

WaPo has something today that's really rich. Pickerhead has often asked his liberal friends if they hate W so much because he's stolen Wilson's thunder. A former Clinton dude asks WWWWD. What would Woodrow Wilson do?

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Is the party of Wilson abandoning Wilsonianism? Why have we gone mum on an issue that is so central to our own foreign policy heritage and past triumphs?

Mark's making fun of the Anglicans today. Then he goes after the nanny state.

The other day, six Anglican archbishops called for the church to bless the unions of same-sex couples. The Anglican Church of Canada is about to have a big vote on the issue, and depending which way they swing it will either deepen the schism within the worldwide Anglican Communion or further isolate the Episcopal Church of the United States.

But never mind all that. What struck me was the rationale the archbishops came up with. This gay thing, they sighed. We've been yakking about it for years. Let's just get on with it, and then we can get back to the important stuff. "We are deeply concerned that ongoing study," they fretted, "will only continue to draw us away from issues which are gradually destroying God's creation – child poverty, racism, global warming, economic injustice, concern for our aboriginal brothers and sisters and the growing disparity between the rich and the poor."

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... But in the broader picture it might be truer still to say that the individual, unlike the state, therefore has an interest in stopping and reversing the government annexation of health care – because that argument can be used to justify almost any restraint on freedom – and, in the end, you may not get the health care, anyway. Under Britain's National Health Service, smokers in Manchester have been denied treatment for heart disease, and the obese in Suffolk are refused hip and knee replacements. Patricia Hewitt, the health secretary, says that it's appropriate to decline treatment on the basis of "lifestyle choices." Today, it's smokers and the obese. But, if a gay guy has condom-less sex with multiple partners, why should his "lifestyle choices" get a pass? Health care costs can be used to justify anything. ...

Vaclav Klaus, president of the Czech republic says the agenda of greens will destroy freedom.

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In the past year, Al Gore's so-called "documentary" film was shown in cinemas worldwide, Britain's - more or less Tony Blair's - Stern report was published, the fourth report of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was put together and the Group of Eight summit announced ambitions to do something about the weather. Rational and freedom-loving people have to respond. The dictates of political correctness are strict and only one permitted truth, not for the first time in human history, is imposed on us. Everything else is denounced.

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[Adam Smith's](#) quote of the week is from Ronald Reagan.

[Jerusalem Post](#) reports a bit of Gaza irony.

Enraged Fatah leaders on Saturday accused Hamas militiamen of looting the home of former Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat in Gaza City.

"They stole almost everything inside the house, including Arafat's Nobel Peace Prize medal,"

[Corner](#) post on the pilfered prize.

[Roger Simon](#) says it's poetic justice.

[Neal Boortz](#) with a Trent Lott post.

... Now we have yet another lesson in how the power of the Imperial Federal Government can be brought to bear against talk radio. Not only are the threats coming from the left, but now also from the right. Talk radio is abuzz today --- and I suspect will be for quite a few days -- over a comment made by Senator Lott late this week. According to The New York Times Senator Lott had threw a bit of a snit-fit on Thursday over the failure (thus far) of the amnesty bill. He is quoted as saying "Talk radio is running America. We have to deal with that problem."

Now if I were Senator Lott and I wanted to diffuse the uproar over that comment, I would say that what I really meant to say was that we, in the Senate, need to work harder to deal with the problems with the amnesty bill that has talk radio listeners in such an uproar. I would then amuse the press by spinning around on my eyebrows and spitting twenty-dollar gold pieces.

We know what Senator Lott meant. Talk radio is getting in the way of a political goal, and therefore talk radio needs to be dealt with. How? Why with government regulations and restrictions, of course! How else does the government deal with pesky little problems?

Kill the messenger. ...

[The Captain](#) posts on a Lieberman WSJ op-ed. Then the [Nifong](#) disbarment gets a comment.

The Bar had some damning things to say about Nifong before disbarring him. They found that Nifong deliberately acted with malice in order to boost his political career, a conclusion most reached after the results of DNA testing became fully known. They also found that he lied to the court and to Bar investigators.

Speaking of Duke, [Power Line](#) wants to know, "what about the (professors in the) gang of 88?"

... It is a remarkable fact of the Duke case that the legal profession has acquitted itself with greater honor than the professoriate.

[Helen Thomas](#) reviews the Reagan Diaries and says nice things.

Read the newly published "The Reagan Diaries" if you want a true insight into the mind of the nation's 40th president.

The diaries -- written daily from 1981 until President Reagan left office in 1989 -- reveal him to be much more involved in the nitty gritty of national and world affairs than many White House reporters thought. He had often been portrayed as a detached "chairman of the board" kind of president. ...

... As a reporter having covered him for eight years in the White House, I am sure the media could have done a better job if we had known the real Ronald Reagan.

[American Thinker](#) on NY Times ad revenue.

[Knowledge Problem](#) posts on "creative destruction" as a film shows producing assets leaving Germany for China.

Washington Post

[The Democrats' Democracy Problem](#)

By Ronald D. Asmus

Democrats today have a problem with democracy. We have lost our voice on the issue of promoting democracy abroad -- which means that what was once a core Democratic foreign policy idea is being ceded to the [GOP](#).

In 1995, democracy promotion was one of the three central pillars of President [Bill Clinton](#)'s first National Security Strategy. Rereading the document today, with its call for "a more secure world

where democracy and free markets know no borders," I'm struck by how the idea of expanding democracy's reach permeated official Democratic thinking a decade ago.

No more. Today, it's hard to say where the [Democratic Party](#) stands on the issue of promoting democracy. The party's 2004 presidential nominee, [Sen. John F. Kerry](#), never spoke directly to the issue. When Senate Democrats issued their March 2006 national security blueprint, entitled "Real Security," it did not even mention the word democracy. Democratic think tanks in Washington churn out reports criticizing Bush administration policies and laying out Democratic alternatives on various matters, but few if any of them explain how -- or whether -- we would advance democracy abroad if we again won the [White House](#).

You can look in vain for major legislative initiatives on the issue from [Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid](#) or House Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#); you have to strain to hear clear statements from our leading presidential candidates -- [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#), [Barack Obama](#) and [John Edwards](#) -- or even to find a mention of democracy in their campaign Web sites' foreign policy sections. The party's leaders have gone quiet in the larger discussion about values, liberty and human rights; they seem to see no broader purpose for U.S. foreign policy other than self-interest and an end to the [Iraq](#) war. When democracy activists from around the world (including those from center-left parties) visit Washington, they often find it easier to get the time and attention of Republican senators than of their Democratic counterparts. Democracy promotion, they are sometimes told, has become "their" -- i.e., the Republicans' -- issue.

[Woodrow Wilson](#), FDR, [Harry S. Truman](#) and [John F. Kennedy](#) must be turning in their graves. Using U.S. power to promote freedom and democracy was central to their foreign policies and legacies. Even [Jimmy Carter](#), a far less successful Democratic president, can be proud of making human rights a major U.S. foreign policy objective. And Bill Clinton's interventions in the [Balkans](#) and drive to expand [NATO](#) were all about consolidating democracy in [Europe's](#) eastern half. There was a time, not too long ago, when Democrats were proud of their track record on democracy promotion -- and rightly so.

Is the party of Wilson abandoning Wilsonianism? Why have we gone mum on an issue that is so central to our own foreign policy heritage and past triumphs?

Part of the reason is [President Bush](#). In [Prague](#) earlier this month, Bush won applause for calling "the advance of freedom and democracy" the "great alternatives to repression and radicalism." But his conflation of democracy promotion with the invasion of Iraq and the preventive use of military force has given freedom a bad name. The more ardently Bush talks about democratization abroad, the more Democrats seem to scamper in the opposite direction. In the zero-sum partisan world of today's Washington, the intense dislike of Bush and his Iraq misadventure has led many Democrats to reject their own foreign policy traditions.

Reinforcing this Democratic retreat on democracy has been the uneasy sense that pushing for more openness in some regions, especially the [Middle East](#), may only empower our foes. [Hamas](#) won elections in the [Palestinian Authority](#), and other Islamic radicals are eager to emulate their victory at the ballot box. And at home, the rise of the antiwar movement has amplified Democratic voices dubious about universal liberal values and the use of U.S. power to pursue them.

The net result? The Democratic Party is divided over whether it should return to the Clinton-era principles of liberal internationalism and reapply them to our increasingly dangerous post-9/11 world, or instead embrace a new, more limited form of cold-eyed realism based on a narrower

definition of U.S. interests, a preference for stability and an abiding skepticism about whether pursuing democracy is a luxury we can afford.

It is time to stop blaming Bush for our inability to articulate a true alternative strategy for expanding democracy and human rights. Democracy promotion was a key issue long before Bush emerged on the national stage, and it will remain one long after he has retired to his Crawford ranch. Nothing is stopping us from coming up with our own updated vision of a principled, tough-minded liberal internationalism except our own confusion, cynicism and timidity. Indeed, such a vision is more important than ever. Americans are hungry for something different and inspiring after years of the Bush administration's bluster and blunders. And such an alternative is central to the task of rebuilding the nation's image and alliances.

Those who think the Democrats can't go wrong in 2008 should think again. In the early 1970s, the antiwar movement helped take the [United States](#) out of [Vietnam](#) and the GOP out of the White House -- for one term. It also saddled the Democratic Party with the albatross of an ambivalent attitude toward U.S. purpose and power that has taken decades to overcome. Let's not make the same mistake again.

What looms above this reversal of principle is Iraq. Democrats who are disgusted with the fruits of Bush's reckless, values-based foreign policy must avoid the temptation to embrace a heartless, interest-based foreign policy devoid of values. The past few years teach us several lessons -- including that some things are true even if George W. Bush says them.

One key lesson is that trying to impose democracy at the point of a gun, without the right preconditions on the ground or a competent plan for the day after, is a recipe for disaster. But let's not forget the lesson of 9/11, either -- that the failure of Arab politics to produce decent, democratic governments helped spawn homicidal opposition movements such as [al-Qaeda](#).

It was also a major error to walk away from [Afghanistan](#) after the 1989 Soviet withdrawal, thereby allowing the [Taliban](#) and al-Qaeda to seize power. And the cozy deals we have made with authoritarian regimes such as those in [Egypt](#) and [Saudi Arabia](#) may have looked good at the time, but they wound up fanning the flames of Islamic radicalism and stoking the strategic nightmare we now face.

Democracy promotion is often messy and hard. You need to work with authoritarian governments even as you try to encourage change in their societies; aid sent to democrats abroad can be wasted; elections don't always produce the results we'd like. Still, the long-term benefits -- as we see in Europe today -- are worth it. The answer to Bush's mistakes must be to develop a more realistic and credible democracy-promotion strategy, not to abandon the goal.

Doing so is also smart politics. Democrats won last year's midterm elections by tapping into the public's disenchantment over Iraq, corruption and other issues. For the first time in decades, polls show the GOP's traditional advantage on national security issues evaporating. But this reflects a collapse in the public's trust of the Republicans, not any particular enthusiasm for the Democrats' ideas. Large parts of the American public still doubt our core convictions on foreign policy. Pointing out Bush's failures won't be enough to win the White House. The American public wants to know what we stand for if it is to entrust us with the ship of state in today's perilous world.

Ronald D. Asmus was deputy assistant secretary of state for European affairs during the Clinton administration. He is the author of "Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era."

Orange County Register

Beware of government as the last action hero

by Mark Steyn

The other day, six Anglican archbishops called for the church to bless the unions of same-sex couples. The Anglican Church of Canada is about to have a big vote on the issue, and depending which way they swing it will either deepen the schism within the worldwide Anglican Communion or further isolate the Episcopal Church of the United States.

But never mind all that. What struck me was the rationale the archbishops came up with. This gay thing, they sighed. We've been yakking about it for years. Let's just get on with it, and then we can get back to the important stuff. "We are deeply concerned that ongoing study," they fretted, "will only continue to draw us away from issues which are gradually destroying God's creation – child poverty, racism, global warming, economic injustice, concern for our aboriginal brothers and sisters and the growing disparity between the rich and the poor."

That's it? Anglicans need to fast-track a liturgy for gay couples so they can free up time to deal with the real issues like global warming? Half that catalogue of horrors seems to be different ways of saying the same thing ("child poverty... economic injustice... growing disparity") in order to give a bit of pro forma padding to the totally cool cause du jour of global warming. Which is so cool that, if an Anglican archbishop shows up at a climate-change conference, he'll be lucky to get in the room, and if he does he'll be stuck at the table with the wonky leg next to the toilet, barely able to see the Most Reverend Almer Gortry up on stage doing his power-point presentation and warning that rising sea levels will send tidal waves crashing through every gay wedding reception in Provincetown by Saturday afternoon.

Everyone's "dealing with" global warming now. The G8 nations just devoted their summit to it. Time magazine has a big story this week headlined "The New Ac-tion Heroes." It's about Michael Bloomberg in New York and Arnold Schwarzenegger in California, photographed together looking either like a couple of mob enforcers or a gay couple who've just been told the church was double-booked for a Jerry Falwell memorial. But, either way, this heroic duo is not like these do-nothings in Congress, mired in partisan bickering. They're men of action, and they're getting things done.

What are they doing? Why, Bloomberg was "opening a climate summit" and "talking about saving the planet." All of it, including the bits west of the Holland Tunnel. And Schwarzenegger was "talking about eliminating disease. All of them. "I look forward to curing all these terrible illnesses," he announced.

As Madame Cornuel observed, no man is a hero to his valet. But fortunately it's a lot easier to be a hero to your typist, especially when it's Time's Michael Grunwald. "They're tackling not just the climate," he says, anxious not to give the impression they're a couple of slackers sneaking off for golf after lunch. No, sir. These action heroes are "doing big things that Washington has failed to do." Bloomberg, coos Grunwald, "also enacted America's most Draconian smoking ban and the first big-city trans-fat ban."

At one level, Bloomberg and Schwarzenegger have a point. Why wait for national or international action when a mayor or governor can just get on with it? But the assumptions underpinning Time's paeon to the new action heroes all operate in one direction – in increased government regulation and restraint on individual judgment.

The argument for this is that the state has an interest in a healthy workforce: If you're poor, and you get lung cancer, you'll be filling up hospital rooms at public expense. If that's true, then the state arguably has a greater interest in you continuing to smoke and dying young: The ever-aging population of the Western world will be the biggest burden on state resources in the coming decades.

But in the broader picture it might be truer still to say that the individual, unlike the state, therefore has an interest in stopping and reversing the government annexation of health care – because that argument can be used to justify almost any restraint on freedom – and, in the end, you may not get the health care, anyway. Under Britain's National Health Service, smokers in Manchester have been denied treatment for heart disease, and the obese in Suffolk are refused hip and knee replacements. Patricia Hewitt, the health secretary, says that it's appropriate to decline treatment on the basis of "lifestyle choices." Today, it's smokers and the obese. But, if a gay guy has condom-less sex with multiple partners, why should his "lifestyle choices" get a pass? Health care costs can be used to justify anything.

And, if becoming a charge of the state is the issue, then Gov. Schwarzenegger is a complete squish on California's real health crisis. His state's emergency rooms have been reduced to Quebec-level waiting times because of the strains of providing free health care to the legions of the undocumented. One third of the patients in Los Angeles County hospitals are illegal immigrants, and they've overwhelmed the system: dozens of emergency rooms in the state have closed this decade after degenerating into an unfunded de facto Mexican health care network. If you're a legal resident of California, your health system is worse than it was a decade ago and will be worse still in a decade's time. Fortunately, by then your action-hero governor will have cured "all these terrible illnesses," and there will be no need for California's last seven hospitals.

The illegal immigration question is an interesting test of government in action, at least when it comes to core responsibilities like defense of the nation. When critics of this "comprehensive" immigration bill demand enforcement of the borders, the administration says: Boy, you're right there! We're with you on that! We want enforcement, too. But we can't get it as long as you're holding up this "comprehensive reform."

Why not? There are immigration laws on the books right now, aren't there? Why not try enforcing them? The same people who say that government is a mighty power for good that can extinguish every cigarette butt and detoxify every cheeseburger and even change the very climate of the planet back to some Edenic state so that the water that falleth from heaven will land as ice and snow, and polar bears on distant continents will frolic as they did in days of yore, the very same people say: Building a border fence? Enforcing deportation orders? Can't be done, old boy. Pie-in-the-sky.

In such a world, let us salute a far rarer politician than Nanny Bloomberg: "What is at risk is not the climate but freedom," said the Czech president Vaclav Klaus this week. "I see the biggest threat to freedom, democracy, the market economy and prosperity now in ambitious environmentalism, not in communism. This ideology wants to replace the free and spontaneous evolution of mankind by a sort of central (now global) planning."

Go back to those Canadian archbishops who want to worry about "child poverty." Poor children are the children of poor grown-ups. If the state assumes responsibility for those children from their parents, what kind of adults are you likely to end up with? And if you can't trust free-born citizens to reach their own judgments on cheeseburgers, what can you trust them with?

Financial Times

What is at risk is not the climate but freedom

by Vaclav Klaus

We are living in strange times. One exceptionally warm winter is enough - irrespective of the fact that in the course of the 20th century the global temperature increased only by 0.6 per cent - for the environmentalists and their followers to suggest radical measures to do something about the weather, and to do it right now.

In the past year, Al Gore's so-called "documentary" film was shown in cinemas worldwide, Britain's - more or less Tony Blair's - Stern report was published, the fourth report of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was put together and the Group of Eight summit announced ambitions to do something about the weather. Rational and freedom-loving people have to respond. The dictates of political correctness are strict and only one permitted truth, not for the first time in human history, is imposed on us. Everything else is denounced.

The author Michael Crichton stated it clearly: "the greatest challenge facing mankind is the challenge of distinguishing reality from fantasy, truth from propaganda". I feel the same way, because global warming hysteria has become a prime example of the truth versus propaganda problem. It requires courage to oppose the "established" truth, although a lot of people - including top-class scientists - see the issue of climate change entirely differently. They protest against the arrogance of those who advocate the global warming hypothesis and relate it to human activities.

As someone who lived under communism for most of his life, I feel obliged to say that I see the biggest threat to freedom, democracy, the market economy and prosperity now in ambitious environmentalism, not in communism. This ideology wants to replace the free and spontaneous evolution of mankind by a sort of central (now global) planning.

The environmentalists ask for immediate political action because they do not believe in the long-term positive impact of economic growth and ignore both the technological progress that future generations will undoubtedly enjoy, and the proven fact that the higher the wealth of society, the higher is the quality of the environment. They are Malthusian pessimists.

The scientists should help us and take into consideration the political effects of their scientific opinions. They have an obligation to declare their political and value assumptions and how much they have affected their selection and interpretation of scientific evidence.

Does it make any sense to speak about warming of the Earth when we see it in the context of the evolution of our planet over hundreds of millions of years? Every child is taught at school about temperature variations, about the ice ages, about the much warmer climate in the Middle Ages. All of us have noticed that even during our life-time temperature changes occur (in both directions).

Due to advances in technology, increases in disposable wealth, the rationality of institutions and the ability of countries to organise themselves, the adaptability of human society has been radically increased. It will continue to increase and will solve any potential consequences of mild climate changes.

I agree with Professor Richard Lindzen from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who said: "future generations will wonder in bemused amazement that the early 21st century's developed world went into hysterical panic over a globally averaged temperature increase of a few tenths of a degree, and, on the basis of gross exaggerations of highly uncertain computer projections combined into implausible chains of inference, proceeded to contemplate a roll-back of the industrial age".

The issue of global warming is more about social than natural sciences and more about man and his freedom than about tenths of a degree Celsius changes in average global temperature.

As a witness to today's worldwide debate on climate change, I suggest the following:

*Small climate changes do not demand far-reaching restrictive measures

*Any suppression of freedom and democracy should be avoided

*Instead of organising people from above, let us allow everyone to live as he wants

*Let us resist the politicisation of science and oppose the term "scientific consensus", which is always achieved only by a loud minority, never by a silent majority

*Instead of speaking about "the environment", let us be attentive to it in our personal behaviour

*Let us be humble but confident in the spontaneous evolution of human society. Let us trust its rationality and not try to slow it down or divert it in any direction

*Let us not scare ourselves with catastrophic forecasts, or use them to defend and promote irrational interventions in human lives.

The writer is president of the Czech Republic

AdamSmith.org

Quote of the week

By [Wordsmith](#) in: [Miscellaneous](#)

Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.

– Ronald Reagan

Jerusalem Post

Looters raid Arafat's home, steal his Nobel Peace Prize

by Khaled Abu Toameh

Enraged Fatah leaders on Saturday accused Hamas militiamen of looting the home of former Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat in Gaza City.

"They stole almost everything inside the house, including Arafat's Nobel Peace Prize medal," said Ramallah-based Fatah spokesman Ahmed Abdel Rahman. " Hamas militiamen and gangsters blew up the main entrance to the house before storming it. They stole many of

Arafat's documents and files, gifts he had received from world leaders and even his military outfits."

Abdel Rahman said the attackers also raided the second floor of the house and stole the personal belongings of his widow, Suha, and daughter, Zahwa. "They stole all the widow's clothes and shoes," he added. "They also took Arafat's pictures with his daughter."

Eyewitnesses told *The Jerusalem Post* that dozens of Palestinians participated in the raid, which took place late Friday.

"Most of the looters were just ordinary citizens," they said. "They stole almost everything, including furniture, tiles, water pipes, closets and beds."

According to the Fatah spokesman, the raid on Arafat's house, which has been empty since 2001, occurred despite promises from Syria-based Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal to prevent such an attack.

"The Palestinian people will never forgive the Hamas gangs for looting the home of the Palestinian people's great leader, Yasser Arafat," Abdel Rahman said. "This crime will remain a stain of disgrace on the forehead of Hamas and its despicable gangs."

The homes of several other Fatah leaders have also been looted over the past few days, Palestinian reporters in Gaza City said over the weekend. Among them are the homes of Muhammad Dahlan and Intisar al-Wazir (Um Jihad).

Wazir complained that looters stole her jewelry, furniture, clothes and family albums and the personal belongings of her husband, Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), a top PLO leader who was assassinated by Israel in 1988 in Tunis.

She said the looting occurred in broad daylight and under the watchful eye of Hamas militiamen. "We don't feel secure any more," she said. "We fear for our lives and property."

The Popular Resistance Committees, an alliance of various armed groups, announced over the weekend that its men stormed Dahlan's house and confiscated a suitcase full of gold, forged US and Pakistani passports and an ID card belonging to Nissim Toledano, an Israeli Border Police officer from Lod who was kidnapped and murdered by Hamas in December 1992.

Following the raid, hundreds of Palestinians rampaged the house and stole all of Dahlan's furniture and clothes.

The Corner

[Too Perfect](#) [Jonah Goldberg]

I know this really shouldn't be a laughing matter, but if you were going to make the sort of dark, ironic, film we've come to expect from Hollywood when it comes to the idea of American empire and all that (think *Syriana*, the *Good Shepherd* et al.) about the Israel-Palestinian "peace process" you'd have to end it with the scene of Arafat's Nobel Peace Prize being looted [from his compound](#) by murderous Palestinian goons:

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I bet "the widow" had a lot of shoes.

Roger L. Simon

Saturday Night Live in the Palestinian Territories

I'm in a hotel room in New York and the Middle East seems strangely near. And I don't think it's just the 3000 miles LA - NY difference. You can almost hear that land of Palestine imploding. Things have spun so far out of control it's hard to imagine what will happen. And in the midst of it all, somewhere in that benighted land some Hamas lunatic has run off with [Yasser Arafat's Nobel Peace Prize](#) - a joke on a joke. I wonder what the pompous fakes in Oslo who awarded the psycho-killer the prize in the first place must be thinking. I'll tell you what I'm thinking - it's poetic justice.

Neal Boortz

EXCUSE ME, SENATOR LOTT ... BUT WAS THAT A THREAT?

How many times have I reminded you that despots and dictators always seek to control the means by which information is disseminated in their countries. Think back --- whenever you hear of a coup or a revolution, where do the revolutionaries head first? OK ... so it's the presidential palace. But their second target is going to be the media; the radio and television stations first, then the newspapers. Several weeks ago in Venezuela Hugo Chavez seized control of the main television station. It seems that the station just wasn't in step with his socialist policies. One can imagine that one of Chavez's aide told him that Radio Caracas Television was opposing his policies, and Chavez replied with something like "We have to deal with that problem."

Enter Mississippi Senator Trent Lott, a member of the old guard if ever there was one. Lott is apparently less-than-pleased that the president's amnesty bill didn't exactly slide unnoticed through the Senate on its way to eventual approval by the House. In fact, perhaps it can be said that Lott is furious, and he seems to be placing the blame for the trouble the amnesty bill is facing directly on talk radio!

We've known for some time now that the left hates talk radio .. hates it with a blinding, searing passion. You don't have to look far to see threats from the left as to what they're going to do with and to talk radio when they get control in Washington. The insipidly-named Fairness Doctrine comes to mind. A return to the Fairness Doctrine would effectively mean the end of talk radio as we now know it in this country. In my book "Somebody's Gotta Say It" I detail just how this would happen. I also point out that the Fairness Doctrine was a favorite of the right during the Nixon years, used often to badger left-leaning talkers who got in the Nixon Administration's way.

Now we have yet another lesson in how the power of the Imperial Federal Government can be brought to bear against talk radio. Not only are the threats coming from the left, but now also from the right. Talk radio is abuzz today --- and I suspect will be for quite a few days -- over a comment made by Senator Lott late this week. According to The New York Times Senator Lott had threw a bit of a snit-fit on Thursday over the failure (thus far) of the amnesty bill. He is quoted as saying "Talk radio is running America. We have to deal with that problem."

Now if I were Senator Lott and I wanted to diffuse the uproar over that comment, I would say that what I really meant to say was that we, in the Senate, need to work harder to deal with the problems with the amnesty bill that has talk radio listeners in such an uproar. I would then amuse the press by spinning around on my eyebrows and spitting twenty-dollar gold pieces.

We know what Senator Lott meant. Talk radio is getting in the way of a political goal, and therefore talk radio needs to be dealt with. How? Why with government regulations and restrictions, of course! How else does the government deal with pesky little problems?

Kill the messenger.

Talk radio isn't your problem, Senator Lott. The American people are your problem. They see right through the false promises of your amnesty bill. They instinctively know that there is no serious intent to close the border with Mexico and shut off the Mexican invasion. How do they know this? Because they know that if you and your fellow elitists in Washington actually intended to secure the borders you would have introduced legislation to do just that. Then, and only then, you would set about dealing with the problem of what to do with the 12 to 20 million illegals already here.

Most Americans were born at night just not *last* night. They instinctively understand that the reason you won't move first to secure the border is because you have no intention of securing the border at all! The business interests that are driving this bill (for Democrats, its the votes) are calling the shots here, and the American people see that clearly.

In the meantime, Senator Lott, a word of thanks ... at least from this second-tier talk show host. I would say that your "Talk radio is running America" statement has driven several million Americans to start twisting their radio dials to see just what is going on out there. Now we can hike our advertising rates again. Might as well make money while we still can.

Captain's Quarters

[Iraq Improving: Lieberman](#)

Joe Lieberman has struggled mightily to maintain American backing for the war in Iraq, and today he writes what amounts to [a rebuttal](#) of yesterday's [Washington Post analysis](#) for the Wall Street Journal. The Senator just returned from a trip to Iraq and other Middle East nations, and claims that he sees major improvements since his last visit in December:

I recently returned from Iraq and four other countries in the Middle East, my first trip to the region since December. In the intervening five months, almost everything about the American war effort in Baghdad has changed, with a new coalition military commander, Gen. David Petraeus; a new U.S. ambassador, Ryan Crocker; the introduction, at last, of new troops; and most important of all, a bold, new counterinsurgency strategy.

The question of course is--is it working? Here in Washington, advocates of retreat insist with absolute certainty that it is not, seizing upon every suicide bombing and American casualty as proof positive that the U.S. has failed in Iraq, and that it is time to get out.

In Baghdad, however, discussions with the talented Americans responsible for leading this fight are more balanced, more hopeful and, above all, more strategic in their focus--fixated not just on the headline or loss of the day, but on the larger stakes in this struggle, beginning with who our enemies are in Iraq. The officials I met in Baghdad said that 90% of suicide bombings in Iraq today are the work of non-Iraqi, al Qaeda terrorists. In fact, al Qaeda's leaders have repeatedly said that Iraq is the central front of their global war against us. That is why it is nonsensical for anyone to claim that the war in Iraq can be separated from the war against al Qaeda--and why a U.S. pullout, under fire, would represent an epic victory for al Qaeda, as significant as their attacks on 9/11.

Lieberman makes the points that advocates of the Iraq strategy repeat. A withdrawal will encourage al-Qaeda and Iran to continue and expand their operations in Iraq. The resultant collapse of security will force neighboring nations to send their own troops into Iraq, making it into a shifting, chaotic mess of cross-purpose actions for several nations. That will create the kind of failed state we see in Somalia and Sudan, and it will eventually force the US to re-invade Iraq when terrorists based their begin attacking American assets around the world -- including here.

However, Lieberman doesn't just argue the consequences of withdrawal. He also says that conditions have improved significantly over the last few months:

When I returned to Anbar on this trip, however, the security environment had undergone a dramatic reversal. Attacks on U.S. troops there have dropped from an average of 30 to 35 a day a few months ago to less than one a day now, according to Col. John Charlton, commander of the 1st Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division, headquartered in Ramadi. Whereas six months ago only half of Ramadi's 23 tribes were cooperating with the coalition, all have now been persuaded to join an anti-al Qaeda alliance. One of Ramadi's leading sheikhs told me: "A rifle pointed at an American soldier is a rifle pointed at an Iraqi." ...

In Baghdad, U.S. forces have cut in half the number of Iraqi deaths from sectarian violence since the surge began in February. They have also been making critical improvements in governance, basic services and commercial activity at the grassroots level.

This doesn't disagree with the report cited by the Washington Post. The article pointed out that the places where American surge strategy has the most application -- Anbar and Baghdad -- it has already succeeded in reducing violence. Anbar, according to that report, has seen violence drop by a third, and the violence now takes the form of battles against terrorists.

The game of whack-a-mole described yesterday by the Post, where violence shifted into Ninewah, demonstrates the efficacy of the new strategies, Lieberman argues. As American and Iraqi forces drive terrorists out of Anbar and Baghdad, they move outward to places like Diyala and Ninewah. The act of retreat makes them more vulnerable and less effective, but also more desperate to conduct attacks. And as in any military engagement, a shift in tactics and aggressiveness by one side will prompt a reaction in the other.

Lieberman makes a strong case for tenacity here. He reminds us that the purpose of our effort in Iraq isn't to win a revenue-sharing deal or the return of Ba'athists to public service. It's to help form a representative democracy in the region that can serve as an example of freedom in a region too long blighted by oppression.

[State Bar Lowers The Boom On Nifong](#)

Mike Nifong's legal career came [crashing to an end](#) today. After finding Nifong guilty on a number of counts of unethical behavior for his actions in the Duke lacrosse non-rape case, the North Carolina State Bar [disbarred Nifong](#), who had resigned as Durham County DA yesterday:

Durham County District Attorney Mike Nifong has been disbarred after being found guilty of a battery of ethics violations for his handling of the Duke lacrosse investigation, a North Carolina Bar disciplinary committee announced Saturday evening. ...

"We are in unanimous agreement that there is no discipline short of disbarment that would be appropriate in this case," said F. Lane Williamson, the committee's chairman.

Before the panel announced its punishment, Nifong said he believed disbarment would be appropriate and that he planned to waive all rights to appeal the findings of the bar panel, his attorney David Freedman said in court Saturday afternoon.

The Bar had some damning things to say about Nifong before disbaring him. They found that Nifong deliberately acted with malice in order to boost his political career, a conclusion most reached after the results of DNA testing became fully known. They also found that he lied to the court and to Bar investigators.

That may continue to complicate his life. The victims of Nifong's attacks have announced that they will seek criminal contempt charges against Nifong on the basis of deliberate misrepresentations to the Durham court. The Bar's findings of multiple counts of deliberate deception will have a strong influence on that case. Nifong could find himself in jail.

Nifong has already announced that he will not appeal the disbarment, although he has the option to do so. His resignation and acceptance of the Bar's punishment might convince a court to keep from sentencing him to prison for his actions, and that has to be what Nifong hopes to accomplish. However, the court should take into account the destruction of trust in the criminal justice system that Nifong has wrought. The impact of his actions under color of authority at least equal that of which Scooter Libby is accused, and the remedy should be similar.

Power Line

[What about the gang of 88?](#)

As John notes below, the organized bar of North Carolina has roused itself to [administer justice](#) to Durham Country District Attorney Michael Nifong. In disbaring him, the disciplinary committee imposed the maximum punishment available. Disbarment is the professional equivalent of capital punishment. Professor K.C. Johnson has been the indispensable chronicler of the case at [Durham-in-Wonderland](#). Professor Johnson concludes his [Sunday roundup](#) on the disciplinary proceeding with the statement of Steven Michael, the president of the North Carolina state bar:

In my experience, misconduct of the sort Mr. Nifong engaged in is very rare and not at all typical of prosecutors in our state. We deeply regret the serious harm caused to these young men and their families. We hope the decision today will lessen the likelihood that anything like this will happen again.

The Bar's strong response to this situation made clear that the ethical rules restricting pretrial public comment and requiring prosecutors to turn over exculpatory evidence will be strictly enforced. Those rules are important because they ensure the fundamental right to a fair trial that every citizen is guaranteed in our constitution.

And yet Nifong's misconduct was not the only professional misconduct that occurred in connection with the case. Who can forget [Duke's Gang of 88](#) radical professors that [supported](#) the on-campus lynch mob that issued "wanted" posters of the lacrosse players? In good postmodern style, the Gang of 88 has attempted to put its past [under erasure](#) (Professor Johnson commented [here](#)), but Duke students who exceed the Gang in maturity and responsibility [remember](#). When he [checked in](#) with one member of the Gang of 88 last fall, Professor Johnson reported:

I e-mailed Professor Curtis last week, to ask if in light of the many facts that have emerged since April 6 she entertained any second thoughts about signing the Group of 88's statement. I also asked if she had considered making a public statement supporting due process for the accused students.

She did not reply.

It is a remarkable fact of the Duke case that the legal profession has acquitted itself with greater honor than the professoriate. *Posted by Scott*

Seattle Post-Intelligencer **[Ronald Reagan revealed in new book](#)**

by Helen Thomas

WASHINGTON -- Read the newly published "The Reagan Diaries" if you want a true insight into the mind of the nation's 40th president.

The diaries -- written daily from 1981 until President Reagan left office in 1989 -- reveal him to be much more involved in the nitty gritty of national and world affairs than many White House reporters thought. He had often been portrayed as a detached "chairman of the board" kind of president.

The diaries show that Reagan had something to say about everything and everybody; his thoughts were often summarized in one handwritten sentence. His notations mixed the profound with the trivial.

Historian Douglas Brinkley, who edited the publication of the diaries, had to toss out chunks to boil the entries down to a 696-page memoir. But no one is shortchanged.

Reagan comes across as deeper, funnier, more religious and more humble than he seemed when he was striding across the world stage. He is true to his public persona -- foe of communism, tax increases and organized labor -- and often the news media.

The diaries are replete with his devotion to his wife, Nancy, and his despair at being "lonely" when she was not around.

On July 6, 1983, Reagan said: "Nancy's birthday! Life would be miserable if there wasn't a Nancy's birthday. What if she'd never been born? I don't want to think about it."

Also revealing were his tensions with his children -- Ronald Reagan Jr., who he said was anxious to shed his Secret Service protection, and Patti, who Reagan said had a "yo-yo relationship" with the family, whatever that means.

A former Hollywood star, he was an avid movie fan. He chafed at having to wear a bullet-proof vest. And he resented as a "d..n gross violation of privacy" the fact that he had to make public every gift, even those from his personal friends.

There were many serious notes about the Middle East often followed by a reference to watching a movie or "watching the 'Waltons on TV' and so to bed."

Here's how Reagan recalled his thoughts after he was shot in the lung by John Hinckley on March 30, 1981, outside the Washington Hilton Hotel as he walked toward his limousine. He was rushed to George Washington University Hospital and wrote:

"I was getting less and less air. I focused on that tiled ceiling and prayed. But I realized I couldn't ask for God's help while at the same time I felt hatred for the mixed up young man who had shot me. Isn't that the meaning of the lost sheep?"

Unlike President Nixon, Reagan did not have an "enemies list" of members of the press, but he was often outraged with the news media.

When Richard Allen, his first national security adviser, was accused of accepting gifts from the Japanese government, Reagan wrote: "The press has really been a lynch mob and I don't think they will stop which is why he can't be back in N.S.C. (National Security Council)."

In another entry, Reagan says: "Press Conference day. I think it was a good one but the 'pack' was blood thirsty."

"The press isn't after news. They want to trap you in a goof," he said at another point.

On June 7, 1981, he wrote: "Got word on Israeli bombing of Iraq nuclear reactor. I swear I believe Armageddon is near."

He recorded his observations about friend and foe.

On Oct. 13, 1981, Reagan said he met with "J.C." -- former President Carter -- adding: "I expected the worst, but he was cordial, friendly and just exchanged views on the Middle East, etc."

Reagan had a friendly relationship with House Speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, D-Mass., but that did not stop him from getting angry.

"Just saw a fundraising letter signed by Tip O'Neill for Dem. Cong. Committee," he said. "It is the most vicious pack of lies I've ever seen. It's aimed at Sr. Citizens & has me out to destroy Medicare & Social Security. We can't let him get away with this."

As a reporter having covered him for eight years in the White House, I am sure the media could have done a better job if we had known the real Ronald Reagan.

American Thinker

[New York Times slo-mo business collapse](#)

by Thomas Lifson

The business model he established for the New York Times Company continues to collapse under the feet of Pinch Sulzberger. The very latest revenue figures of the company released just minutes ago show that advertising revenue and gross revenue are declining at a rate that cannot be matched by growth in revenues from the expensive internet properties purchased by Sulzberger. Here is the data:

NY Times May ad rev at NY Times Media Group off 9.1%

NY Times May Internet ad revenue up 21.4%

NY Times May ad revenue off 8.5%, total revenue off 5.8%

Internet revenue growth was able to absorb roughly a third of the decline in the rest of the media properties, including the flagship NYT and other smaller papers (which are generally healthier monopolies than big city dailies, especially those with competition).

A six percent decline in revenue over a year is a serious signal for any company. For the New York Times Company, it demonstrates that the ship is still taking on water, and is listing, with the wet newsprint business outweighing the dry but small internet segment grafted onto the company.

To switch metaphors, this is a slow-motion business collapse, with the foundations crumbling faster than the the new shoring-up measures can match.

Having jettisoned the profitable broadcast station group, which provided high profit margins, there now is less revenue counterweight to mask the decline in newsprint revenue.

It may be a tough day for NYT stock. In the first few minutes of trading, it is down just under 2%.

Knowledge Problem

["Losers and Winners": The Gale of Creative Destruction, Captured on Film](#)

by Michael Giberson

"[Losers and Winners](#)" captures a telling moment in the world economy. Just a small part of a big story - just one telling moment among millions. But somehow, without ever straying too far from the grounds of the German factory being disassembled, the film provides a picture of globalization.

The story, according to the film's website:

400 Chinese workers break down the Kaiserstuhl coke factory in the Ruhr Valley into manageable parts and ship them back to their homeland: disassembly in the West – reassembly in the Far East. Dortmund's last coke workers find themselves helping the Chinese to dismantle their own workplace.

A columnist in the *Washington Post* offers a little more: "After it was completed in the early 1990s, the sprawling \$800 million complex was billed as the most modern and efficient anywhere in the world, a monument to German engineering prowess. Unfortunately, it came on line just as the world price of steel and coke collapsed and Europe's steelmakers began to import cheaper foreign coke from Asia and Eastern Europe." The factory was purchased by a Chinese company, who rather than operate it in Germany, wanted to move it back to China.

When the movie ended, I felt a little lost. I wanted more background and more perspective. I didn't have a clear idea of just how big the factory was. Big, sure, but how big? The film claimed that there were 400 Chinese workers, but we never see more than 30 or 40. How many German workers were employed at the plant when it was in operation? If the film mentioned that point, I missed it. The film seemed to lack any overarching organizational principle, other than just the story of the factory being disassembled in Germany and shipped to China.

Slowly it dawned on me what the filmmakers had done. The beauty of the film was in this very lack of any overarching organizational principle *other than* the story. The film manages to tell us a bit about Europe and a bit about China, something about globalization, technology transfer, the culture of work, and environmental and safety regulations. The film captures a bit of the modern economy, one swirling eddy out of the continuing gale of creative destruction, and it does all of this without a single talking head trying to tell us "what it all means." No politicians, no labor activists, no anthropologists, no sociologists and absolutely no economists.

Just the story of a few Chinese workers, fewer German workers, a factory being disassembled, a telling moment captured on film.

NOTE: "[Losers and Winners](#)" is being shown as part of [SilverDocs](#): The AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival in Silver Spring, MD (just outside of Washington, DC). The film will be shown again at the AFI Silver Theater this Saturday, June 16, and then in New York City on June 23.

Scrappleface

[New Bush Bill Makes Illegals Build Border Fence](#)

by [Scott Ott](#)

(2007-06-15) — President George Bush, in an effort to address conservatives' dual concerns about border security and the rule of law, today said the revived [immigration reform](#) bill would finish the U.S.-Mexico border fence by fining illegal aliens to pay for it and requiring each one to build a section of the [fence](#) with his own hands.

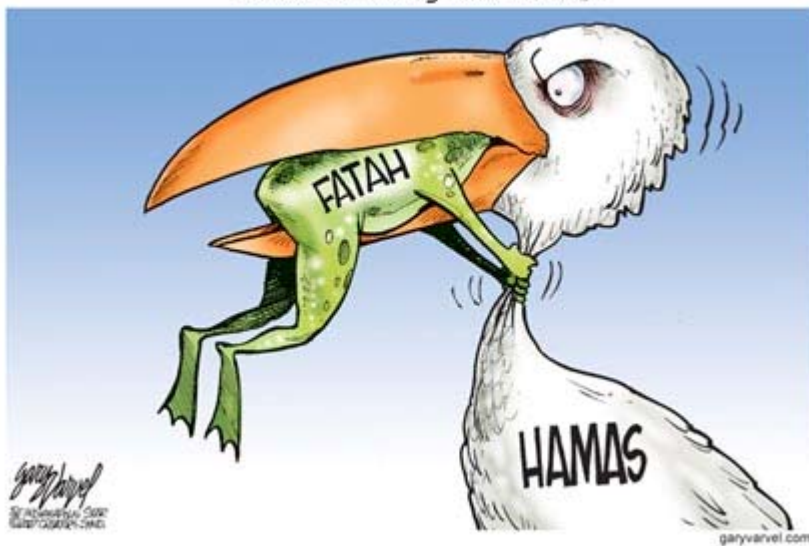
With the U.S.-Mexico border stretching more than 1,951 miles, and estimates that 20 million illegal aliens already inhabit the United States, President Bush said the measure would require each "currently undocumented future citizen" to build about six inches of fencing.

"I hope this will satisfy my friends on the other side of the Republican aisle," said Mr. Bush. "They'll get their border security while those who broke our laws to get here will pay a financial price and serve time in hard labor to do a job that we can't afford to hire Americans to do."

Conservative presidential candidate Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-CA, said he could support the new bill "as long as the illegal aliens building the fence face north when they do it, and head south when they're done."



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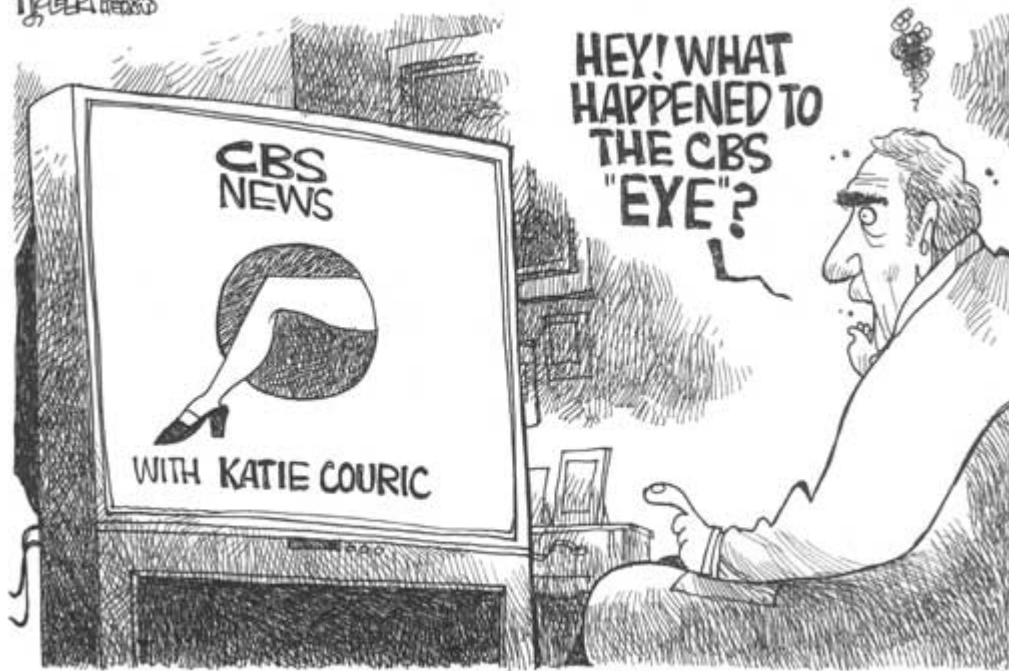
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