

February 25, 2009

[Peter Wehner](#) tries to set the Iraq record straight.

Peter Baker, the excellent New York Times reporter, wrote an interesting Week in Review [piece](#) yesterday contrasting President Bush's effort at promoting democracy with that of President Obama, who has said nary a word in defense of it and whose administration seems to be downplaying human rights as a centerpiece of American foreign policy (see Hillary Clinton's remarks in China). ...

... It seems that for many people, the mistakes made in Iraq in the aftermath of 2003 permanently tainted their views of that nation; it is as if they decided the war was wrong and the effort to transform it into a functioning democracy was a mistake, come what may. Fortunately the Iraqi people have, with the support and skill of the American military, carried on; they have continued with the difficult task of self-government. Given all they have suffered through, what Iraqis have achieved is fairly extraordinary, and even heroic. And with the passage of time, Iraq may well demonstrate to the world all over again that freedom is still the best path to human flourishing and the cause of peace. Championing freedom and human rights isn't easy, but it remains a noble cause. Those who want to make the opposite case — who want to argue on behalf of the benefits of authoritarianism, dictatorships, and tyranny, or why we should be indifferent to them — are free to do so. My hope and expectation is that America will, in the main, remain on the side of liberty. That is, after all, right where she belongs.

[John Tierney](#) gives us pause to be careful of scientists with a political agenda; like John Holdren, nominated to be Obama's science advisor. You will be interested in Holdren's reaction to one of our favorites; Bjørn Lomborg.

... "Some scientists want to influence policy in a certain direction and still be able to claim to be above politics," Dr. Pielke says. "So they engage in what I call 'stealth issue advocacy' by smuggling political arguments into putative scientific ones."

In Dr. Pielke's book, one example of this stealthy advocate is the nominee for White House science adviser, Dr. Holdren, a longtime proponent of policies to slow population growth and control energy use. (See [TierneyLab](#), for more on his background.) He appears in a chapter analyzing the reaction of scientists to "The Skeptical Environmentalist," a 2001 book arguing that many ecological dangers had been exaggerated.

Dr. Holdren called it his "scientific duty" to expose the "complete incompetence" of the book's author, [Bjorn Lomborg](#), a Danish political scientist. Dr. Holdren was one of the authors of an extraordinary 11-page attack on the book that ran in [Scientific American](#) under the headline, "Science defends itself against 'The Skeptical Environmentalist' " — as if "science" spoke with one voice.

After reviewing the criticisms, Dr. Pielke concludes that a more accurate headline would have been, "Our political perspective defends itself against the political agenda of 'The Skeptical Environmentalist.' " ...

Seems like California might be a preview of what Obama has in store for us. [Mark Steyn](#) kicks off the coverage.

The Times of London put it this way: "Arnie Schwarzenegger Joins the Ranks of Girlie Men."

Quite. As is well known, the Terminator has been unable to terminate anything — not even the impact study group studying the impact of expanding the Department of Impact Studies. The man who walloped his predecessor for fiscal profligacy has managed to preside over a California budget that's expanded 40 percent (so far) since the good old Gray days. Sacramento is piling on an extra million-and-three-quarter dollars of debt every hour, 24/7. The Golden State is a foldin' state, going out of business — a far cry from when Ahnuld arrived as a penniless immigrant in a land of plenty. Now he's an immigrant of plenty in a penniless land. Another Californian actor-governor famously observed that "we are a nation that has a

government, not the other way around." In Collyvornya, it's the other way round. Doing your '08 tax return? If you're expecting a refund, Sacramento's stopped the check: Instead you receive an IOU saying they'll get around to it when they can. On the other hand, if you owe them money, don't expect reciprocal treatment. As the governor's celebrated catchphrase has it: "Ah'll be back — for more of your money." ...

And [Matthew Kaminski](#) tells us how California became France.

... The parallels are also disquieting. The French have long experienced the unintended consequences of a large public sector. Ask them about it. As the number of people who get money from government grows, so does the power of constituencies dedicated to keep this honey dripping. Even when voters recognize the model carries drawbacks, such as subpar growth, high taxes, an uncompetitive business climate and above-average unemployment, their elected leaders find it near impossible to tweak the system. This has been the story of France for decades, and lately of California.

Six years ago, Mr. Schwarzenegger arrived in Sacramento to "cut up the credit card" and give the girlie men at the State Capitol a testosterone shot. California languished then in a fiscal crisis whose causes were pretty much the same as today. The hapless Gray Davis had been recalled, and the Austrian-born actor made a promising start to break the pattern.

In 2005, banking on his popularity, the governor pushed an ambitious ballot initiative to impose a hard state spending cap, limit the unions' political buying power, tighten requirements for teacher tenure, and overhaul a gerrymandered state political map. Arnold lost.

After that setback, Mr. Schwarzenegger shifted his attention to green jobs and energy, winning fans in Europe and among Democrats. "He's recognized that California's a pretty moderate place," says Darrell Steinberg, the Democratic president pro tem of the Senate. "You've got to govern from the middle."

People closer to the governor offer a different take. "Once he got beat, he reverted back to, 'I want to be liked,'" says a former Schwarzenegger aide. "It's classic narcissism." ...

[WSJ Editors](#) on last night's speech.

Anyone who thought the recession and financial market turmoil would moderate President Obama's policy ambitions discovered the opposite last night. Far from suggesting limits on Congress or federal spending, the new President made clear in his first State of the Union address that he believes in government power as the answer to our current difficulties, and he intends to use it. ...

[Jennifer Rubin](#) has some speech thoughts.

... There is not the slightest recognition that the growth of government retards economic vitality or impairs innovation. There is no sense that all that money we are going to spend comes from somewhere — businesses and individuals who will have fewer and fewer resources of their own. This is a fantasyland. There is no responsibility in sight, no mature discipline. It is all just a flood of government goodies.

[Abe Greenwald](#) too.

In listening to President Obama's address tonight, I thought I heard something a little extreme about education, but then tossed it up to being distracted and a little sleepy. I just went back and looked at the [transcript](#) and, sure enough, this startling little passage was actually uttered:

And so tonight, I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training. This can be community college or a four-year school; vocational training or an apprenticeship. But whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a high school diploma. And dropping out of high school is no longer an option.

Every American should go back to school for at least a year on the president's orders? Really? ...

[Michael Goldfarb](#) from the Blog at the Weekly Standard.

... It's only been a few weeks, but so far all the American people have to show for Obama's election is \$1 trillion in new debt and a thousand point drop in the Dow. Everything else is still just talk, some of which has the potential to damage the economy even further if implemented poorly or, in the case of cap and trade, implemented at all. The only thing Obama's certain to deliver is the one thing he claimed tonight he didn't believe in -- bigger government.

[Jack Shafer at Slate](#) continues with the Moyers story.

Contentions

[Bush's Freedom Agenda](#)

by Peter Wehner

Peter Baker, the excellent *New York Times* reporter, wrote an interesting *Week in Review* [piece](#) yesterday contrasting President Bush's effort at promoting democracy with that of President Obama, who has said nary a word in defense of it and whose administration seems to be downplaying human rights as a centerpiece of American foreign policy (see Hillary Clinton's remarks in China). But Baker makes one claim that in my judgment is clearly wrong, if widely accepted:

The Middle East, of course, is what led Mr. Bush down this road [democracy promotion] in the first place. After the invasion of Iraq failed to turn up any weapons of mass destruction, he embraced the goal of building democracy there as an outpost for freedom in a repressive region.

In fact, Bush repeatedly articulated his freedom agenda *before* the Iraq war began. The evidence can be found in many places, including in three prominent pre-war speeches: the 2002 State of the Union [address](#), the June 24, 2002 [speech](#) on the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and the president's February 27, 2003 address to the American Enterprise Institute, in which he said this:

There was a time when many said that the cultures of Japan and Germany were incapable of sustaining democratic values. Well, they were wrong. Some say the same of Iraq today. They are mistaken. The nation of Iraq — with its proud heritage, abundant resources and skilled and educated people — is fully capable of moving toward democracy and living in freedom. The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder. They encourage the peaceful pursuit of a better life. And there are hopeful signs of a desire for freedom in the Middle East. Arab intellectuals have called on Arab governments to address the “freedom gap” so their peoples can fully share in the progress of our times. Leaders in the region speak of a new Arab charter that champions internal reform, greater political participation, economic openness, and free trade. And from Morocco to Bahrain and beyond, nations are taking genuine steps toward politics reform. A new regime in Iraq would serve as a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region.

It is presumptuous and insulting to suggest that a whole region of the world — or the one-fifth of humanity that is Muslim — is somehow untouched by the most basic aspirations of life. Human cultures can be vastly different. Yet the human heart desires the same good things, everywhere on Earth. In our desire to be safe from brutal and bullying oppression, human beings are the same. In our desire to care for our children and give them a better life, we are the same. For these fundamental reasons, freedom and democracy will always and everywhere have greater appeal than the slogans of hatred and the tactics of terror.

So the argument that advocating democracy was for President Bush a post-war justification is simply not correct.

On the larger matter of whether events in Iraq have discredited the cause of advocating liberty abroad: they have not. We have learned vital lessons from our experience in Iraq, from the supreme importance of having reliable intelligence, to the need of having the right invasion/counterinsurgency strategy in place when fighting a war of this kind, to the value of having a president who is determined and courageous enough to pursue a change in strategy, even when it comes very late in the day, etc.

But what Iraq has *not* done is discredit democracy. Iraq's government is vastly preferable to that of almost every other regional regime, from Iran to Syria to Saudi Arabia. Iraq is now an ally instead of an enemy of America, the birthplace of the Sunni rise against militant Islam, and a nation that does not threaten its neighbors. While its experiment in self-government is still young, fragile, and reversible, what we have seen in Iraq remains stirring. The most recent provincial elections were extremely heartening, and there is reason to believe that, over time, the events in Iraq might even reshape the political culture in the Middle East .

We can all agree that democracy can't be pursued everywhere, all at once. It's also true that the Iraqi elections did not, by themselves, put an end to the violence in Iraq. What was needed, and for years what was missing, was the basic security and order that would allow the institutions of liberty to take root. The ever wise political scientist James Q. Wilson cautioned in 2005 that it takes a long time to convert a nation accustomed to authoritarian rule — and Saddam Hussein's regime was much more malignant than run-of-the-mill authoritarianism — into one that embraces democratic rule. A rapid transition, he wrote, has never been possible and ought not to be expected.

It seems that for many people, the mistakes made in Iraq in the aftermath of 2003 permanently tainted their views of that nation; it is as if they decided the war was wrong and the effort to transform it into a functioning democracy was a mistake, come what may. Fortunately the Iraqi people have, with the support and skill of the American military, carried on; they have continued with the difficult task of self-government. Given all they have suffered through, what Iraqis have achieved is fairly extraordinary, and even heroic. And with the passage of time, Iraq may well demonstrate to the world all over again that freedom is still the best path to human flourishing and the cause of peace. Championing freedom and human rights isn't easy, but it remains a noble cause. Those who want to make the opposite case — who want to argue on behalf of the benefits of authoritarianism, dictatorships, and tyranny, or why we should be indifferent to them — are free to do so. My hope and expectation is that America will, in the main, remain on the side of liberty. That is, after all, right where she belongs.

NY Times

[Politics in the Guise of Pure Science](#)

by John Tierney

Why, since [President Obama](#) promised to “restore science to its rightful place” in Washington, do some things feel not quite right?

First there was [Steven Chu](#), the physicist and new energy secretary, warning The Los Angeles Times that [climate change](#) could make water so scarce by century's end that “there's no more agriculture in California” and no way to keep the state's cities going, either.

Then there was the [hearing in the Senate](#) to confirm another physicist, John Holdren, to be the president's science adviser. Dr. Holdren was asked about some of his gloomy neo-Malthusian warnings in the past, like his calculation in the 1980s that famines due to climate change could leave a billion people dead by 2020. Did he still believe that?

“I think it is unlikely to happen,” Dr. Holdren told the senators, but he insisted that it was still “a possibility” that “we should work energetically to avoid.”

Well, I suppose it never hurts to go on the record in opposition to a billion imaginary deaths. But I have a more immediate concern: Will Mr. Obama's scientific counselors give him realistic plans for dealing with global warming and other threats? To borrow a term from Roger Pielke Jr.: Can these scientists be honest brokers?

Dr. Pielke, a professor in the environmental studies program at the [University of Colorado](#), is the author of "The Honest Broker," a book arguing that most scientists are fundamentally mistaken about their role in political debates. As a result, he says, they're jeopardizing their credibility while impeding solutions to problems like global warming.

Most researchers, Dr. Pielke writes, like to think of themselves in one of two roles: as a pure researcher who remains aloof from messy politics, or an impartial arbiter offering expert answers to politicians' questions. Either way, they believe their research can point the way to correct public policies, and sometimes it does — when the science is clear and people's values aren't in conflict.

But climate change, like most political issues, isn't so simple. While most scientists agree that anthropogenic global warming is a threat, they're not certain about its scale or its timing or its precise consequences (like the condition of California's water supply in 2090). And while most members of the public want to avoid future harm from climate change, they have conflicting values about which sacrifices are worthwhile today.

A scientist can enter the fray by becoming an advocate for certain policies, like limits on carbon emissions or subsidies for wind power. That's a perfectly legitimate role for scientists, as long as they acknowledge that they're promoting their own agendas.

But too often, Dr. Pielke says, they pose as impartial experts pointing politicians to the only option that makes scientific sense. To bolster their case, they're prone to exaggerate their expertise (like enumerating the catastrophes that would occur if their policies aren't adopted), while denigrating their political opponents as "unqualified" or "unscientific."

"Some scientists want to influence policy in a certain direction and still be able to claim to be above politics," Dr. Pielke says. "So they engage in what I call 'stealth issue advocacy' by smuggling political arguments into putative scientific ones."

In Dr. Pielke's book, one example of this stealthy advocate is the nominee for White House science adviser, Dr. Holdren, a longtime proponent of policies to slow population growth and control energy use. (See [TierneyLab](#), for more on his background.) He appears in a chapter analyzing the reaction of scientists to "The Skeptical Environmentalist," a 2001 book arguing that many ecological dangers had been exaggerated.

Dr. Holdren called it his "scientific duty" to expose the "complete incompetence" of the book's author, [Bjorn Lomborg](#), a Danish political scientist. Dr. Holdren was one of the authors of an extraordinary 11-page attack on the book that ran in [Scientific American](#) under the headline, "Science defends itself against 'The Skeptical Environmentalist'" — as if "science" spoke with one voice.

After reviewing the criticisms, Dr. Pielke concludes that a more accurate headline would have been, "Our political perspective defends itself against the political agenda of 'The Skeptical Environmentalist.'" "

"Public debates over climate change," Dr. Pielke says, "often are about seemingly technical questions when they are really about who should have authority in the political debate. The debate over the science thus politicizes the science and distracts from policy."

Dr. Pielke suggests that scientists could do more good if, instead of discrediting rivals' expertise, they acknowledge political differences and don't expect them to be resolved by science. Instead of steering politicians to a preferred policy, these honest brokers would use their expertise to expand the array of technically feasible options.

What would honest brokers tell the president about global warming? Dr. Pielke, who calls himself an Obamite, says he's concerned that the presidents' advisers seem uniformly focused on cutting carbon emissions through a domestic cap-and-trade law and a new international treaty.

It's fine to try that strategy, he says, but there are too many technological, economic and political uncertainties to count on it making a significant global difference. If people around the world can't be cajoled — or frightened by apocalyptic scenarios — into cutting carbon emissions, then politicians need backup strategies.

One possibility, Dr. Pielke says, would be to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in the future. [He calculates](#) that it could cost about the same, in the long run, as making drastic cuts in emissions today, and could be cheaper if the technology improves. It could also be a lot easier sell to the public.

Yet research into this strategy has received little financing in past budgets or the new stimulus package because it doesn't jibe with the agenda of either side in the global-warming debate. Greens don't want this sort of "technological fix"; their opponents don't want to admit there's anything to fix. And neither side's advocates will compromise as long as they think that science will prove them right.

National Review

[Governor Gravid](#)

by Mark Steyn

The *Times* of London put it this way: "Arnie Schwarzenegger Joins the Ranks of Girlie Men."

Quite. As is well known, the Terminator has been unable to terminate anything — not even the impact study group studying the impact of expanding the Department of Impact Studies. The man who walloped his predecessor for fiscal profligacy has managed to preside over a California budget that's expanded 40 percent (so far) since the good old Gray days. Sacramento is piling on an extra million-and-three-quarter dollars of debt every hour, 24/7. The Golden State is a foldin' state, going out of business — a far cry from when Ahnuld arrived as a penniless immigrant in a land of plenty. Now he's an immigrant of plenty in a penniless land. Another Californian actor-governor famously observed that "we are a nation that has a government, not the other way around." In Collyvornya, it's the other way round. Doing your '08 tax return? If you're expecting a refund, Sacramento's stopped the check: Instead you receive an IOU saying they'll get around to it when they can. On the other hand, if you owe them money, don't expect reciprocal treatment. As the governor's celebrated catchphrase has it: "Ah'll be back — for more of your money."

Ah, well. I supported him at the time. Don't know why. In a field of Arnie, Cruz Bustamante, Arianna Huffington, Larry Flynt, etc., etc., I should probably have plumped for Angelyne, the non-singing non-dancing non-acting "celebrity" famous for doing nothing except displaying her embonpoint on Los Angeles billboards. True, her cleavage isn't as impressive as Ahnuld's, but whose is? If I sound bitter, I shouldn't be. Governor Schwarzenegger is merely the latest "fiscally conservative, socially liberal" mirage to dissolve from shimmering oasis to bottomless toxic swamp. Usually this beast roams the East Coast — see Christie Whitman, George Pataki, William Weld, and others you forgot to remember. I see the nice Maine ladies, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, were hailed for reaching across the aisle on the "stimulus" bill by William Cohen, who helpfully explained to the *Washington Post* that Pine Tree Staters are "liberal on social issues and conservative on fiscal matters." And nothing says "fiscally conservative" like voting for a trillion dollars of pork after you've stayed up three nights in a row carefully weeding out the \$473.84 that shouldn't have been in there.



Universal Studios

A “social liberal/fiscal conservative” is not necessarily a girly-man, more of a pre-op transsexual. It would be nice to be able to have it both ways, like that so-called “pregnant man” out on the West Coast — and, incidentally, didn’t Ahnuld play a pregnant man in some movie a decade or so back? Why, so he did: *Junior*. I remember the poster, the leading man with a swollen belly — like a girly-man governor about to give birth to a big bloated budget. The problem with being “socially liberal, fiscally conservative” is that most of the social liberalism comes with quite a price tag — just have a ten-minute riffle through the non-stimulus bill. We all want to move beyond “the standard left/right paradigm,” as Arianna liked to say in that gubernatorial race. If I had a pair o’ dime for every time a politician has said we need to move beyond the old paradigm, I could afford to live in Arnold’s California. But the reality is that almost every “socially liberal, fiscally conservative” politician turns out to be fiscally liberal — in the same way that, if you mix half a pint of vanilla ice cream with half a pint of horse manure, it’s not hard to figure which taste will predominate.

To be fair to Ahnuld, a lot of voters want it both ways, too. Which is why “fiscal” is not a useful word in this context. Big Government is not primarily a “fiscal” issue: These programs are not wrong because they’re unaffordable; they’re unaffordable because they’re wrong — they’re not the proper role of government, and if you pretend they are, then, as in California, you unbalance the relationship between the citizen and the state. But it’s not a green-eyeshade thing: They would be just as wrong, as I said a month or two back, if Bill Gates wrote a check to cover them every month. So when a politician tells you he’s “fiscally” conservative, it’s like Conan the Barbarian announcing he’ll bring his abacus to a sword fight.

That’s the missing element in the bailoutapalooza. For six months now, Paulson, Geithner, and the gang have talked about it as a kind of technical correction, a recalibration that will re-inflate the credit bubble and get us back to “normal.” But it’s not about the arithmetic, it’s about restoring the concept of “moral hazard” that is vital to any functioning market but which the “socially liberal/fiscally conservative” circle-squarers have all but rendered extinct. No government can guarantee universal homeownership, or absurd returns on mediocre assets as a permanent feature of life. And to attempt to do so is to strip language of meaning. You’re debauching the currency — not in the “fiscal” exchange-rate nickel-’n’-dime sense, but something more profound: the very currency of liberty — property, contract, citizenship, responsibility.

There was another muscle man who ran into trouble long ago: Antaeus. Big tough guy. No girly-man. Slew all comers — as long as his feet were planted firmly on the ground. But, as Hercules figured out, get him up in the air, unmoored, unrooted, and he turned into a big sack of nothing. There’s a lesson there, and not just for Conan in La-La Land.

WSJ

How California Became France

Unable to afford a welfare state and unable to reform it.

by Matthew Kaminski

Sacramento, Calif.

As California goes, says an old cliché, so goes the nation. Oh my.

These days, the Golden State leads the nation on economic and fiscal dysfunction, from the empty homes spread across the Central Valley to the highest state budget shortfall in the nation's history. Meanwhile, its political class pioneers denial in the face of catastrophe.



The spark for the immediate political crisis was a familiar Californian discovery, a fiscal hole of \$41 billion. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared an "emergency" in November and took legislative leaders behind closed doors to hammer out a compromise. The budget adopted in a marathon session this week splits the baby, closing the deficit with spending cuts (hated by the left) and tax hikes (ditto the right), all the while largely failing to tackle the state's built-in structural defects.

Some parts of the deal, such as borrowing from future lottery receipts, may yet collapse at the ballot in May, and California could soon be back in line to mark another first -- state bankruptcy. In anticipation, Standard & Poor's this month downgraded its bond rating a notch below Louisiana's.

Even discounting for the impact of global recession, the most populous state's ills are unique and self-inflicted -- and avoidable. In the last three decades, California expanded the public sector and regulation to Europe-like dimensions. Schools, state employees, health care, even dog kennels, benefited from largesse in flush times. Government workers got 16 official holidays, everyone else six. The state dabbled with universal health care and adopted strict environmental standards. In short, California went where our new president and Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco want America to go.

Now there's much to recommend the Old World. California brings to mind my last home, France -- God's country blessed with fertile soil for wines, sun-blached beaches, and a well-educated populace. Amusingly, both states are led by bling-bling immigrants married to glamorous women and elected to shake up the status quo. In both departments, the governor got a head start on Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris.

The parallels are also disquieting. The French have long experienced the unintended consequences of a large public sector. Ask them about it. As the number of people who get money from government grows, so does the power of constituencies dedicated to keep this honey dripping. Even when voters recognize the model carries drawbacks, such as subpar growth, high taxes, an uncompetitive business climate and above-

average unemployment, their elected leaders find it near impossible to tweak the system. This has been the story of France for decades, and lately of California.

Six years ago, Mr. Schwarzenegger arrived in Sacramento to "cut up the credit card" and give the girlie men at the State Capitol a testosterone shot. California languished then in a fiscal crisis whose causes were pretty much the same as today. The hapless Gray Davis had been recalled, and the Austrian-born actor made a promising start to break the pattern.

In 2005, banking on his popularity, the governor pushed an ambitious ballot initiative to impose a hard state spending cap, limit the unions' political buying power, tighten requirements for teacher tenure, and overhaul a gerrymandered state political map. Arnold lost.

After that setback, Mr. Schwarzenegger shifted his attention to green jobs and energy, winning fans in Europe and among Democrats. "He's recognized that California's a pretty moderate place," says Darrell Steinberg, the Democratic president pro tem of the Senate. "You've got to govern from the middle."

People closer to the governor offer a different take. "Once he got beat, he reverted back to, 'I want to be liked,'" says a former Schwarzenegger aide. "It's classic narcissism." (The governor declined requests for an interview, but I did walk away with three custom-made Daniel Marshall cigars from his office.)

In the Arnold era, the overall cost base has stayed the same as in the Davis era. That isn't entirely his fault. California's constitution locks in higher spending in good years, paving the way for huge deficits in the down. A dependence on a highly progressive tax code leaves it particularly vulnerable to boom and bust cycles. Democrats run the legislature. Across the street from the Capitol, the offices of unions and lobbyists are arguably the real locus of power in Sacramento.

In this budget debacle, Mr. Schwarzenegger found himself back where his remarkable political journey began in 2003. Only now with him in the Davis role. The pill is bitterer still since the budget he signed yesterday will raise the vehicle tax -- the same Davis tax increase he campaigned against and terminated in his first act in office.

Neither side won with this deal, to which the one good alternative would be a time machine to take Sacramento's political class back five years and do it right then. In the event, Republicans split, and signed off on \$14.5 billion in new taxes and a less than airtight spending cap. State personnel reductions are minimal, as well, further infuriating their base. The Democrats swallowed \$15 billion in spending cuts, which unions vow to fight.

California is in a French-like bind: unable to afford a welfare-type state, and unable to overhaul it. "The people say they want all these programs, then there's nothing they want to pay for," says Hector De La Torre, a Democratic assemblyman. "The schizophrenia in the legislature reflects the peoples'."

This week's deal likely won't keep the state in balance beyond 18 months, perhaps even fewer. "This budget will take us through 2010," says Karen Bass, the Assembly speaker, a Democrat from Los Angeles. "I don't know if it will hold."

Some Democrats and Republicans privately say the best option may be failure. The rough scenario is fiscal insolvency, followed perhaps by federal receivership. No precedent or legal avenue exists for a state to reorganize its affairs under a form of Chapter 11 protection, but that striking suggestion sounds better by the day.

The expectations for Mr. Schwarzenegger's two remaining years in office are low, leaving many of his supporters to ponder the might-have-been. "No one has the political incentives to cut government," says a Republican strategist. "It takes tremendous political capital, which Arnold had. It's a tragedy to have this rare moment when you can try to change and waste it."

For the nation, California is the what-might-be.

Mr. Kaminski is a member of the Journal's editorial board.

WSJ - Editorial

Obama Unbridled

The President has only begun to expand the government.

Anyone who thought the recession and financial market turmoil would moderate President Obama's policy ambitions discovered the opposite last night. Far from suggesting limits on Congress or federal spending, the new President made clear in his first State of the Union address that he believes in government power as the answer to our current difficulties, and he intends to use it.

We suspect many Americans will respond well to his clear determination, tied as it was to optimism about the future. Americans are looking for leadership, and last night Mr. Obama dropped his recent riff about looming "catastrophe" and pointed to a brighter day beyond today's trouble. Americans want Mr. Obama's policies to succeed because they rightly understand that all of us will pay a price if they fail. This helps to explain Mr. Obama's high poll ratings, despite struggling financial markets and the partisan divide over the stimulus bill. Americans won't easily or quickly concede that another President isn't making the grade.

The political divide is over means, not ends, and on that score Mr. Obama is slowly revealing himself as a President who meant what he said going back to the primaries. He believes in the power of the state to drive prosperity, to reform the financial system and health care, and even to transform the entire energy economy. Mr. Obama said at one point that he didn't believe in government for its own sake, but his policy emphasis showed otherwise.

We were especially struck by his determination to pass a carbon "cap and trade" regime, despite the costs it would impose on the economy amid a recession. Only last year Midwest Democrats rebelled against those costs when the Senate debated cap and trade. But in the past week Mr. Obama's green advisers have declared that the Administration will soon formally declare that carbon must be regulated like any pollutant under the Clean Air Act. This will unleash a flood of new regulatory controls across the economy, and perhaps Mr. Obama believes this imperative will drive Congress to act, almost as a kind of relief. But the economic uncertainty alone will further retard business risk-taking just when we need such daring for the economy to recover.

Likewise, even many Democrats have argued that the political system can't accommodate both a cap and trade debate and health care reform in the same year. Mr. Obama declared otherwise last night. He urged Congress to pass a new universal health-care entitlement "this year," a request that was met with ecstatic applause among the Democrats who now run Congress. No one seriously believes that kind of commitment would cost anything less than \$220 billion a year, which is real money even in today's Washington.

Mr. Obama suggested he could finance all of this with a combination of a budget scrubbing plus a tax increase on a mere 2% of American taxpayers. The President said his staff has already found \$2 trillion in spending savings, and we look forward to those details. As for those 2%, they are a lot poorer than they used to be and in any case there aren't enough of them to come close to paying for Mr. Obama's plans. Despite the President's protests, the American middle class will eventually be asked to pay far more than they do now.

Mr. Obama made a valiant attempt to explain the importance of unclogging the financial system, and that's no easy task considering the anger toward our financial elites across the country. But he also played to that anger himself when he declared that "This time, CEOs won't be able to use taxpayer money to pad their paychecks or buy fancy drapes or disappear on a private jet." This only encourages the phony, but still damaging, populism in Congress that will also slow the revival of animal spirits. ([See here.](#))

Mr. Obama clearly believes the recession has created a political moment when Americans are frightened enough to be open to a new era of expanded government. The question is whether his vast ambitions will allow the private economy to grow enough even to begin to pay for it all.

Contentions

So Much For All Those Republicans

by Jennifer Rubin

Who wasted breath and personal credibility arguing and assuring us that Obama was some new kind of Democrat. No, he's a far left liberal who sees that every problem is the government's responsibility and all good things, but no ill effects, flow from the infinite expansion of government. There is not the slightest recognition that the growth of government retards economic vitality or impairs innovation. There is no sense that all that money we are going to spend comes from somewhere — businesses and individuals who will have fewer and fewer resources of their own. This is a fantasyland. There is no responsibility in sight, no mature discipline. It is all just a flood of government goodies.

Contentions

I Wonder

by Jennifer Rubin

How all those libertarians who convinced themselves Obama would be fine feel about things now.

How much the grand total of all of this stuff costs — \$4 trillion? \$10 trillion? Is it even knowable?

How far below \$250,000 Obama will need to go in order to pay for even half of this.

How the Blue Dog Democrats feel about the direction of their party.

How Sens. Specter, Snowe and Collins feel about the torrent of spending they have unleashed.

How many Republican presidential contenders think the public will have had enough by 2012 and that they might have a shot after all.

Contentions

The Anti-Stimulus

by Jennifer Rubin

While the Obama administration is trying to lift us out of a recession through a stimulus spend-a-thon and a series of bailouts, its labor policy is making that climb more difficult.

Mallory Factor explains:

Experience shows the link between increased unionization and reduced job and income growth. The ten states with the highest rates of private-sector union membership in 1997 had two-thirds less aggregate private-sector job growth by 2007 than did the ten states with the lowest rates. The ten most unionized states had only half as much real personal income growth as the ten least. Also, businesses prefer to locate in right-to-work states, where unions cannot enforce “closed shops” — that is, where union membership can't be made a precondition for employment, and where fewer employees tend to fall under monopoly bargaining power. Similarly, if card check increases unions' power through the whole country, many businesses would have no choice but to relocate to other countries whose policies are less tilted in favor of monopolistic unionism.

The Kennedy card-check scheme is far from the only economy-crushing Big Labor special-interest legislation that Obama has endorsed. The trial-lawyer-friendly “Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act” already has been enacted, removing time limits on wage-discrimination cases. Alleged victims can now bring such cases long after any alleged discrimination has occurred, even after the alleged discriminators have died. Employers will surely respond by setting aside more money to settle future employment-discrimination claims — money that otherwise could be put to productive use.

And then there are the [executive orders](#), which have the effect of [raising the price of labor](#) and decreasing the number of jobs.

While the Obama administration has made noises about putting card check on the back burner, their other payoffs to Big Labor show where their priorities are. If job creation was really at the top of the list, they wouldn't be increasing litigation and the cost of labor for American businesses.

Contentions

[Everyone, Back to School!](#)

by Abe Greenwald

In listening to President Obama's address tonight, I thought I heard something a little extreme about education, but then tossed it up to being distracted and a little sleepy. I just went back and looked at the [transcript](#) and, sure enough, this startling little passage was actually uttered:

And so tonight, I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training. This can be community college or a four-year school; vocational training or an apprenticeship. But whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a high school diploma. And dropping out of high school is no longer an option.

*Every American should go back to school for at least a year on the president's orders? Really? Even the ones who have been through school and are gainfully employed? Even the ones who can't afford to take time away from their jobs in order to get an additional certificate? And the unfortunate kids who *need* to leave school and take care of this or that responsibility . . . *can't*? I'm sympathetic to the importance of education and support most any effort to get Americans to choose to learn, but this isn't pro-education; it's community organizing on a national scale. It's also unfeasible and creepy. The last time we caught a whiff of anything like this was when Michelle Obama made what I frankly thought was a gaffe a year ago. In a speech at UCLA, she [said](#):*

Barack Obama will require you to work. He is going to demand that you shed your cynicism. That you put down your divisions. That you come out of your isolation, that you move out of your comfort zones. That you push yourselves to be better. And that you engage. Barack will never allow you to go back to your lives as usual, uninvolved, uninformed.

Apparently that was no gaffe. She knows her husband. But, most times, peoples' “lives as usual” have taken shape out of necessity, not commitment to ignorance or isolation, and certainly not an addiction to “comfort.”

Can a prescribed reading list be far off?

Weekly Standard Blog

[Read Obama's Lips](#)

by Michael Goldfarb

This may come back [to haunt him](#):

But let me perfectly clear, because I know you'll hear the same old claims that rolling back these tax breaks means a massive tax increase on the American people: if your family earns less than \$250,000 a year, you will not see your taxes increased a single dime. I repeat: not one single dime.

Obama seems intent on running a permanent campaign, and he's still making the kind of over-the-top promises that campaigns toss around like Monopoly money. In this speech he promised cap and trade and health care reform this year. He promised universal college education. He promised a cure for cancer. Obama also promised that he, too, would "sacrifice some worthy priorities for which there are no dollars."

Obama's critics during the campaign -- Democratic and Republican -- painted Obama as a lightweight who talked a good game but wouldn't be able to deliver. Clinton accused Obama of raising a "false hope" and pointed out that it wasn't the speeches of JFK and Martin Luther King that landed a man on the moon and ended segregation, but the competence and oversight of a rather less inspiring LBJ. Now Obama, having promised so much during the campaign and already off to a bad start with his new era of bipartisanship, is pledging massive increases in spending, huge reductions in the deficit, and no new taxes for 95 percent of Americans. It's only been a few weeks, but so far all the American people have to show for Obama's election is \$1 trillion in new debt and a thousand point drop in the Dow. Everything else is still just talk, some of which has the potential to damage the economy even further if implemented poorly or, in the case of cap and trade, implemented at all. The only thing Obama's certain to deliver is the one thing he claimed tonight he didn't believe in -- bigger government.

Slate's press box

[More on Moyers](#)

Plus, J. Edgar Hoover on how to spot a homosexual.

by Jack Shafer

When Bill Moyers left his show *Now With Bill Moyers* at the end of 2004, he told the [Associated Press](#) that his immediate project would be a book about the year he worked for Lyndon B. Johnson. Upon returning to PBS in the spring of 2007 to relaunch *Bill Moyers Journal*, he informed the [AP](#) that the book was progressing.

Progressing, yes, but not progressing sufficient that Moyers could say anything definitive about his White House years when the [Washington Post](#) asked him last week to comment on its discovery that he had directed the FBI to investigate Johnson administration figures who were "suspected as having homosexual tendencies." He confessed to the *Post* via e-mail of having scant memories of the incidents of four decades ago but volunteered that the inquiries could have been in response to allegations brought to Johnson by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

To assist Moyers in researching his Johnson book, I spent the better part of Saturday afternoon at the library exploring what Moyers knew about the gay-hunting in the Johnson administration and when he knew it. What I learned, plus what I already reported in a previous column ("[The Intolerable Smugness of Bill Moyers](#)"), should help reinvigorate his memory.

As the *Post* reported, the active search for Johnson administration homosexuals got going just a month before the 1964 presidential election after police arrested top Johnson aide Walter Jenkins as he was performing oral sex on a retired Army sergeant in a YMCA men's room near the White House.

Johnson tried to suppress the news of the arrest and asked his underlings to see if it couldn't be proved that Jenkins had been framed by Republicans. Both strategies failed, which we know in detail thanks to the 2001 book [Reaching for Glory: Lyndon Johnson's Secret White House Tapes, 1964-1965](#), edited and annotated by historian Michael Beschloss. The secretly taped conversation can be keyword searched on Amazon.

Johnson and his people worried that Sen. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., the Republican candidate for president, would capitalize on the Jenkins arrest to win the election. According to Robert Dallek's [Lyndon B. Johnson: Portrait of a President](#), Goldwater declined to take political advantage of the arrest. Dallek writes, "When reporters on his campaign plane pressed him for a comment, he would only speak 'off the record.' 'What a way to win an election,' he said, 'Communists and cocksuckers.' "

Cartha "Deke" DeLoach, assistant director of the FBI and Hoover's liaison to Johnson, handled the administration's mop-up of the Jenkins affair and took instructions directly from the president on how to proceed. On Oct. 27, they had this conversation:

DeLoach: Mr. President. ... I know how busy you are, but this is so humorous, I felt like I just had to tell you. We got a rumor that—in fact, Bill Moyers knew about it and asked me to check it out—that [a member of the Johnson staff] was involved in a homosexual incident down in Houston, Texas.

LBJ: I believe anything now, so check them all out.

DeLoach: We checked it out very thoroughly, but we found out that his reputation down there was exactly to the contrary!

LBJ: [*Laughs and snorts*] Well, he's a man about town, I'll tell you that. Don't check too hard on those things, because you might get some confirmations!

DeLoach: Yes, sir.

LBJ: [*Name deleted*] is a very active fellow. I've found that out.

The ellipsis, notations, and deletions are in the original. In light of the *Post* findings, I think we can surmise that the name deleted was that of Jack Valenti. We learn of the FBI's investigation of Valenti from Johnson's own lips in a post-election telephone conversation (Nov. 4) he has with Moyers and presidential aide McGeorge Bundy.

Moyers: If you'll take a couple of days and fly down to the Dorado Beach [Hotel] in Puerto Rico, you can be my guest.

LBJ: [*laughs*] ... Jack Valenti ... is going off as somebody's guest at Palm Springs. ... How do you think Jack's FBI is working out? ... Don't you know what Hoover said? That he had no problems in *that* direction. Emphasized *that* direction.

Bundy: In the *other* direction.

LBJ: We call him a little stud!

Again, punctuation from the original. Beschloss adds in a note that "Jack's FBI" is a reference to the "FBI investigation LBJ ordered on all top staff and Cabinet members after the Jenkins episode." Indeed, in response to Johnson's criticisms that a just-discovered prior arrest of Jenkins proved that the White House staff hadn't been adequately checked by the FBI as he had demanded, Deke DeLoach told the president on Oct. 14, "I'll check to make certain that everybody on your staff has had that check." So, contrary to Moyers bit of dissembling to the *Post*, the administration's investigations were *not* initiated by Johnson after hearing from Hoover.

What we do know from the tapes was that Hoover thought he had flawless gaydar. Beschloss writes that Hoover believed, based on a report from liberal columnist Drew Pearson, that the Republicans were about to drop a "bombshell" on a Johnson administration official on Oct. 31, a bit of intelligence that he had passed along to Johnson. On the morning of Oct. 31, Johnson telephoned Hoover for new gossip, and the conversation ambled toward a Navy employee.

LBJ: ... They raised the question of the way he combed his hair and the way he did something else, but they had no act of his. ...

Hoover: It's just ... that his mannerisms ... were suspicious.

LBJ: Yeah, he worked for me for four or five years, but he wasn't even suspicious to me. I guess you are going to have to teach me something about this stuff. ... I swear I can't recognize them. I don't know anything about them.

Hoover: It's a thing that you can't tell sometimes. Just like in the case of the poor fellow Jenkins. ... There are some people who walk kind of funny. That you might kind of think a little bit off or maybe queer. But there was no indication of that in the Jenkins case.

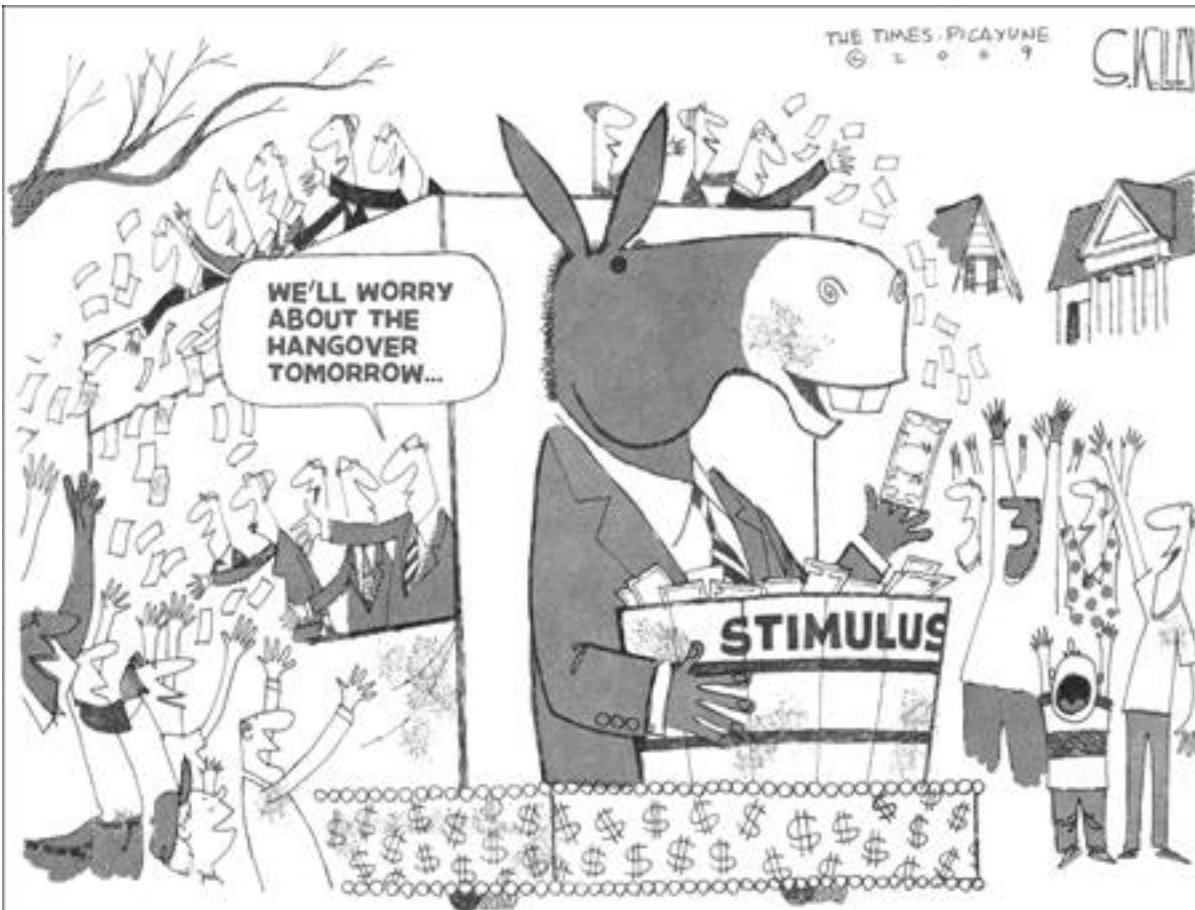
(Again, all punctuation in the original.) Beschloss writes in a note that Johnson was having fun at Hoover's expense: "LBJ knew full well the rumors that Hoover was a secret homosexual."

To fully refresh Moyers' memory, I direct his attention to a 2005 *Journal* [op-ed](#) by Laurence H. Silberman (cited in a *Saturday Wall Street Journal* [editorial](#)). Silberman, who was acting attorney general in 1975, read Hoover's secret files before testifying before Congress. He writes:

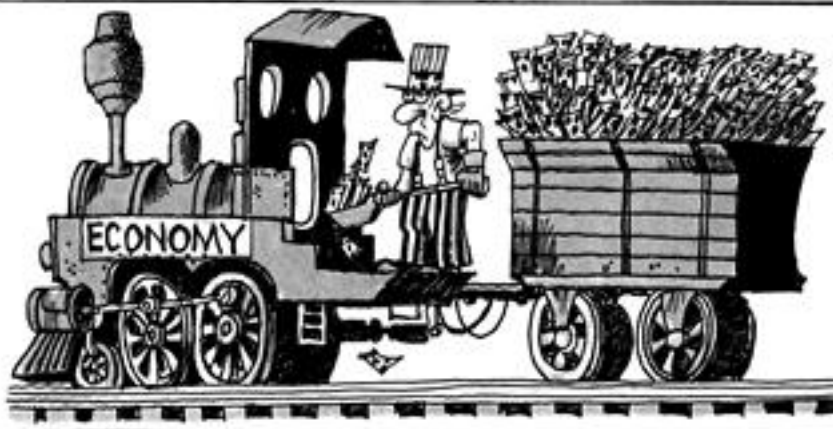
... Bill Moyers, was tasked to direct Hoover to do an investigation of Goldwater's staff to find similar evidence of homosexual activity. Mr. Moyers' memo to the FBI was in one of the files.

When the press reported this, I received a call in my office from Mr. Moyers. Several of my assistants were with me. He was outraged; he claimed that this was another example of the Bureau salting its files with phony CIA memos. I was taken aback. I offered to conduct an investigation, which if his contention was correct, would lead me to publicly exonerate him. There was a pause on the line and then he said, "I was very young. How will I explain this to my children?"

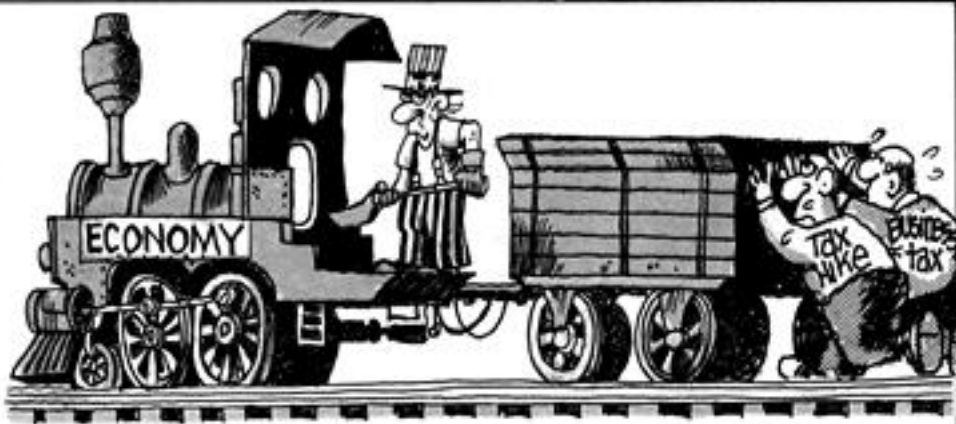
How *will* Moyers explain it to his children? By setting aside a chapter in his big, forthcoming Lyndon Johnson book.



Plan 1:
Government
trillion dollar
Stimulus project!



Plan 2:
Cutting the
deficit in
half (in four
years)!



GARFIELD © 2009 THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

NEWS ITEM: OBAMA'S AUTO TEAM DRIVES IMPORTS

HI! ARE YOU
ONE OF OBAMA'S
DRIVERS OR CAN
I INTEREST YOU
IN AN AMERICAN
CAR?



STAYSKAL
TRIBUNE MEDIA
SERVICES 7/09



EMAIL: hpayne@detnews.com © 09 DETROIT NEWS 5



BAILOUT HEARINGS

MR. DOGBERT, DID YOU FLY HERE IN A CORPORATE JET?



www.dilbert.com scottadams@aol.com

YES, THE SAME JET THAT TOOK YOU ON A FACT-FINDING TRIP TO ARUBA, YOU WOOL-COATED GLOB OF FAT.



© 2001 Scott Adams, Inc./Dist. by UFS, Inc.

BRING IT ON! I CAN DO THIS ALL DAY.

I YIELD MY TIME TO THE HYPOCRITE FROM ANOTHER STATE.

