



## THE FOUNDATION

"Our country is in danger, but not to be despaired of.... On you depend the fortunes of America. You are to decide the important questions upon which rest the happiness and the liberty of millions yet unborn. Act worthy of yourselves." --Dr. Joseph Warren

## PATRIOT PERSPECTIVE

### North Star for the Republican Party

By Mark Alexander

Today marks the 59th anniversary of President Ronald Wilson Reagan's 39th birthday, as he would have put it. We remember Reagan for his extraordinary leadership, wit and wisdom -- and for living the quintessential success story.

President Reagan was born in Tampico, Illinois, a town with a few hundred residents. His family had modest means, and instilled him with timeless Christian virtues and Mid-American values. "Dutch," as his father nicknamed him, attended Dixon High School and Eureka College, where between economics and sociology classes, and football, he became interested in acting. After college, he became a sports radio announcer, and on a trip to California with the Chicago Cubs in 1937 he took a screen test that landed him a seven-year contract with Warner Brothers.

That same year, he enlisted in the Army Reserve and was assigned to the 323rd Cavalry.

Before World War II, Reagan had roles in more than 20 films, including a leading role in "Knutie Rockne, All American" as George Gipp, from which he acquired the lifelong nickname, "The Gipper." During the War, he was classified for limited duty because of poor eyesight, and was assigned to public relations for the Army Air Force. Captain Reagan's unit made more than 400 AAF promotional films before the end of the war.

In 1947, Reagan was elected to lead a powerful union, the Screen Actors Guild, and his political perspective was further refined by controversies over Communist influence in the motion picture industry. In the years that followed, Reagan became an ar-

ticulate and outspoken conservative, though still a Democrat.

In 1962, he became a Republican, saying, "I didn't leave the Democratic Party. The party left me." I suspect the President could not imagine how far to the left his once-great Democratic Party would free fall by 2008, and how many of his countrymen would go along for the ride.

In 1964, Reagan delivered the nomination speech for Barry Goldwater at the Republican Convention, "A Time for Choosing," and it became, and remains, the quintessential battle order for conservatives: "The Founding Fathers knew a government can't control the economy without controlling people. And they knew when a government sets out to do that, it must use force and coercion to achieve its purpose. So we have come to a time for choosing..."

Two years later he won a landslide election to become governor of California, and won re-election in 1970. As governor, he promoted free enterprise and limited government.

One of his most public challenges was confronting massive leftwing movements at institutions like Berkeley, where the radical ideologies of Barack Obama's mentors were refined. Of that ragtag lot, Reagan quipped, "Their signs said make love, not war, but they didn't look like they could do either."

In 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected President of our great nation, winning 44 states and 489 electoral votes versus Jimmy Carter's six states and 49 electoral votes.

In 1984, only 25 years ago, Ronald Reagan won re-election by historic margins, receiving almost 60 percent of the popular vote and a record 525 of a possible 538 electoral votes -- winning every state

but Minnesota, the home state of his opponent Walter Mondale.

To those of us who were (and remain) Reagan's most devoted disciples, 1984 seems like just yesterday, because the president's platform and record were grounded in the timeless principles that have sustained our nation through the most difficult of times.

When Reagan defeated Carter in 1980, the nation was in a severe economic crisis. We faced an energy crisis, and something worse than recession alone -- a period of economic stagnancy coupled with skyrocketing inflation -- "stagflation," as the Carter-induced condition became known.

Reagan entered office with inflation at almost 14 percent and unemployment soaring into double digits. It took President Reagan several years to restore free-market principles -- tax reduction, deregulation and sound monetary policy -- that would sustain the largest peacetime economic surge in American history.

Unfortunately, Reagan was saddled with a Democrat-controlled House for all his years in office, and they refused to cut government spending for social welfare programs. The consequences were twofold: First, millions of Democrat constituents remained dependent on those programs; and second, it fueled growing deficits.

Democrats, of course, point to military spending as the culprit -- spending which drove the "Evil Empire" into collapse -- but had social spending cuts kept pace with tax reductions, and had Democrats not tried to socially engineer the housing market, we might still be enjoying a healthy economy today.

Typical of great statesmen, Ronald Reagan took no credit for our nation's recovery during his tenure. He was called "The Great Communicator" because he almost single-handedly restored the nation's confidence. Indeed, what we're experiencing now is, first and foremost, a crisis of confidence.

"I wasn't a great communicator," President Reagan said in his farewell address, "but I communicated great things, and they didn't spring full bloom from my brow, they came from the heart of a great nation -- from our experience, our wisdom, and our belief in the principles that have guided us for two centuries."

He added, "There were two great triumphs ... that I'm proudest of. One is the economic recovery, in which the people of America created -- and filled -- 19 million new jobs. The other is the recovery of our morale. America is respected again in the world and looked to for leadership."

The day before George H.W. Bush was elected, Reagan reassured those of us who suspected Bush would fumble the ball: "[Though] my name isn't on your ballot tomorrow, something more important is: a principle, a legacy. No, this is not the end of an era; it's a time to refresh and strengthen the new beginning we started eight years ago. ... I hope that someday your children and grandchildren will tell of the time that a certain president came to town at the end of a long journey and asked their parents and grandparents to join him in setting America on the course to the new millennium, and that a century of peace, prosperity, opportunity and hope had followed."

Unfortunately, Bush did fumble the ball right into Bill Clinton's hands, and he ran it all the way for a touchdown.

By 1993, a frequently heard complaint from dwindling conservative circles was that the Reagan era had ended. One thing is certain: The only hint of Republican leadership (now an oxymoron) since Reagan left office, which rose to his standard, was the 1994 Contract with America, when a new Republican-controlled Congress was called to order by Newt Gingrich. Gingrich fulfilled almost all of that Contract's mandates, but his lieutenants got lazy and, by the turn of the millennium, there were only about 100 Reagan Republicans remaining in the House, and maybe 20 in the Senate.

During his two terms as president, George W. Bush shined as a commander in chief, cut our taxes, and seated two sterling Supreme Court justices. Despite this, he failed to lead on the domestic front, and we now find ourselves with a failing economy, and, worse, executive and legislative branches of government controlled by the most liberal politicians in the history of our Republic.

The GAO estimates that unemployment may exceed nine percent by 2010, and the Democrats are proposing to print almost a trillion dollars to distribute to their constituencies, ostensibly for "economic recovery." If you think that's a big bailout, keep in mind that from 1919 to 2006, no government bail-

out exceeded the \$8 billion capital infusion by the Fed during the 1986 savings and loan crisis. That's eight billion versus one-thousand billion. One can only surmise how much inflation it will take to absorb the distribution of all that cash.

So, is the Reagan era over -- has his "Conservative Mandate" expired? Is free enterprise going to be irrevocably supplanted by the Demonomics of trickle-up poverty?

Too many Republicans have ventured down the path of destruction laid by Democrats -- Democrats who long ago abandoned our Founders' legacy of freedom and liberty. In doing so, they have succumbed to the allure of unmitigated power and self-aggrandizement.

But all is not lost -- far from it.

There is still a tenacious group of Reagan conservatives in Congress -- about the same strength in ranks as existed when Bush (43) was elected in 2000.

In the House, they form the Republican Study Committee. Along with their Senate colleagues, these folks have kept the flame of our nation's "First Principles" shining bright.

They are devoted to individual liberty, the restoration of constitutional limits on government and the judiciary, and the promotion of free enterprise, national defense and traditional American values.

Increasingly, wayward Republicans, now relegated to the back of the bus, are taking a hard look at where they are and how they got there. With the help of those resolute conservatives who have remained steadfast in their allegiance and loyalty to their oaths, there is a resurgence in the ranks of House and Senate members who are refocusing on the North Star of the Republican Party: Ronald Reagan.

That resurgence was in evidence last week, as House Republicans voted unanimously against the Democrat's 600-page stimulus proposal that handed out an average of \$1.6 billion per page. Although 11 thoughtful Democrats joined Republicans, the measure still passed 244-to-188. But that's a start.

Beyond the Beltway, there's a much larger and more tenacious group of American Patriots, and they stand ready for leadership to emerge from the ranks of those Republicans.

In "A Time for Choosing," Reagan issued a clarion call: "It's time we asked ourselves if we still know the freedoms intended for us by the Founding Fathers. James Madison said, 'We base all our experiments on the capacity of mankind for self government.' This idea -- that government was beholden to the people, that it had no other source of power -- is still the newest, most unique idea in all the long history of man's relation to man. This is the issue of this election: Whether we believe in our capacity for self-government or whether we abandon the American Revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capital can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves."

He continued, "You and I are told increasingly that we have to choose between a Left or Right, but I would like to suggest that there is no such thing as a Left or Right. There is only an up or down -- up to a man's age-old dream, the ultimate in individual freedom consistent with law and order -- or down to the ant heap totalitarianism, and regardless of their sincerity, their humanitarian motives, those who would trade our freedom for security have embarked on this downward course."

Indeed, we are now at another time for choosing.

"A Time for Choosing" and the 1984 Republican Platform are templates to lead the nation back to economic and moral prosperity, and Ronald Reagan's victory in that year is ample affirmation of that.

Thank you, President Reagan, and may all Patriots heed your warning: "As government expands, liberty contracts." God bless you, sir.

### Quote of the week

"I think it's time we ask ourselves if we still know the freedoms that were intended for us by the Founding Fathers. If we lose freedom here, there is no place to escape to. This is the last stand on Earth. And this idea that government is beholden to the people, that it has no other source of power except to sovereign people, is still the newest and most unique idea in all the long history of man's relation to man." --Ronald Reagan (1964)

### Open query

"How do you tell a Communist? Well, it's someone who reads Marx and Lenin. And how do you tell an anti-Communist? It's someone who understands Marx and Lenin." --Ronald Reagan (1987)

## On cross-examination

"The year Kentuckians first sent me to Washington ... the Republican candidate for president won 49 of 50 states. That same year you could walk from Maine to California and from Oregon to Florida, without leaving a state that had a Republican in the Senate. You would have found Republican governors on the East Coast, the West Coast, the Great Plains, and above and below the Mason Dixon Line. We were everywhere.... In politics, there's a name for a regional party: it's called a minority party. And I didn't sign up to be a member of a regional party. I know no one in this room did either. As Republicans, we know that commonsense conservative principles aren't regional, but I think we have to admit that our sales job has been [regional]. And in my view, that needs to change." --Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell at the GOP's National Committee winter meeting

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

### News from the Swamp:

#### Stimulate now, pay later

The Senate is now considering the economic "stimulus" package, a.k.a. the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," adding a billion dollars here and a billion there in new spending to the House version in order to secure enough votes for passage. The current version now tops \$920 billion, though Sens. Ben Nelson (D-NE) and Susan Collins (R-ME) are working to cut more than \$100 billion from the bill, including "\$1.1 billion for comparative medical research, \$350 million for Agriculture Department computers, \$75 million to discourage smoking, \$20 million in Interior Department funding, \$400 million for HIV screening and \$650 million for wildlife management," according to The Washington Post. The bill also includes \$140 million for "climate data modeling." We wonder how many jobs *that* will create. Then there's the \$87 million for a polar icebreaking ship. And here we thought there was no more ice at the North Pole.

(For more non-stimulus spending items, including \$5.2 billion for community development and "neighborhood stabilization activities" that Barack Obama's ACORN buddies are sure to get, National Review lists 50 De-Stimulating Facts.)

There are small victories being won, however. Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) successfully offered an amendment to delete \$246 million in tax breaks for

Hollywood studios. Other Senate Republicans are fighting for more tax cuts -- such as for home and car buyers -- and less spending.

Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), for his part, objects to the complaints of the bill's critics: "I'm not indifferent to the question of spending. I wish that the people who are concerned about this would join with me in trying to rein in some of the excessive military spending." And according to President Obama, "Most of the programs that have been criticized as part of this package amount to less than one percent of the overall package."

Beyond massive spending, there are other problems with the bill. For example, the "Buy American" provision would require that all "manufactured goods" bought using stimulus money be made in the United States. Ah, the union label. Europeans were rightly miffed at the provision, warning of a trade war if it passed. To his credit, President Obama has requested that it be removed. Another bad idea is that the bill relies on the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires that "prevailing wages" (read: union wages) be paid to workers who carry out stimulus spending. The Heritage Foundation estimates that including Davis-Bacon will drive up the \$188 billion in construction costs by another \$17 billion.

Never fear, though; there will be oversight -- for a small fee. Various Offices of Inspector General will receive \$208.5 million, the Government Accountability Office will get \$25 million and the new seven-member "Accountability and Transparency Board" will get \$14 million. And all this after the bill stipulates that "up to 0.5 percent of each amount appropriated in this Act may be used for the expenses of management and oversight of the programs, grants, and activities funded by such appropriation." That number could be in the neighborhood of \$3 billion, give or take.

If passed, this "stimulus" would push this year's budget deficit -- the annual gap between spending and income -- to a record \$1.4 trillion, or nearly 10 percent of the nation's overall economic output. The last time that happened was World War II.

The bottom line, however, is that this bill is nothing more than an enormous power grab -- an effort by Democrats to further centralize government authority over the economy. Doubtless the harmful effects will be felt for years.

### **This week's 'Alpha Jackass' award**

"If we do not move swiftly, an economy that is in crisis will be faced with catastrophe. Millions more Americans will lose their jobs. Homes will be lost. Families will go without health care. Our crippling dependence on foreign oil will continue. That is the price of inaction." --former community organizer Barack Obama

*Nothing to fear but...*

### **This week's 'Braying Jenny' award**

"Every month that we do not have an economic recovery package, 500 million Americans lose their jobs. I don't think we can go fast enough." --Nancy Pelosi

*Pelosi's remarks -- along with others from the math-challenged Left -- call to mind the scene from "Austin Powers" in which the president, rolling with laughter, points out the ludicrousness of Dr. Evil's demand for \$100 billion: "Dr. Evil, this is 1969 -- that amount of money doesn't even exist! That's like saying, 'I want a kajillion bajillion dollars!'"*

*On the other hand, in light of the incredible amounts of money involved in the stimulus and bank bailout, this would-be hilarious scene suddenly seems as though it were drawn rather perfunctorily from today's headlines.*

### **The BIG lie**

"I can pledge to you that no earmark or any of that, any description you want to make of it, will be in the bill that passes the House. ... There will be no earmarks in the economic recovery package that passes the House." --House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) on 12 January on the pork-laden stimulus bill that passed the House last week

### **New & notable legislation**

The House passed and President Obama signed the extension of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) on Wednesday, a victory for Democrats after two years of setbacks, including two vetoes by former President George W. Bush. The bill extends health care to an additional four million children, but it may be more than that before long. During the bill-signing ceremony, Obama said, "The way I see it, providing coverage to 11 million children through CHIP is a down payment on my commitment to cover every single American."

In an executive move, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar canceled oil and gas leases on 77 parcels of federal land in Utah, reversing the decision of the Bush administration to actually work toward energy independence, the supposed Holy Grail of the Left. The other Holy Grail, environmental extremism, won the day instead. Next up for Salazar: a review of offshore oil drilling. "I believe, as President Obama does, that we need to responsibly develop our oil and gas supplies to help us reduce our dependence on foreign oil," Salazar said, "but we must do so in a thoughtful and balanced way." In other words, not at all.

The House voted Wednesday to delay the transition to all-digital television by four months. It is the second time the transition has been delayed. Originally, broadcasters were supposed to stop sending analog signals in 2006, but that deadline was changed to 17 February 2009 over the same concerns about lack of equipment and consumer confusion that have sparked the current delay. Heaven forbid anyone wakes up on 18 February unable to watch television.

The House passed legislation this week to create a terrorist white list -- a database of people who have been flagged wrongly on no-fly lists at airports. Innocents would have to prove to the Department of Homeland Security that they are not, in fact, terrorists. Their names would then be added to the "Comprehensive Cleared List."

Former impeached federal judge and current congressman Alcee Hastings (D-FL) introduced HR 645, the National Emergency Centers Establishment Act, which calls for "not fewer than 6 national emergency centers on military installations" at a cost of \$360 million over the next two years. The stated purpose is temporary housing and medical and humanitarian assistance for people dislocated due to an emergency or disaster. It would also provide centralized locations for training and coordination of first responders, and "meet other appropriate needs, as determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security." We can only imagine what "other appropriate needs" might be.

### **Hope 'n' Change: The change we hoped would come**

Former Senate Democrat leader Tom Daschle withdrew his name from consideration this week for the position of secretary of Health and Human Services

because of his failure to pay \$128,000 in back taxes between 2005 and 2007, and because he's been enriching himself in recent years via the very industry he would have overseen. Daschle said that he didn't want to be a "distraction" to the administration's ambitious and socialist health care agenda. During his 26 years in Congress, Daschle rarely missed an opportunity to support tax hikes, and he was even on record as saying, "tax cheaters cheat us all, and the IRS should enforce our laws to the letter." Interestingly enough, Daschle only paid his back taxes *after* he was nominated for the HHS post, indicating that if he hadn't been nominated, he might have never paid the tab.

Simultaneously, Nancy Killefer, nominee for the newly created post of chief performance officer, withdrew her nomination because she failed to pay less than \$1,000 in taxes on household help. The former McKinsey and Company executive became the third Obama administration nominee to become embroiled in tax issues, after Daschle and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner. Among Killefer's past work is a consulting stint at Treasury to modernize the IRS and push the agency to more aggressively pursue tax cheats.

The troubles didn't stop there. Thursday, it came to light that the husband of Labor secretary nominee Hilda Solis paid more than \$6,000 this week to clear up a tax lien going back 16 years. It seems that the only way to get Democrats to pay their taxes is by nominating them or their spouses for the Obama cabinet.

No wonder the Democrats are so big on tax hikes. After all, what do they care? They're not paying them. So much for the new culture Obama wanted to bring to Washington. (Wall Street Journal columnist James Taranto has more on the trouble Obama has brought on himself.)

In the only successful news for Obama this week, Eric Holder, who seems to have his taxes in order, was confirmed as Attorney General by a 75 to 21 vote. Democrats lauded Holder as an example of how the Justice Department will change after the Bush years, which they have derided as unethical and overly politicized. Holder's own involvement in the Marc Rich pardon and the pardons of several Puerto Rican terrorists during the waning days and hours of the Clinton administration apparently doesn't count as unethical and over-politicized.

Speaking of politics as usual, Obama's early executive orders on lobbying restrictions have not held up to the tough claims that he made about lobbying practices during the campaign. The day after his inauguration, Obama barred former lobbyists from joining his administration if they had actively plied their wares in the previous two years, but it apparently wasn't going to apply to Tom Daschle, and it didn't apply to William Lynn, nominee for the number-two spot at Defense and lobbyist for Raytheon. Then there's William Corr, a lobbyist for an anti-tobacco advocacy group and the nominee for the deputy secretary position at HHS...

### **Gregg joins cabinet**

Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH) is likely to become secretary of commerce, becoming the second high-profile Republican to join the Obama cabinet after Defense Secretary Robert Gates. Gregg's nomination was sad news to his fellow Republican senators, because it could bring the Democrats the coveted 60-vote filibuster-proof majority. A smoke-filled-room deal between Gregg, Obama and New Hampshire Governor John Lynch, a Democrat, virtually ensures that Gregg's replacement will be a Republican, maintaining the majority-minority split. However, Republicans will have a difficult time defending that seat in 2010 in a state that has grown increasingly blue in recent elections. And few in the Beltway seem troubled by the fact that Senate seats are being traded like baseball cards these days. New Hampshire now joins Illinois and New York as states that have filled Senate seats via a quid pro quo method of back room deals and trade-offs rather than letting the people choose who their representatives should be.

### **From the Halls of Justice: More Clinton legal troubles**

If there wasn't enough of a three-ring legal circus while her husband was president, now Hillary Clinton has to respond to a legal proceeding, too. On behalf of State Department employee David Rodearmel, the watchdog group Judicial Watch filed suit challenging Hillary's eligibility for secretary of state based on Article I, Section 6 of the Constitution, known legally as the "Emoluments" Clause. Despite Congress readjusting the salary of both the secretary of state and secretary of the interior as a fix to get around the Constitution and allow both Hillary and former Sen. Ken Salazar of Colorado to serve, the plaintiffs argue that the secretary of state's compensation was still increased during Sen. Clin-

ton's term in office, which began in 2007, and thus renders Hillary ineligible until 2013. To decide otherwise, argues Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton, would be to allow an "end run" around the Constitution.

The case, *Rodearmel v. Clinton*, is pending before the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on an expedited basis. Given President Obama's track record of selecting scofflaws for cabinet posts, Mrs. Clinton's circumstances aren't surprising.

### **From the Left: Dodd's disclosure**

Just call him the Not-So-Artful "Dodd-ger." After months of promising to release more than 100 pages of documents relating to his dubious dealings with mortgage lending giant Countrywide, Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) gave journalists what the DC Examiner's Mark Tapscott has termed the "idiot's treatment," inviting a select few Connecticut reporters to review -- but not copy or take -- the documents purportedly absolving Dodd of wrongdoing in accepting sweetheart loans from former Countrywide CEO Angelo Mozilo.

Countrywide, of course, helped catalyze the housing disaster that sparked the global economic crisis. And as part of Countrywide's VIP program, which Dodd claims was "nothing more than enhanced customer service," the Connecticut Senator reportedly saved \$75,000 in refinancing two loans worth \$800,000.

Dodd, who is the chairman of the powerful Senate Banking Committee, the committee charged with overseeing the nation's financial institutions, said he and his wife "acted properly in our mortgage refinancing negotiations. We did not seek or expect any special rates or terms on our loans and we never received any." Why, then, did Senator Dodd still only give reporters what *The Wall Street Journal* calls a "Peek-A-Boo Disclosure"?

Perhaps Dodd truly was an innocent recipient of Countrywide's "enhanced customer service." More likely, though, he was playing a peek-a-boo game of his own, covering his eyes as the housing industry went kaput on his watch.

### **GOP now party of Steele**

Last week, GOPAC head and regular Fox News contributor Michael Steele outlasted four opponents to become the national chair of the Republican

Party. It took six ballots for the 168 members of the Republican National Committee to choose Steele over his final opponent, South Carolina GOP Chair Katon Dawson. Incumbent RNC Chair Mike Duncan faced insurmountable odds given that he was George W. Bush's pick two years ago. Former Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell and Michigan GOP head Saul Anuzis were also vying for the post.

Steele, the former Lt. Governor of Maryland, is considered the most moderate of the contenders by media observers, particularly in light of his liberal stances on gun control and affirmative action. His lack of electoral success is also somewhat troubling -- he lost a U.S. Senate bid to then-Rep. Ben Cardin (D-MD) in 2006 in his lone statewide race, albeit in deep-blue Maryland. But Steele, arguably the best-known candidate nationally, campaigned well with an aggressive Internet effort, and he convinced RNC state and territorial leaders to give an outsider a shot.

Steele inherits a Republican Party plagued by two successive stinging defeats nationally and a growing schism between conservatives and moderates. He advocates for clearer Republican branding and better use of technology. His action plan focuses on strengthening the relationship among the national, state and local party units and increasing grassroots participation by recruiting and training 25,000 new activist leaders by 2012. His first test comes this year with state elections in New Jersey and Virginia.

## **NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **Warfront with Jihadistan: Iraqi elections**

Though little reported by the Leftmedia, there was an election in Iraq last week. It was noteworthy more for its lack of drama than for its outcome. For example, there wasn't a single bombing in Anbar province that day, formerly the most dangerous province in Iraq. Thus, the Iraqi people sent George W. Bush the best possible farewell gift -- democracy in a peaceful display of what America's blood and treasure had brought to our former enemy.

As Marine Major General John Kelly expressed it from his firsthand perspective:

"One of the things I've always said was that we came here to 'give' them democracy. Even in the dark days my only consolation was that it was about freedom and democracy. After what I saw today,

and having forgotten our own history and revolution, this was arrogance. People are not given freedom and democracy -- they take it for themselves." President Obama, of course, ran for president on a cut-and-run platform. We think the Iraqi people sent him and his party of defeatists a crystal-clear message as well: Freedom tastes sweetest to those who first experience it -- *no thanks to you*.

### Iranian Sputnik

On Tuesday, Iran apparently succeeded in getting its Safir space launch vehicle off the pad and into space, and claims to have put a satellite into orbit. Those paying attention will recall that Iran made a similar claim last August, despite the assessment by most Western analysts that the 2008 attempt failed shortly after launch. While it is tempting to mock Iran's nascent space program, a close look at the Iranian media images reveals why this event is so very serious: The first stage of the two-stage Safir rocket appears to be a Shahab-3 MRBM motor. There are undoubtedly many other components of the Safir that have direct application to Iran's ballistic missile programs. Iran has now demonstrated for the second time the ability to employ multi-stage rockets, a significant hurdle on the path to IRBMs or even ICBMs. This week's launch is just one more example of why the U.S.-Polish missile defense agreement should go forward, and why national missile defense is needed here in the United States. Oh, and did we mention that the missile was named "Omid," or "Hope"?

In other news, Iran also provided a textbook example of why experience matters in a commander in chief. Following President Obama's sophomoric attempt to sweet-talk them into direct engagement, Iran's response -- predictably -- was to push back as hard as possible and frame the United States as the party negotiating from weakness. Iranian spokesman Gholam Hossein Elham declared, "This request means Western ideology has become passive, that capitalist thought and the system of domination have failed." Anyone familiar with Iran's twisted worldview and obsession with perceived U.S. wrongs of the past could have seen this coming, but President Obama apparently thought Iran would swoon the way Berliners did during his campaign and agree to drop 30 years of enmity toward the "Great Satan." Does anyone out there think John McCain would have made such a weak-kneed misstep? Alas, that's the difference between hope and experience.

### Profiles of valor:

#### U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Mark Slusher

United States Marine Corps Maj. Mark Slusher served in Iraq as team leader for Military Transition Team 111 of 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division from 22 August 2007 until 17 August 2008. During that time, Slusher led his 15-man team through several combat operations, clearing terrorist strongholds and securing weapons caches in violence-plagued Basra, Iraq's second largest city. Slusher also spent much of that year advising the Iraqi military. In the earliest days of this particular campaign, Slusher and his men were continuously pounded with mortar rounds and small-arms fire, and Slusher repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to better direct his team's defensive actions and assist the Iraqi battalion commander. During an engagement after conducting a combat patrol on 24 April 2008, one of the team's vehicles was hit by an explosively formed penetrator -- a form of IED used to penetrate armor at a distance. The vehicle was destroyed and all five Marines inside were wounded. Maj. Slusher worked to rescue all five of the wounded from the burning vehicle while under steady enemy fire. He moved each Marine to a covered position and administered first aid. For his courage under fire, Slusher was awarded the Bronze Star with combat "V" for valor.

### BUSINESS & ECONOMY

#### Income Redistribution:

##### Trillion Dollar Baby

To the average American, "accountability" and "transparency" have pretty straightforward meanings. That's true for the Left, as well -- it's just that the terms mean something completely different in, well, English, once routed through the Left's doublespeak grinder. Certainly neither makes an appearance in the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP).

According to the just-released, 112-page Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the program, TARP suffers not only from a lack of a "clearly articulated vision" (also known as an "objective") and both accountability and program transparency, but also from a lack of oversight. "Oversight," of course, is another name for assurance of accountability and transparency. To the Left, however, "oversight" means "spending." How so? Well, oversight requires an overseer -- actually, many overseers. And those overseers need regula-

tions to follow to guarantee proper oversight. All of that costs money -- lots of money.

So as the Obama administration considers which banks to help next, just what can we expect for our money? Ask AIG, the failed financial insurer propped up -- and now owned, for all intents -- by the government. After the Fed had thrown \$150 billion at it and established an 80 percent stake in the insurer, AIG is now expressing "hope" that it will need no further federal aid. Hope? In our minds, \$150 billion should have bought a lot more than hope.

All of this is to conclude that we should not be looking for either Congress or the Fed to pull the country out of the banking crisis. The way out is to leave the market alone and let it settle its own issues -- bailouts, intervention and oppressive regulation are all formulas for prolonging the problem, as the Great Depression's example attests, not for solving it.

### **Regulatory Commissars: Limiting executive pay**

"Change" has arrived in the payroll departments, and it ain't pretty. Making good on his promises to Big Labor and other liberal interest groups, President Obama signed the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and several executive orders designed to make life easier for labor unions, radical feminists and the plaintiff's bar. The misnamed Paycheck Fairness Act is also working its way through Congress and is expected to arrive on Obama's desk soon. These actions represent a fundamental reordering of how employee compensation is determined. Regulators and the courts -- not the market -- will now determine what pay is "fair."

In a preview of things to come, President Obama also announced Wednesday that CEO compensation will be capped at \$500,000 for certain companies that receive money from TARP. ("As an amendment to the stimulus bill," reports The New York Times, "the Senate voted on Thursday to limit pay and ban bonuses for the 25 top executives at companies that have received money from the Treasury's \$700 billion bailout program for the financial industry.") As described by Obama, this restriction will apply only to companies that receive "extraordinary" relief, not to companies that have already accepted TARP funds. On top of that, according to the Associated Press, "the cap can be waived with full public disclosure and a nonbinding shareholder vote."

There is considerable speculation that more restrictions will be applied to all businesses that accept TARP funds in the future. As a result, many businesses are reconsidering whether they should accept federal handouts. Furthermore, Wall Street talent may go elsewhere to do business, leaving states that depend on the tax revenue hurting. Meet the catch-22 of government "help."

Perhaps President Obama and members of Congress would consider taking the same 90 percent pay cut.

### **Lost a job? Apply with the federal government**

According to Commerce Department numbers released last week, real gross domestic product contracted at an annual rate of 3.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008 -- a significant change from the 0.5 percent decrease in the third quarter. While this is lower than the five to six percent anticipated by economists, experts attribute it to a sudden drop in purchasing that left inventory -- i.e., "production" -- unsold.

Nigel Gault, chief domestic economist at HIS Global Insight, notes, "The drop in spending was so fast ... that production could not be cut fast enough. ... That is happening now, and the contraction in the current quarter ... will probably exceed 5 percent."

Meanwhile, the economy shed 598,000 jobs in January and the unemployment rate hit 7.6 percent -- the highest since September 1992. But the federal government is hiring. Currently, Uncle Sam boasts a staff of approximately two million, but this is expected to grow -- by as much as 244,000 or more under the economic "stimulus" package. If one is wondering how the nation's largest employer can afford to hire, the answer is simple: Whereas private companies must generate money to hire by producing and/or distributing goods or services, the government has no such prerequisite. Instead, it either takes taxpayer money or simply prints more green paper, which in turn requires more taxpayer money.

## **CULTURE & POLICY**

### **Faith and Family: Change is coming**

"With a president they view as more sympathetic to their causes, progressive religious activists are pushing the new Obama administration for aggressive action -- on poverty, the environment and social justice issues -- that would mark a significant shift in the faith agenda that dominated the Bush years,"

reports The Washington Post. The Bush administration pushed an agenda focused on reducing abortion, preserving the traditional meaning of marriage and restricting federal funding for embryonic stem cell research, which Democrats and their accomplices in the Leftmedia portrayed falsely as a ban on such research.

Among President Obama's first acts in office was to lift the ban on federal funding for international abortion providers. Making that a priority certainly says a lot about his so-called efforts to reach across the aisle. Another troubling policy is Obama's plan to require religious groups to hire outside their own faith if they receive federal funds -- a change that Obama says is an effort to stop discrimination. Thus, a Baptist organization may be forced to hire a Buddhist, which is rather antithetical to their mission, but at least Leftists can feel good about it.

### From the 'Non Compos Mentis' File

The decision to have children is generally the most consequential of one's life. Now, according to some politicians, both here and abroad, there is now something else we must take into account when deciding whether or not to procreate: civic duty.

On the heels of Nancy Pelosi's assertion last week that having fewer children will save the government money in these troubled economic times, a member of the British government is now advocating population control in order to stop -- you guessed it -- global warming. Jonathon Porritt, the chairman of England's Sustainable Development Commission, stated recently that Brits should "connect up their own responsibility for their total environmental footprint and how they decide to procreate and how many children they think are appropriate." He added, "I think we will work our way toward a position that says that having more than two children is irresponsible."

In his view, abortion and contraception are equally viable options for exercising this responsibility and are both useful tools for ensuring the survival of foliage and polar bears.

Yet again, the Left has proven that there is no depth to which they will not sink in order to achieve their goals. To them, the ends always justify the means, though in this case, they ignore the fact that population control does not serve humanity's interest. An average of more than two children per couple is

necessary just to maintain the current population level. While Pelosi's statements were a shameless and nonsensical push for the federal government to subsidize contraception, Porritt's view is far more frightening: that humans are actually a blight on the planet.

### To keep and bear arms

A homeowner in Juliette, Georgia, had just left his wife in the den after watching "American Idol" one night when he "heard that door crash open for some reason, and I knew someone was in the house." The intruder was armed with a shotgun and had quickly gone from the kitchen to the dining room and was nearing the den. That's when the homeowner opened fire with his .22 Magnum revolver. "I tried to do my best to protect my family," he said. "This weapon was in my pocket. I tote a weapon every day of my life. It's never away from me at any point. It's some mean folks out there." The intruder was not injured, but fell to the floor before getting back up and running from the home. The homeowner did not give chase or keep firing, though he said he might have been more accurate with one of his three other firearms. "I'm just glad me and my wife are alive," he said.

### And last...

As we celebrate Ronald Reagan's birthday today, we thought it appropriate to close with some of the Gipper's own witticisms, so many of which are still relevant a quarter century later. Here are a few of our favorites:

"Politics is not a bad profession. If you succeed there are many rewards; if you disgrace yourself you can always write a book."

"Status quo, you know, that is Latin for 'the mess we're in.'"

"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."

"The most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help."

"The nearest thing to eternal life we will ever see on this earth is a government program."

"If you like laws and sausages, you should never watch either one being made."

"History's no easy subject. Even in my day it wasn't, and we had so much less of it to learn then."

"When you see all that rhetorical smoke billowing up from the Democrats, well, ladies and gentlemen, I'd follow the example of [Bill Clinton]: don't inhale."

"The trouble with our liberal friends is not that they're ignorant; it's just that they know so much that isn't so."

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for *The Patriot's* editors and staff.

(Please pray for our Patriot Armed Forces standing in harm's way around the world, and for their families -- especially families of those fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, who granted their lives in defense of American liberty.)