



THE FOUNDATION

“The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man.” --James Madison, Federalist No. 10

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Ground Zero Mosque: Rights vs. Right

The controversial plan to build a mosque near Ground Zero in New York City has been simmering under the surface for some time, but it finally boiled over this week. The Cordoba Initiative is the organization planning to build a 15-story Muslim “cultural center,” now called Park51, just two blocks from the hole in the ground that was the World Trade Center ... a hole in the ground created by terrorists who murdered 3,000 Americans in the name of Islam. And some “tolerant” leftists wonder why so many Americans are upset.

Barack Obama couldn't help but step into the fray. “Let me be clear,” he began, “As a citizen, and as president, I believe that Muslims have the same right to practice their religion as anyone else in this country. That includes the right to build a place of worship and a community center on private property in lower Manhattan, in accordance with local laws and ordinances.” The president certainly has a keen sense of the obvious.

Of course they have the right to practice their religion and even build their mosque wherever appropriate. No serious critic is suggesting otherwise. What we *are* saying is that such mosques are symbols of Muslim military triumph and that this one is a slap in the face of every American -- particularly those who lost loved ones on 9/11.

As Peter Kirsanow of National Review writes, “[U]nlike the president, when his fellow Americans think of the construction of a mosque on Ground Zero, their view doesn't begin and end with the First Amendment and local zoning ordinances. Rather, their view is of images that the mainstream media has done their best to airbrush out of our collective consciousness: Americans leaping out of windows and plunging -- seemingly interminably -- to their deaths to avoid incineration; first responders pulling charred remains from the smoking rubble of the collapsed towers; New Yorkers searching frantically for evidence that loved ones escaped the horror.”

Obama's statement was also taken as endorsement of the project. However, when that didn't poll well, he was forced to backtrack. “I was not commenting and I will not comment on the wisdom of making a decision to put a mosque there,” he later waffled. Perhaps such comment is above his pay grade.

Meanwhile, the mosque's imam, Feisal Abdul Rauf, told “60 Minutes” on Sept. 30, 2001, “I wouldn't say that the United States deserved what happened [on 9/11], but United States policies were an accessory to the crime that happened.” That would be the same view held by Obama's pastor, Jeremiah Wright, who thundered, “America's chickens are coming home to roost.” Is it that much of a leap of logic to conclude it's Obama's view too?

For her part, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) wants *critics* investigated. “[T]here is no question there is a concerted effort to make this a political issue by some,” she complained. “I join those who have called for looking into how is this opposition to the mosque being funded. How is this being ginned up...?” To a leftist who obviously feels little love for America, of course opposition is “being ginned up.”

The Cordoba Initiative says the project is about “peace and healing.” If that's the case, the “center” should be interfaith and renamed. Spain's Cordoba Caliphate was an era Muslims consider especially glorious for Islam. Furthermore, lead developer Sharif El-Gamal says the proximity to Ground Zero is not an issue. Has he looked at the news lately? As they say in real estate, “location, location, location.” Indeed, that's the reason that while he may have a right to build the mosque, it's not the right thing to do.

Open Query

“Why is it a good idea to build a fancy new mosque just two blocks from the site of an act of mass murder that was committed in the name of Islam? Ask this question, and the response is almost certain to be some combination of verbal abuse (“Bigot! Un-American!”) and airy abstractions about freedom of religion. No one seems to have a real answer to the question.” --Wall Street Journal columnist James Taranto

This Week's 'Alpha Jackass' Award

"Nine years after 9/11, the fight over the mosque near Ground Zero shows how obsessed we remain with an enemy that may no longer exist." --Time Magazine

News From the Swamp: Those Lame Ducks

House Democrats this week voted down a proposal to prevent a lame-duck legislative session after the midterm election -- when many of its members no doubt will have been voted out of office. Democrats have made no secret of the fact that they intend to use the lame-duck session in November and December to ram through new bills that they didn't get to earlier in the year, among them a series of tax hikes possibly recommended by Barack Obama's debt commission, new entitlement spending and so-called "climate change" legislation. Allowing members of Congress who have been voted out to continue to craft new and groundbreaking legislation that the majority of Americans do not want brings the "Democratic" party to a new low in its subversion of the democratic process. It now seems that even elections can't protect Americans from the damage that can be done by politicians in Washington.

New & Notable Legislation

The government spending spree continued last week when the House came back from recess and voted 247-161 to pass a \$26 billion bill to bail out public schools and Medicaid programs in 30 states. The \$16 billion Medicaid portion funded a program to aid state governments in meeting their payment obligations. The program was supposed to expire at the end of this year, but many states built the federal grants into their budgets, assuming that the free money would keep coming. If the federal government didn't provide the money, numerous state programs would become insolvent. The \$10 billion school aid was nothing more than a payoff to teachers' unions that claim the money will save 100,000 teaching jobs. In an era of ironclad public sector job security, the notion of 100,000 public school teachers being laid off is preposterous, a lie told by people who have lied for so long that they have lost all touch with reality.

This subtle blackmail by spendthrift state governments and public sector unions was paid for by a mixture of promised cuts to the food stamp program and tax increases on businesses that compete overseas. The food stamp cuts will never take place; members of Congress are already talking about kicking that can further down the road. However, the taxes will certainly become reality as Congress takes yet another opportunity to punish the only sector in the economy that can actually create job growth.

First Lady Michelle Obama's pet project -- childhood obesity -- received some support in Congress in the form of an \$8 billion child-nutrition bill that supposedly will be paid for in part by more cuts to the food stamp program (see item above). Built-in benefit increases for food stamp recipients would expire earlier than originally scheduled, but some Democrat lawmakers hope they can find a way to keep the increases in place. Other liberals are not pleased that one entitlement is being trimmed for the sake of another, and they have promised to oppose the funding scheme.

Income Redistribution: Report Reveals Obama Propaganda Machine

It's been said that if you tell a lie often enough, the people will eventually accept the lie as truth. Perhaps the ranking member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), understands this better than most because last week he issued a hard-hitting report on the usage of "propaganda initiatives" (on the federal dime, no less) by Barack Obama and his administration.

Obviously government propaganda is not new, particularly as a tool in wartime for the American effort. However, the depth and scope of issue-based leftist infiltration of purportedly "mainstream" media outlets, particularly in the entertainment industry, makes Issa's report both timely and revealing. Instead of pursuing the war against Islamic terror through these means the government seems to be waging its war on the nation's producers and conservative causes in general and en masse.

Artists for health care, actors and writers for volunteerism, "new media" specialists at the Justice Department attacking bloggers advocating limited government, the First Lady's promotion of initiatives -- all are just cogs in a great Democrat machine advocating more government control on our lives. In this battle for the hearts and minds of the American people, the truth is the first target.

In other wealth distribution news, Aug. 19 marked "Cost of Government Day" as measured by Americans for Tax Reform. ATR defines it as "the day on which the average American has earned enough gross income to pay off his or her share of the spending and regulatory burdens imposed by government at the federal, state, and local levels." It took 231 days this year to pay for the cost of government -- an extra month more than in 2008 before Obama took office. According to ATR, "In other words, in 2010 the cost of government consumes 63.41 percent of national income." Astounding.

From the Left: Blagojevich Guilty on Just One Count

Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, a Democrat, was found guilty Tuesday of one count of making false statements to the FBI in its investigation into whether he tried to sell the Senate seat held by Barack Obama after the latter was elected president. The jury failed to reach a verdict on 23 other counts of corruption. Blagojevich was on tape talking about the appointment to fill Obama's former Senate seat saying, "I've got this thing and it's f---ing golden and I'm not just going to give it up for f---ing nothing." It seemed to be a convincing case, but U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald couldn't close the deal on extortion, racketeering, conspiracy and other charges.

Perhaps that was because, at least on several charges, one lone holdout refused to convict. As the trial began, ABC's affiliate in Chicago described that juror -- now confirmed to be Jo Ann Chiakulas -- as "a black female believed to be in her 60s, is a retired state public health director who has ties to the Chicago Urban League. She has handed out campaign literature for a relative who ran for public office. She listens to National Public Radio and liberal talk radio shows." That last part is redundant. No wonder she held out in favor of her fellow Chicago politico.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Defense Secretary Gates to Retire?

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates this week signaled his intention to resign his post before the end of 2011. Or has he? Gates has previously spoken publicly about wanting to retire to his home in Washington State but has been persuaded to stay on the job. As Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell pointed out, "This is not Secretary Gates announcing his retirement. I would remind you all that every time Secretary Gates has seriously considered hanging it up for good, he ultimately has decided to keep serving." White House spokesman Bill Burton said Gates has served with distinction but declined further comment. With DC being DC, rumors of possible successors immediately started swirling. Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), a veteran, and Michele A. Flournoy, undersecretary of defense for policy, were mentioned.

Secretary Gates's tenure has been at best somewhat of a mixed bag for the country. Gates, a former director of the CIA, was appointed by President George W. Bush in 2006 to succeed Donald Rumsfeld and oversee the U.S. troop surge in Iraq that has been credited with turning the war. However, Gates, who agreed to stay on as SecDef under Obama, has also stuck to Obama's plans of near total disengagement with Iraq by the end of 2011, leav-

ing a still-struggling Iraqi government to fend for itself against the jihadis. In fact, the last U.S. combat brigade -- 4th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division -- left Iraq this week, nearly seven and a half years after the U.S. invasion. The move formally ends Operation Iraqi Freedom, though 50,000 troops will remain as trainers and advisers through 2011. We certainly hope Iraq is successful on its own.

Additionally, Gates has proposed eliminating or shrinking what are, arguably, the armed services' highest-priority programs, including the Navy's DDG-1000 destroyer, the Air Force's F-22 Raptor fighter, the Army's Future Combat System, and the Marines' Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, all programs vital to maintaining America's ability to project power and protect global lines of communication. Add his proposal for additional defense cuts of \$100 billion over the next five years and it would appear that Gates intends on leaving the U.S. with a hollow, Carter-esque military force, which can only embolden America's enemies. That would be a sad legacy for a once noble servant of the United States.

Justice to Sue Arpaio?

"Justice Department officials in Washington have issued a rare threat to sue Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio if he does not cooperate with their investigation of whether he discriminates against Hispanics," reports The Washington Post. Of course, the threat comes just weeks after Justice's suit against Arizona over its immigration law.

According to the Post, "A federal grand jury in Phoenix is examining whether Arpaio has used his power to investigate and intimidate political opponents and whether his office misappropriated government money." Arpaio is a 78-year-old Republican who has been re-elected four times since 1992. He has become famous for his chain gangs and the pink underwear he forces inmates to wear. He is also tough on illegal immigration, which, no doubt, is why Attorney General Eric Holder said in March that he expects the inquiries to "produce results." In our humble shop, that sounds like out-and-out political intimidation.

Video of the Week

Opponents of Arizona's SB 1070 -- the bill that makes being an illegal alien against state law as well as federal law -- [desecrate the U.S. flag during the National Anthem](#).

Two Free Speech Cases Decided

A three-judge panel on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 that a law prohibiting false claims of military

honors is unconstitutional. According to the Associated Press, “The Tuesday ruling involves the case of Xavier Alvarez, who falsely claimed in 2007 to have won a Congressional Medal of Honor [sic]. He was charged with violating the federal Stolen Valor Act, which makes it a crime to falsely claim to have won a military medal.”

The majority wrote, “[G]iven our historical skepticism of permitting the government to police the line between truth and falsity, and between valuable speech and drivel, we presumptively protect all speech, including false statements, in order that clearly protected speech may flower in the shelter of the First Amendment.” So John F. Kerry is safe.

Meanwhile, Chief U.S. District Judge Fernando Gaitan ruled this week that the wackos at Westboro Baptist “Church” in Kansas can continue protesting at military funerals with signs such as “God Hates Fags” and “Thank God for Dead Soldiers.” Gaitan struck down a Missouri law aimed at stopping the vile protests. “Although plaintiff’s speech may be repugnant to listeners, the court finds that, at a minimum, some of plaintiff’s speech is entitled to constitutional protection,” Judge Gaitan wrote. As with the Ground Zero mosque, the right to do something doesn’t mean it’s right to do it. The U.S. Supreme Court will hear a similar case involving a Westboro protest in Maryland. Oral arguments begin Oct. 6.

Iran Announces 10 More Uranium Sites

Iran announced on Monday that construction will soon begin on the first of 10 future uranium enrichment sites. Iran initially announced plans for 10 more enrichment sites in September 2009, after the existence of its second such site at Qom was revealed. While not specifying the new site’s location, Iranian officials claimed it would be built deep inside a mountain, like the Qom site, a design feature that serves only one purpose -- protection from attack. Iran still claims that all of its nuclear facilities are meant for peaceful uses, and that it doesn’t have any aspirations of developing nuclear weapons. Former International Atomic Energy Agency director Mohamed ElBaradei could not be reached for comment.

Elsewhere in Iran, the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant appears on the verge of being fueled and going operational thanks to our Russian friends. Patriot readers may recall that Russia insisted the Bushehr NPP be exempted from UN Security Council Resolution 1737 and all succeeding UN resolutions on Iran’s nuclear program, allowing Russia to continue final construction, testing, and now fueling

the reactor. The Bushehr plant is a western-style pressurized light-water reactor, and as such is not a pressing proliferation concern. Its spent fuel rods will eventually yield plutonium, but the process of extracting and then reprocessing the plutonium into weapons is likely to remain beyond Iran’s technical capability for many years. However, Russia’s willingness to step up and fuel the reactor is a poke in the eye for American and UN efforts to gain Iranian compliance with its treaty obligations and indicates that Russia still sees value in supporting miscreant nations to cause trouble for the United States. How’s that “Reset Button” working out, Hillary?

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Around the Nation: BP Paying Dues for Gulf Spill -- So Are Oil Workers

After the Deepwater Horizon disaster, the Obama administration made BP an offer they couldn’t refuse -- the oil giant would supply \$20 billion for an “independently” managed trust fund to satisfy future damage claims and reimburse state and local governments for clean-up costs resulting from the spill. The government’s “BP windfall” would come from revenue of future oil production in the Gulf out of the nearly 150 producing wells BP either owns or holds a stake in, at a cost of \$5 billion a year until the government fund is made whole. Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX) was right when he called it a “shakedown.” Too bad he apologized.

In the meantime, drilling in the Gulf is becoming more problematic as the arbitrary and capricious government-enforced moratorium on new exploration keeps rigs idle and oil industry workers on the unemployment line. These same workers weren’t on the agenda when Obama visited the region last weekend for a cinematic dip in the Gulf à la Slick Willie (he actually swam in an inland bay) before jetting off to do some fundraisers and a trip to Martha’s Vineyard.

While the BP fund is set aside for the use of parties directly affected by the spill, the Gulf oil industry affects many areas barely touched by the now-capped undersea gusher. Obama’s visit to Florida to promote Gulf tourism may be good for that industry, but the economic viability of the region as a whole continues to suffer as the oil explorers sit idle or relocate equipment to areas where new drilling is still allowed.

Regulatory Commissars: ObamaCare Rationing

The Food and Drug Administration became the first regulator under ObamaCare to make cost conscious rationing

decisions that take away individual choice from Americans. Last month, an FDA advisory board recommended withdrawing government approval of the cancer drug Avastin because its \$88,000-per-year cost outweighed the benefits of helping one third of advanced breast cancer patients stay alive. Removal of FDA approval will also remove the drug's eligibility for coverage of breast cancer under most private insurance plans as well as for Medicare. Quixotically, the drug remains (for now) approved for colon, lung, kidney and brain cancer, earning \$855 million in revenue each year in the United States.

It's unclear how government bureaucrats (none of whom appear to be cancer survivors) quantified rationing away patients' 1-in-3 chance of increasing survivability because they thought the benefit of surviving didn't justify the costs. The bureaucrats certainly didn't reach out to the patients or their families to learn their thoughts.

The FDA's final decision will come down in September. We can only hope that future ObamaCare death panels aren't populated by similar Kevorkian-esque bureaucrats concerned more with costs than care.

China Surpasses Japan as World's Number Two Economy

In the global economic race, China has officially edged out Japan as the world's Number Two economy, based on gross domestic product (GDP) for the second quarter. Citing China's "spectacular" growth compared with Japan's history of "stagnant growth," the Associated Press reports that in the second quarter of 2010, China's GDP was \$1.335 trillion while Japan's was \$1.286 trillion. This, the AP says, "underscore[s] China's emergence as an economic power that is changing everything from the global balance of military and financial power to how cars are designed."

According to the Heritage Foundation, however, the news is, well, yawn-worthy. Heritage Research Fellow for Asia Economic Policy Derek Scissors writes that while China now leads Japan, the former "repeatedly revises its own GDP higher and is still missing some service sector and rural transactions," meaning "[i]t probably passed Japan several years ago. Also, GDP calculations adjusting for different prices within economies -- known as purchasing power parity -- indicated China's economy was larger than Japan's as early as 1995. This is old news."

Scissors notes that more than GDP, individual wealth supports economic development. Here Japan ranks approxi-

mately 40th in personal income, while China's per capita GDP still amounts to only 15 percent of U.S. levels. Bottom line: Until personal wealth in China catches up to GDP, all the hubbub may be just overblown hype.

CULTURE & POLICY

Faith and Family: What Next for Prop 8?

As we reported two weeks ago, U.S. Judge Vaughn Walker declared California's Proposition 8, defining marriage as between one man and one woman, to be unconstitutional. In doing so, this one judge overturned a measure approved by 52 percent of California voters in 2008 and upheld by the California Supreme Court in a 6-1 ruling.

While Judge Walker's ruling would have lifted the stay on same-sex marriages on Aug. 18, a three-judge panel from the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals extended the stay until that court could hear the case. The panel also set an expedited schedule for hearings and asked lawyers to address the issue of which parties have legal standing to appeal. Without a proponent for Prop 8 who has standing, the legal right to speak in favor of the proposition, there can be no appeal, and Judge Walker's decision will stand. The case was brought against the State of California, and both Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Attorney General Jerry Brown so far have declined to make an appeal of Walker's decision. Some believe that California state law gives initiative proponents a right of appeal.

It's a shame that an issue, with broad ramifications as this one has, could be decided by default. It's possible that any ruling on standing will go to the Supreme Court. For now, briefs are due to the Ninth Circuit by Sept. 17 -- Constitution Day -- and oral arguments will begin Dec. 6.

Judicial Benchmarks: Court Upholds ACORN Funding Ban

The U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld the law Congress passed last year preventing federal funds from going to the community organizing group ACORN. Readers will recall that the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now was caught red-handed last year advocating prostitution and tax evasion -- all while benefiting from millions of tax dollars. In a unanimous decision, the three-judge panel overturned Eastern District Judge Nina Gershon's ruling that de-funding ACORN was unconstitutional and constituted punishment without trial, and they remanded the case back to Judge Gershon "for further proceedings as to the plaintiffs' First Amendment and due process claims."

In the court's opinion, Judge Roger J. Miner wrote, "Although the appropriations laws may have the effect of alienating ACORN and its affiliates from their supporters, Congress must have the authority to suspend federal funds to an organization that has admitted to significant mismanagement."

Representing ACORN is the quizzically named Center for Constitutional Rights (quizzical in that the group's mission holds as equal the Constitution and the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The Center's legal director, William Quigley, has promised to request a hearing before the full circuit, noting, "We have high hopes that this is not the final word on this issue." Speaking for those who would rather not fund brothels and tax cheats, we have high hopes that it is.

And Last...

Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) is chairman of the House Financial Services Committee and has long been a champion of quasi-government-run mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. In 2002, for example, when Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) warned of the danger the two posed to the mortgage market, borne out by the 2008 collapse, Frank said, "I do not regard Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac as problems. I regard them as assets." In 2007, he com-

plained about "the insistence of some economic conservative fundamentalists in the Bush administration who, to be honest, don't think there should be a Fannie Mae or a Freddie Mac."

He changed his tune significantly this week, however ... just before his re-election bid heats up. "They should be abolished," Frank said of Fannie and Freddie. "They only question is what do you put in their place." Yes, that is the \$64,000 question. Frank's suggestion is, "If we want to subsidize housing then we could do it upfront and let the budget be clear about that." In other words, we should no longer disguise socialist housing policies inside Fannie and Freddie, but short of that, we're glad to see that Frank has come around. The only surprise is that he would want to can anything called "Fannie."

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for *The Patriot Post's* editors and staff. Read online at <http://patriotpost.us>

(Please pray for our 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.)