He has framed his reforms as a way of creating an atmosphere conducive to saving and expanding ownership for our nation’s workers. His plan calls for limited and stable personal accounts in which workers can invest a portion of their Social Security taxes.

Other proposals have called for tax cuts for those who invest directly in market investments, allowing workers to own their retirement assets.

Whatever the proposals, we must keep two core principles as our guide: Ensuring the financial health of Social Security and preserving the benefits of current beneficiaries and older workers. By doing this, we will be able to fix this problem and protect the retirement security of Americans for the next generation.

That kind of action will make the math work. ☺

— Rep. Mark Foley is a Florida Republican and member of the House Ways and Means Committee

“Whatever the proposals, we must keep two core principles as our guide: Ensuring the financial health of Social Security and preserving the benefits of current beneficiaries and older workers. By doing this, we will be able to fix this problem and protect the retirement security of Americans for the next generation.”



The Great Civilizer Role of international trade in promoting peace

By U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley

The idea that international trade serves to promote peace is not new. The 4th-century scholar Libanius observed how effective trade is in promoting social cohesion and stability among different peoples. More recently, the 19th-century economist Frederic Bastiat is credited with observing that “when goods cannot cross borders, armies will.” In the 20th century, former Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who was appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, similarly warned of the dangers that lurk in the absence of trade. In fact, Hull once characterized international commerce as “the greatest civilizer and peace-maker in the experience of the human race.”

Looking ahead to the challenges of the 21st century, these important insights should not be forgotten. Instead, we should emphasize the role of international trade in advancing our nation’s security interests with increased global prosperity and economic interdependence within the community of nations.

The case for trade is straightforward. International trade is based foremost upon communication across borders. The countless commercial interactions that occur each day are the most effective means of increasing familiarity, understanding, tolerance and respect among different peoples. The economic interdependence that ensues raises the cost of war to a prohibitive level. The prosperity that results is shared among all, creating the opportunity for a better life for future generations and enfranchising those who might otherwise seek to destabilize societies through violence and terror.

International trade is also based upon principles of transparency and respect for the rule of law. By promoting these principles among a wider audience, international trade further enhances the prospects for peace among different peoples.

The Bush administration has demonstrated a clear appreciation for the role of international trade in promoting peace. The administration’s aggressive free trade agenda is helping to foster both economic and political stability around the world.

For example, President George W. Bush has called for the development of a



Courtesy of Senator Grassley’s office

U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley

Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA), to include the United States and the nations of the Middle East and the Maghreb, by the year 2013. Already the United States has negotiated comprehensive free trade agreements with Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Bahrain, and I expect that these will be joined by agreements with Oman and the United Arab Emirates in the near future. This array of comprehensive trade agreements will serve as the bedrock upon which a MEFTA can be built. Once achieved, the MEFTA will help bring stability, prosperity, hope and opportunity to a part of the world that has known little of such things for far too long.

The Bush administration is also reaching out to South America in negotiating an Andean Free Trade Agreement with Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. A comprehensive free trade agreement with these countries will expand economic opportunities in the region. These expanded opportunities will not only lead to increased prosperity for the Andean peoples, but will also serve to complement regional drug eradication efforts by offering viable alternatives to illicit drug production. This in turn will help undermine and disrupt the violent groups that fund themselves with proceeds from trade in illicit drugs. In this way, international trade has an important role to play in promoting regional peace and stability

and advancing the security interests of the United States.

Another example of this is the recently negotiated Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). The CAFTA will help ensure that nations in Central America do not witness a return of the internal strife that marked the region during the 1980s.

In addition, the Bush administration is negotiating terms for Russia’s accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO). This negotiation presents a number of opportunities to improve transparency and respect for the rule of law as Russia transitions to a market-based economy. The negotiation over China’s recent accession into the WTO presented similar opportunities, and while trade tensions continue to flare on occasion, we now have the benefit of the WTO forum in which to mediate our disputes with China. Once Russia’s trade commitments are formalized through accession to the WTO, we will have access to the same benefit. China and Russia are each important players in the global economy. Their commitment to a common rule of law for international trade will do much to promote both economic and political stability around the world.

Congress too has demonstrated an appreciation for how increasing international trade promotes peace. In 2004, Congress passed an important extension of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). First passed in 2000, AGOA is credited with creating over 190,000 jobs and over \$340 million in investments in sub-Saharan Africa. That is a significant contribution to increased peace and stability on the continent. Last year Congress also passed legislation to allow duty-free treatment for imported hand-woven carpets. This duty-free treatment will primarily help the citizens of Afghanistan and Pakistan, two important allies in the global war on terror.

As we prepare for the start of a new Congress this year, I look forward to continue working with my colleagues and the administration to promote peace by expanding international trade. ☞

— Sen. Chuck Grassley is an Iowa Republican and chairman of the Senate Finance Committee



Increasing Our Oil Supply

The case for drilling in ANWR

By U.S. Representative Joe Barton

I have been arguing for some time that the reason to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) is essentially the same reason Willie Sutton gave when asked why he robbed banks: "That's where the money is." We should drill in ANWR because that is where the oil is. Of course, there is a crucial difference in this comparison: Willie pursued goods that belonged to someone else, whereas the oil in Alaska belongs to us.

Congress has debated ANWR oil since 1959 - a time when the gas station man wearing an oil company uniform would come to your car, wash your windows, check your oil and pump gasoline at 25 cents per gallon. This debate has regained preeminence for one obvious reason: In many places, consumers pay upwards of \$2 a gallon for gasoline.

Oil propels every part of our economy. While there may be a better way to keep Americans working, it has yet to be invented. Hence, we must ask: Why have gasoline prices increased, and how can we fix this?

First, many small mistakes were made by politicians, bureaucrats and environmental activists. As a result, new gasoline refineries have not been built in America for 25 years. Therefore, existing refineries are running at more than 90 percent capacity every day. This means that, when there is a malfunction and a plant is closed, the entire nation is suddenly short of gas. Consequently, gasoline prices rise.

Second, we must consider the problem of different types of gas. The pump at our neighborhood stations implies that there are only three kinds of gas: regular, a middle-grade usually called "plus," and premium. In reality, we require refineries to make 54 distinct blends of gasoline. Each is intended to accommodate the environment in a particular area of the country. Furthermore, none may be swapped for fuel in another area. For this reason, there can be simultaneously high prices in Dallas and low prices in Denver.

Finally, we must consider where we get our oil. ANWR is a good example of where we do not get it. During the last 45 years in which we have debated ANWR,



Courtesy of Rep. Barton's office

U.S. Representative Joe Barton

drilling technology has improved and therefore there is little likelihood of making a mistake. Critics of ANWR argue that drillers will extinguish the Alaska caribou herds; others maintain that the caribou will flourish. Some are convinced that great spills will blacken the landscape; others insist that more is spilled daily at one's neighborhood "quickie lube." I, on the other hand, flatly insist that jobs, economic growth and personal opportunity in America depend on energy - which we must get somewhere.

If we had decided to open ANWR at anytime during the later stage of this long

political debate, ANWR fields would already be very productive. And this would make a difference in the wallet of every citizen.

Other attempts at lowering prices have failed. When the Senate passed a resolution urging cancellation of a planned future oil deliveries to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, authors argued that this would flood the market with enough oil to cut gasoline prices by 10 cents to 25 cents per gallon. A less optimistic projection was that freeing 100,000 barrels per day might reduce the price by one penny.

In any case, ANWR is closed to American consumers and likely to remain so until an energy crisis pries it open. The same is true of many promising areas along our Eastern and Western coasts. As long as this basic policy is not altered, much of America's supply of recoverable oil will remain buried in the ground.

I believe that in the long run, the question we must address is not whether we tap ANWR, but when we use this valuable resource. However, without enough incentive to overcome the many objections by special interests, we will not soon be able to make use of this vital oil supply.

America has spent almost 50 years finding ways not to provide energy - not to explore, not to drill, not to refine. Now it is time to decide what we will do. And we must begin where the oil is. ☞

— Rep. Joe Barton is a Texas Republican and chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction in the House over energy issues

"The reason to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is essentially the same reason Willie Sutton gave when asked why he robbed banks: 'That's where the money is.' We should drill in ANWR because that is where the oil is."



Republican History Lights the Way

The party has always defended freedom and individual rights

By U.S. Representative Tom Petri

On March 20, 1854, opponents of the Democrats' pro-slavery policies met in Ripon, Wisconsin to establish the Republican Party. As the congressman representing Ripon, I frequently re-visit the Little White Schoolhouse where our party was born and I reflect upon the lessons of our early years. Over the past 150 years, public policy concerns have inevitably changed numerous times. However, we can identify important strands of continuity.

Our party was ultimately founded upon the principle of an abhorrence of slavery. Democrats were advocates for freedom, states' rights and property rights. Yet, their version of rights included the right to own people. After the Civil War, it took 100 years before a majority of Democratic partisans clearly rejected segregation. And even today, in a strange irony, the Democrats continue to staunchly defend racial preferences.

In contrast, Republicans have traditionally been more comfortable with the belief that people should be evaluated as individuals. We were never the party of racism. In fact, every single African-American elected to Congress until 1935 was Republican.

Currently, it is the Democrats who put people in categories such as: the rich, the poor, people of color, the elderly, the people vs. the powerful, and so on. These classifications have some merit. However, the overuse of these categories undermines the concept of the individual who is, after all, the smallest and most important minority.

From the beginning, we were the party of national unity. And so it is today. The Democrats are in the process of retreating to enclaves on the coasts and in the big cities. In contrast, we continue to contest in every region, even if not always in every state. The South is largely Republican now. Today's southern Republican conservatism seeks to conserve what is best in our heritage rather than maintaining discredited beliefs. This is Republicanism on our terms – and with which Abraham Lincoln would have found much in common.

In consonance with our devotion to liberty, we are currently the strongest advo-



Courtesy of Rep. Petri's office

U.S. Representative Tom Petri

cate for the expansion of republican forms of government abroad. Similarly, during the Cold War, we were the clearest and least conflicted opponents of communist tyranny.

From the beginning, we were the party of economic development. We have always supported the free market with limited regulation. We were at the forefront of championing consumer and environmental protection; while the draconian and, some might argue, the Mussolini-inspired National Reconstruction Administration (and other examples of overbearing state control) emanated from President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

We have always believed in the Opportunity Society. The Homestead Act of 1862 ultimately relinquished 10 percent of the area of the United States to small farmers who were willing to work the land. This is the direct precursor of President George W. Bush's "Ownership Society." President Bush's initiative seeks to empower individuals by increasing home ownership and by conferring upon workers the ownership of a portion of Social Security taxes. President Bush's policies will also foster the creation of new small businesses, the expansion of choices in medical care through Health Savings Accounts and more. All of these provisions are designed to expand personal initiative at the expense of government paternalism.

Of course, not everything Republican deserves unqualified support.

In his day, many Americans regarded President Abraham Lincoln as an extremist for he wanted to make a fundamental change to our social structure by ending the South's "peculiar institution." He was, however, profoundly conservative and restorative: he recognized the corrosive and unjustifiable contradiction of permitting slavery in "the land of the free."

There were, however, overly impatient reformers dominating the party and Congress. These Radical Republicans insisted on freedom, justice and equality immediately. They were absolutely right on the moral question, but wrong on the practical issue of how to achieve their goal.

Lincoln knew that northern and border state Democrats would cooperate with the war effort only if war was justified on the basis of saving the Union. He understood that for the slaves to be free, the North had to win the war. Opposed to Lincoln's caution and practicality, the Radical Republicans held an early convention in which they nominated a different Republican candidate. The regular Republicans nominated Lincoln once again under the banner of the National Unity Party.

There is a lesson here for modern Republicans as we try to advance our goals. In a republic we can indeed lead the people – but only if we march at a pace that the public is willing to match. We should stand up for our beliefs, but if we find that a "my way or the highway" attitude is causing gridlock, we should pause long enough to consider whether we are trying to solve problems by jamming square ideological pegs into round public policy holes.

The events of the 1860s can be used as a model: a blend of fervent idealism and moderate realism can keep the party and the country moving in the right direction without rolling off the tracks. ☞

— Rep. Tom Petri, a Ripon Society founder, is a Wisconsin Republican and chairman of the Highways, Transit and Pipelines Subcommittee



The Growing Hispanic Vote Election 2004 was a watershed moment

By U.S. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

When history is written, the 2004 elections will go down as a watershed moment in American politics: the power of the growing Hispanic vote became evident.

In the 2000 election, Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore did not appear on the very popular Spanish TV show "Sabado Gigante" because of scheduling conflicts. In contrast, in 2004, neither candidate could afford not to appear. In fact, both President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry actively campaigned for the Hispanic vote.

In an election that had the highest turnout in more than 30 years, 44% of Hispanics voted for President Bush. This is the highest percentage of Hispanic votes ever attained by a Republican candidate. The previous high was attained by President Ronald Reagan in 1984 when he secured 37% of the Hispanic vote.

Two years ago, Hispanics became the largest minority in this country. They are now a large voting bloc that every presidential candidate will have to court in order to win. The power of the Hispanic vote will only increase in every subsequent election. Hispanics, and the issues of importance to them, are sure to become more prevalent.

Hispanics continue to increase both in numbers and in their contributions to this great country. For example, while Hispanics make up 13% of the U.S. population, they account for 18% of the fighting men and women in the U.S. armed forces. In addition, 6% of all businesses in this country are owned by Hispanics. This demonstrates that Hispanics can be entrepreneurs and can create jobs to help the American economy prosper.

Now that more Hispanics are becoming a larger portion of our population, we must work to increase the number of Hispanics in public office. It is satisfying that in November we made progress in this direction by electing two Hispanic senators: Democrat Ken Salazar from Colorado and Republican Mel Martinez from my state of Florida. I am confident



Courtesy of Rep. Ros-Lehtinen's office

U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

that these leaders will leave their unique mark upon the Senate. They will surely be the first of many more Hispanics who will serve in the Senate in the years to come.

We also made minimal progress in the House of Representatives. Hispanics gained one seat, increasing our representation from 25 to 26. This is barely 6% of the total number of House members. We Republicans also made history for the first time in over a century by electing a Republican as Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico. I congratulate Luis Fortuño for this accomplishment and look forward to working with him in the 109th Congress.

Nevertheless, while Hispanics make up 13% of the U.S. population, they still comprise less than one percent of all elected officials. The representation of Hispanics at the state and federal levels are both low. For example, from a total of 1,035 Hispanic elected officials in California, only 35 hold state or federal offices. This is a little more than 3 percent. It is even worse in New York, where there are only 63 Hispanics elected to local, state and federal offices.

We must continue to encourage Hispanics to participate in our democratic process. They should be fully active in our republic, both as voters and by volunteer-

ing and running for public offices. To achieve this, we need to do more to reach out to Hispanics, especially through Spanish language TV, radio and newspapers. Also, we should work to lower the high dropout rate of Hispanic students in our schools. Hispanics should be encouraged to pursue higher education for with an advanced degree they will have a better chance to succeed in their endeavors.

It is my hope that with the new clout of these voters, politicians will be able to address issues of importance to Hispanics. For example, we can increase their access to education by passing the Dream Act and by encouraging more students to continue their education. Health care should be more affordable in order to ensure that low-income workers will have a chance to offer health insurance for their families. We must also strive to increase the number of minority homeowners. And finally, it is imperative to reform our immigration system; workers who contribute to our nation's economy and pay taxes will therefore be able to come out of the shadows and achieve legal status.

As the numbers of Hispanics continue to grow, we must ensure that they fully participate in our civic society. The more educated Hispanics are, and the more opportunities they are given, the more they will contribute to our great nation. A testament to the growing power of this constituency is the fact that on November 2nd almost one in ten voters who lined up and voted was Hispanic. With every election, there will be a larger percentage of Hispanics who will have their voices heard.

I am confident that we can continue to increase the participation of Hispanics in our political system, thereby ensuring that the overall participation of Americans remains high. 🍷

— Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
is a Florida Republican

Why I Left the Democrats

The GOP and the rise of Italian-Americans

By John Marino

My connection to the Democratic Party runs deep, extending back to my youth. My earliest memories include marching as a child in the Labor Day parade in Asbury Park with my father, a union carpenter. We would make the trek in his Ford work van in order to celebrate the “working man” and the land of opportunity. I was raised in a blue-collar home in Belmar, New Jersey. I grew up proud of my family’s working-class roots and union identity. My loyalty to the Democratic Party came naturally.

My relationship with the Democrats was reinforced by my parents’ immigrant experience. They were born and raised in a small, humble village in southern Italy. In search of a better life, they came to the United States. Although initially not knowing the language or culture, they enthusiastically embraced the American Way. Hence, like countless other Italian-Americans, they saw the Democratic Party as their political home.

I remained attached to the Democrats throughout my teenage years. In 1984, my grade school notebooks were covered with Mondale-Ferraro bumper stickers even though I was not yet old enough to vote. I cast my first vote in the 1989 New Jersey gubernatorial race for then-Democratic candidate Jim Florio. When I entered college my commitment to the Democrats was only reinforced by an environment that slanted distinctly Left. Since almost all of my family, friends and educators were Democrats and liberals, it is easy to discern how I remained an unwavering Democrat for many years.

This began to change, however, during my late twenties. Looking at my new-found responsibilities at home and at work, I started to question my affiliation with the Democrats. I realized something important: They no longer represented my political outlook or personal values. The time had arrived for me to break old ties and forge new ones.

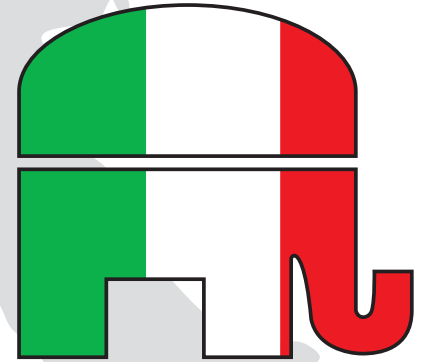
Ironically, the culture that placed me firmly within the Democratic fold was the same one that motivated me to leave it. I was raised in a household where personal responsibility, hard work, religion and

family were not only values but requirements. You wouldn’t know this from the usual portrayals of Italian-Americans in film or television. Hollywood has distorted the image of Italian-Americans, often presenting them as semi-literate, murderous gangsters. This is seen in blockbuster movies like “The Godfather” and “Good Fellas” or TV hits such as “The Sopranos.” The reality is very different. All of the Italian-Americans that I knew were predominantly skilled, blue-collar workers, who toiled exceptionally hard, saved their money and sent their children to college with the hopes that they would enter the professional class. Their model was – and is – someone like Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, not Tony Soprano. I sought a party that embraced these values of work, opportunity and family. The GOP was a natural choice.

Moreover, as a Democrat I was frustrated at having to remain a closet Christian. I also opposed the penchant to view everyone as a victim despite their actions, and grew weary of a seemingly incessant criticism by many liberals of American policies – both at home and abroad. This especially pained me for I was taught to love America and to be grateful for the opportunity it had provided for my family. I had personally seen the great promise of America fulfilled and the immigrant’s dream made reality. Consequently, I left the Democratic Party, and found a new home with the GOP.

As a proud American of Italian ancestry, I feel especially comfortable in the ever-growing Republican “Big Tent.” Although I still have many Democrats who are my friends and colleagues, I recognize that their party is not my party.

Despite my right-leaning views, professionally I consider myself fortunate to work



As a proud American of Italian ancestry, I feel especially comfortable in the ever-growing Republican “Big Tent.”

with elected officials on both sides of the aisle. Moreover, I am convinced there are other moderates like myself out there, who during the 1990s left the Democrats to join the Republicans. These voters are similar to the so-called Reagan Democrats of the 1980s. Perhaps political historians will recognize this trend and coin a name for us. We are everywhere and we are in good company. People like U.S. Sen. Norm Coleman, Minnesota Republican, have shown that Jews from Brooklyn, just like Italian-Americans from New Jersey, can follow their hearts to a party that truly represents their values. ☺

— John Marino is the managing director of government relations and public policy at the National Italian American Foundation, an independent, non-partisan and non-profit foundation. This article does not represent the views of the foundation.



Make Use of Prison Labor Allow the private sector to employ prisoners

By Robert D. Atkinson

American jails and prisons now hold more than 2 million inmates. While the import of this milepost may be more symbolic than real, its fiscal impact is quite real. At \$40 billion annually, or \$20,000 a year per prisoner, incarceration is a major budget item. So it is likewise significant that more than two-thirds of all (state) ex-offenders are re-arrested in three years. One successful activity that helps offset public costs for prisons and reduce recidivism is prison work in industries.

At the federal level, Federal Prison Industries (FPI), an arm of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, employs prisoners making goods and services. Under the trade name UNICOR, FPI markets about 150 types of products and services to federal agencies. This includes furniture, textiles, electronic components and engine repair.

By mandate, FPI is limited to offering its goods and services to the federal government. In return for this limitation, Congress has required that federal agencies purchase a portion of the products they need from FPI - even if the products cost more than they would from a private vendor. At the state level, federal legislation passed in 1979 enabled state prisons to allow private companies to employ prisoners making goods and services for interstate transport. However, the legislation contained so many restrictions that the program employs only about 5,000 prisoners.

Employing inmates in prison industries programs provides three important benefits:

First, prisoner work requirements lead to better security in prisons and lower recidivism. The Federal Bureau of Prisons' Post Release Employment Project concluded that industries inmates were not only better behaved while in prison but were 35 percent less likely to be rearrested after release.

Second, prison industries programs generate revenue that can go to offset taxpayer-supported costs for housing prisoners. This revenue can support victim restitution, child support and the like.

Third, in contrast to those that argue

that prison labor is a zero-sum game, inmate work actually helps the economy. The economy benefits because both regular and prison workers are producing output. If a more robust inmate labor program succeeded in employing an additional 350,000 prisoners who produced an average of \$35,000 per year in value-added, the U.S. economy would be \$12.2 billion larger.

In recent years, however, prison industries programs have generated increasing criticism. Some on the Left oppose prison labor: these critics do not believe that prisoners should be required to work. Furthermore, they maintain that, if prison costs are lowered by requiring prisoners to work, it will be easier for elected officials to enact tougher sentencing policies. In contrast, some on the Right oppose FPI because they see it as an unwarranted government intrusion into the marketplace. Finally, a narrow segment of employers and organized labor argue that prison labor takes jobs away from law-abiding Americans.

As a result, Congress has introduced legislation to dramatically restrict FPI's ability to employ prison labor. The Federal Prison Industries Competition in Contracting Act of 2003 (H.R. 1829) passed the House in 2004 by a wide margin; a companion bill awaits consideration in the Senate. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Peter Hoekstra, Michigan Republican, will allow federal agencies to buy the products they now buy from FPI from private contractors - that is, if the price is lower. This will eliminate approximately half of the current sales of FPI. The bill nonetheless acknowledges the importance of work for prisoners and therefore authorizes funding for vocational training and allows FPI to sell to non-profits at an operational loss (with the difference being made up by an appropriation from Congress).

Congress is right that FPI is in need of significant reform. However, while the status quo was not sustainable, dramatically reducing FPI's role was not the only, or the best choice. Instead, Congress could find an alternative means of addressing the issue

of unfair competition while still getting the social and economic benefits from prison industries program. This can be done by eliminating FPI's preference to sell to the federal government and by allowing private sector companies to employ prisoners. Private companies should be able to go into federal or state prisons and, with the consent of the prison officials, hire prisoners as their employees.

FPI should transition out of the business of making and selling goods. Instead, they should facilitate the employment of inmate labor by private sector companies. In their new role, FPI would provide the security and space for private contractors to set up production facilities inside the prison. At the same time, Congress should lift the federal restrictions governing the Prison Industry Enhancement (PIE) Program so that state prison programs could more effectively engage with private companies who want to employ prisoners.

Six years after Congress passed legislation ending welfare as we know it, it is ironic that there is one major group in society that still gets public support without work requirement: prisoners. As a result, it is time to enlist the entrepreneurial energies of the private sector and reduce the regulations and barriers to companies employing prisoners. Doing so is good for prisoners, the justice system, employers and taxpayers. ☞

— Robert D. Atkinson is vice president of the Progressive Policy Institute and director of PPI's Technology and New Economy Project



Angry Canucks Growing anti-Americanism in Canada

By Rachel K. Ayerst

Americans share a 5,000-mile undefended border with their northern neighbor, but in recent years, Canada and the United States have shared little else. Officials in both nations insist that relations are as friendly as ever. It is clear, however, that disagreements over foreign policy and growing anti-American sentiment among Canadian citizens are creating a major rift between the longtime friends and allies.

President George W. Bush recently completed a two-day trip to Canada — marking the first official state visit to the country by a sitting U.S. President in over a decade. Although he did not address Parliament, President Bush delivered a major speech in which he described the current state of U.S.-Canadian relations by saying “beyond the words of politicians and the natural disagreements that nations will have, our two peoples are one family, and always will be.” President Bush was being generous.

In the past few years, many Canadian liberals have not only expressed their distaste for the United States’ current Republican leadership, but also for many of its core values. One would think that they might refrain from insulting a country whose economic investment is necessary for Canada’s very survival (Washington is Ottawa’s largest trading partner). Rather, Canada’s predominately leftist elite delights in attacking the United States at every turn, which is not only immature, but also disrespectful.

From the beginning of the Bush Presidency, Canadian liberals have had an almost pathological distaste for his personality and political beliefs. A good example of this anti-Bush hysteria is the recent controversy surrounding Carolyn Parrish, a Liberal Member of Parliament from Ontario. On the eve of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Ms. Parrish famously declared that she hated Americans. Just last month, she appeared on a satirical Canadian television program, stomping on the head of an action doll that resembled President Bush. Despite these outrageous comments, Ms.

Parrish was only recently removed from her party’s caucus. This should not really come as a surprise. Canada is, after all, a country that broadcasts *Al-Jazeera*, yet objects to airing *Fox News*.

For much of the past century, Canada and the United States have enjoyed a friendly working relationship. Both countries were staunch allies in World War I and World War II, the Korean War and the first Persian Gulf War.

But this close alliance is now being eroded. Two recent announcements by Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin promise to have a grave impact on U.S.-Canadian relations. First, Mr. Martin declared that Canada will neither invest any money in President Bush’s proposed missile defense system, nor allow the United States to station any of its rockets on Canadian soil. Mr. Martin also publicly stated that Canada will allow U.S. soldiers who refuse to serve in Iraq the right to immigrate.

The vast majority of Canadians question American motives — especially with regard to foreign affairs. They genuinely believe their country is safe from attack because their government pursues peaceful policies. This naïve outlook is, of course, bolstered by Canadian knowledge that, in a time of real crisis, the United States would certainly come to their defense.

Yet there is something besides opposition to President Bush’s global war on terrorism that is fueling the growing tide of anti-Americanism. Canada has always had an inferiority complex regarding its giant neighbor to the south. Developments in recent decades have only accentuated this.



Illustration by John M. Boone

“In the past few years, many Canadian liberals have not only expressed their distaste for the United States’ current Republican leadership, but also for many of its core values. One would think that they might refrain from insulting a country whose economic investment is necessary for Canada’s very survival.”

The country’s ailing public health care system, its burdensome tax rates and increasing irrelevance on the international stage — all have contributed to a general sense among Canadians that they are falling behind their American counterparts. Hence, it is easier for many Canadians to lash out at President Bush or at America in general, rather than focus on their own country’s real problems.

Canada’s livelihood is dependent on its trade with the United States, and if relations continue to deteriorate, Canadians have much to lose. President Bush’s recent trip to Canada constituted a good faith gesture on the part of his administration. Let’s hope that Canadians can reciprocate his goodwill. ☺

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

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After Arafat

The future of the Middle East

By Frederick Krantz

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's death has triggered much speculation about the future of the Middle East "peace process." Can it in fact be revived, and if so, how quickly? Will new Palestinian Authority elections actually take place? Are there really Palestinian "moderates," and if so, can they overcome radical terrorist groups without a struggle leading to chaos and civil war?

Much of the current speculation is predicated on false assumptions. These are: that the "peace process" is still in operation; that Arafat's death has made a more "moderate" leadership possible; and that this leadership will make a genuine and lasting peace with Israel. Another assumption is that such a real peace will be permanent, rather than simply a temporary tactic used to destroy the Jewish state. There has been almost 60 years of unremitting, bloody Palestinian rejection of the legitimacy of Jewish Israel in the Middle East. Are we now to believe that the Palestinians will finally accept the Jewish state?

The 'Two-State' Solution

There are those who assume that it is possible to establish a peaceful settlement by creating two independent states: Israel and Palestine. These analysts can be placed into two related categories.

One group presents a naïve analysis of Palestinian politics. These individuals have a quite remarkable, and perhaps willed amnesia, about the unremitting genocidal Palestinian policy towards Israel. Even the late Palestinian leader, Faisal Husseini, admitted that Palestinian support for the 1993 Oslo accords was a consciously adopted "Trojan horse." Despite the continuing terrorist campaign, the incorrigibly optimistic liberal or leftist *bien pensants* continue to see a silver lining. They hope that it will be possible to forge a "moderate" path to peace – even though this will entail utilizing the same Palestinian cast of characters, minus Arafat.

There is also another perspective. This one is less benign, more *realpolitik*, and cynically anti-Israel. In this case, the French-led European Union is key.

According to the scholar Bat Ye'or, the European Union is consciously attempting to create "Eurabia," an anti-Israel (and anti-American) economic and political alliance between the European Union and the Arab League states. This is a policy that originated in the 1960s. It envisions a rapid revival of the peace process that will lead to a two-state solution. This plan also requires the cooperation of the now "moderate," post-Arafat Palestinian leadership.

However, the "moderate" candidates for leadership, Mahmoud Abbas and Mohammed Qureia, were Arafat's comrades from the 1950s and were founding members of Fatah and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). They were participants in the attempt to take over Jordan from 1968-70, in which they were subsequently expelled to Lebanon. They were with Arafat in sparking civil war in Lebanon, and with him after the PLO was forced by Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon into exile in Tunisia.

These "moderates" participated in PLO terrorism and corruption throughout the 1960s and 1970s. They condoned acts such as the civilian aircraft hijackings and bombings (a PLO invention), the 1972 Israeli Olympic athletes massacre at Munich, and the 1973 PLO "Black September" assassination of American ambassadors in Khartoum. These leaders also supported the Ma'alot massacre of 21 Israeli schoolchildren and four adults in 1974, and the capture of the Achille Lauro and murder of the wheelchair-bound Leon Klinghoffer. The list goes on and on, as does the river of blood. Furthermore, Abbas and Qureia have been involved in the Arafat-led corruption which has marked the PLO, and the Palestinian Authority, from its origins.

Two-state advocates also make certain untenable assumptions about Israel's "necessary" concessions such as the removal of all settlements from the West Bank and Gaza, and the ceding of east Jerusalem to the Palestinians for their capital. Yet Israel will not, assuredly, again offer to divide Jerusalem, nor give up all, or even most, of the Judea and Samaria settlements.



Illustration by John M. Boone

Also, two-state advocates usually remain silent about the crucial "right of return" issue. The Palestinians continue to claim the right to the repatriation to Israel proper of up to three million refugees and their descendants. No Israeli government of any political stripe will agree to commit demographic suicide by adding another two to three million Arabs to Israel's Palestinian Arab population.

The 'One-State' Solution

Alongside the "two-state" scenario a new, "one state" or "bi-national" solution has recently emerged. This view has been espoused by anti-PLO Arab radicals, European anti-Israel leftists, and increasingly by some American and Canadian analysts. In their view, the Arab-Israeli conflict can be resolved by merging Israel and "Palestine" into one democratic entity that encompasses two "peoples."

Upon closer examination this one-state option is not an option at all. Extremists, both Arab and Western, use this suggestion as a kind of threat: if Israel won't allow a separate Palestinian state on its borders,

then we will get the world to impose a one-state solution upon the Jews. This “right of return” variant is, in fact, a thinly veiled prescription for a revanchist Arab majority (one, moreover, without democratic experience or commitment), which would mean both the destruction of Israel and the expulsion, or worse, of its Jews.

Israel, of course, will never accept this.

The ‘No State’ Solution

Finally, there is yet a third, and perhaps the most feasible option pertaining to the post-Arafat situation: the “no state” position. This view is backed by those who argue that neither the so-called Arab-Israeli conflict, nor the current post-Oslo situation, are accidents.

These Israeli and pro-Israel voices note that the current conflict did not emanate from Israeli ill-will. Since 1948, the Israelis have consistently sought peace and recognition. On the other hand, since the 1920s the Arabs have been determined first to eliminate the Jews from Palestine, and then – in 1947–48, 1956, 1967 and 1973 – to destroy the Jewish state.

No-state advocates are convinced that Arafat and the PLO have never swerved from their goal of destroying the Jewish state. This objective was stated, and never in fact removed, from their “Covenant,” or constitution. No-state advocates are therefore less sanguine than the two-state people about reviving real negotiations. Nor do these skeptics assume that the old-line associates of Arafat have now morphed into moderates, or that the post-Arafat period will see the emergence of a younger-generation of true “moderates.”

No-staters argue that the Palestinians have been unable to achieve their ultimate objective through diplomacy and, hence, now resort to violence and terror. They use radio, television and their education system to spew anti-Semitism and to glorify suicide-bombers. Consequently, no-staters maintain that, for the foreseeable future, Palestinians have abdicated the right to an independent, sovereign state. This can be reversed only when a new moderate leadership is chosen in free and fair elections, and it has ended terrorism and anti-Semitic propaganda.

Such an outcome will take years, not months. In the interim, the anti-terrorism barrier will be completed and will provide a *de facto* border. Also, settlements in Judea

and Samaria will remain in place. And as planned by Israel’s Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for military and political reasons, current Israeli politics may preclude even the evacuation of Gaza.

Hence, no-staters believe that while the two-state solution, on hold since the late 1990s, may seem to have again entered the realm of possibility with Arafat’s death, it cannot be arbitrarily resuscitated before a stable and truly moderate Palestinian leadership emerges. Arafat’s terror war not only failed politically but led to social and economic disaster. Thus, Abbas and some of his supporters may have become converts to reconciliation and honest acceptance of the legitimacy of Israel – but this remains to be seen.

The no-state advocates point to the many obstacles that still bar the path to reconciliation. Palestinian leaders face a sullen, brainwashed population which has indulged in a “culture of death” for over four years. They also face a formidable array of extremists, within and without the Palestinian territory. Above all, terrorist Hamas (backed by Lebanon’s Hezbollah, itself backed by Iran) opposes any move by the Palestinian Authority towards accommodation with Israel, and has announced it opposes elections and will not give up using violence. And the Islamic Jihad terrorist group also stated recently that it rejects the January elections.

U.S. foreign policy further complicates matters. President George W. Bush made Arafat *persona non grata* well before his death. This was a major American policy shift. And President Bush has called for a new Palestinian leadership that must put an end to Palestinian violence and hate propaganda and elect a new and truly moderate leader. President Bush maintains that these are prerequisites for any negotiation.

Yet neither Israel nor the United States are in a hurry to resume talks. For the moment, then, whether the two-state route will be resumed, and whether once resumed it can succeed, remains moot. The almost messianic enthusiasm of its advocates recalls the hopes which greeted Oslo a decade ago; like those dreams, such new hopes could again be dashed.

The Best Hope for Peace

It is evident then, that once again, the “no state” policy is still the best possible policy. This has in fact been in place since

Arafat unleashed his terrorist war against Israel in 2000. Erection of the security barrier, the possible evacuation of Gaza, placement of the Israel Defense Forces around the main Arab cities and crossroads in Judea and Samaria to interdict terrorist organizations and block suicide bombers – all are unilateral Israeli steps taken in the absence, now and for the foreseeable future, of a suitable negotiating partner.

Oslo, and former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak’s extremely radical peace offers made at Camp David II and Taba, are dead. And, given the last four years of unremitting, Arafat-backed Palestinian murder and mayhem, a broad spectrum of Israelis overwhelmingly back Ariel Sharon’s policies. No real negotiations can resume until the Palestinian Authority reimposes its control of Palestinian areas, suppresses the terror campaign and educates its people finally to give up the impossible dream of a “right of return.”

This is, given Palestinian history, a tall order. If men like Mahmoud Abbas and Mohammed Qureia have in fact learned that Israel cannot be destroyed by force, and that the Arafat-led terrorist war has resulted only in disaster, they must convince the Palestinians to radically change course. Severe divisions, and even civil war and the collapse of Palestinian society, remain possible. Indeed, there is current talk of involving the Egyptians in Gaza and, should it prove necessary, the Jordanians in the West Bank; this underlines possible alternatives to a failed Palestinian state.

The “world community” has lavished treasure and support upon Palestinian leaders since 1948. Yet, the Palestinian dream of an independent state may today be farther from, not closer to, realization. This is a paradox worth pondering. ☞

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