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## THEY SAID IT

We need more serious reflection on what happens, both to ourselves and to others who rely upon us, when we lose wars or when our failure to act causes something worse to happen. Those who cry “peace, peace” often have unacknowledged blood on their hands because they failed to use adequate force when needed; “To the victors go the spoils” is an ancient principle of fact, not rightness. Cowardice has never been considered a virtue. Nor has “turning the other cheek” served as an acceptable excuse for allowing some evil – one we could have stopped except that our theories or fears prevented us from trying – to continue or conquer. Not a few worthy things have been eradicated forever because a war was lost. Eternal vigilance remains the price of liberty and much else that is worthy.

James V. Schall, Professor of Government at Georgetown University, “When War Must Be The Answer.”

## HOPING AND PRAYING FOR DEFEAT.

One of the most frequent and enduring criticisms of President Bush regarding his handling of the war in Iraq and the broader war on terror is that he has failed, or, at the very least, has performed poorly in relaying to the American people the necessity of the war, the strategy involved in its execution, and the progress being made on its various fronts. We’re particularly aware of this because we’ve been among the most vocal proponents of this view, writing countless times that the war itself is necessary, valuable, and winnable, but that the American public is largely unaware of all of this because the President has been slipshod in his communications effort.

And while we continue to believe that communications is one of the President’s weakest suits, and, by extension, one of the war’s, we have also come to the conclusion of late that there is something else going on here, something that would make the maintenance of public support for this effort exceptionally difficult even if George W. Bush possessed the communications skills of Franklin Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton all rolled into one.

We should note that we’re not alone in drawing this conclusion. Other analysts and pundits, predominantly those on the right, have likewise come to see the war’s enduring unpopularity as the result of more than the simple failing of a hesitantly communicative president.

Last week, the military historian Victor Davis Hanson wrote that the real problem with the war in the Middle East is that it is, in many ways, different from any American war before it, requiring as it does an exceptionally precarious balance between its respective military and public relations components. Too much force destroys the ability to foment responsible democratic governance in a post-Islamist, post-bellum regime. But too little disheartens the American public, which understands the viciousness of the enemy and longs to see it defeated. Hanson put it this way:

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What Mr. Bush is faced with is this nearly impossible paradox of half war/half peace: at a time when most are getting fed up with abhorrent Middle Eastern jihadists who blow up, hijack, and behead in the name of their religion, he is attempting to convince the same American public and the Western world at large to spend their blood and treasure to help Muslim Afghans, Iraqis, and now Lebanese, who heretofore — whether out of shared anti-Americanism or psychological satisfaction in seeing the overdog take a hit — have not been much eager to separate themselves from the rhetoric of radical Islam.

Certainly, Hanson has a point about the nature of this war and the difficulties that it presents. But as he readily concedes, the fact that the nature of this war is what distinguishes it from previous conflicts means that the principal problem remains the public's ignorance of the stakes of the fight and its unique and precarious circumstances. In other words, the antidote for flagging public support is still effective and delicate communication. To wit:

The administration's problem is not really its (sound) strategy, nor its increasingly improved implementation that we see in Baghdad, but simply an American public that so far understandably cannot easily differentiate millions of brave Iraqis and Afghans, who risk their lives daily to hunt terrorists and ensure reform, from the Islamists of the Muslim Street who broadcast their primordial hatred for Israel and the United States incessantly . . .

Now, that's all well and good. But the difficulty involved in the communication of the war's challenges is not the only force at work here. Whether Hanson or anyone will else say it out loud, the fact of the matter is that there is and has long been evidence that there are factions — prominent, well placed, and powerful factions — within this country and amongst our allies and purported allies who want the United States to lose this war. And they have, since day one, made it difficult for the President to carry out any of his responsibilities as commander-in-chief and communicator-in-chief.

Since September 11, there has been a political taboo against discussing the true intentions of some of the members of the not-so-loyal opposition. Democrats carp and whine incessantly about Republicans who “question their patriotism.” And anyone who dares suggest that there are some who believe that the Islamists represent the lesser of two evils in this battle is immediately tarred as a “neo-McCarthyite” or a “Christianist hatemonger.” On the rare occasions when those who long to see George Bush's America lose the war are caught thusly pining, excuses are made, and we are all reassured that the situation has been misunderstood and, moreover, that the fault for the misunderstanding is ours.

We have all been compelled to believe the ridiculous fiction that the differences that divide us on the war on terror are minor, that we all agree on the basic principles at stake and the desired outcome but differ on the tactics and strategy that should be employed to achieve that end. That is simply not true. More to the point, the pretense that it is true clouds the situation, making it exceptionally difficult to assess the problems that the President has had in bolstering the home front in this long and complicated war.

One of the most pressing of those problems is that the mainstream media is openly and aggressively opposed to this president, to his war, and, frankly, to anything even akin to victory. This is hardly a shocking charge to anyone who has been paying attention. But until recently, the press could at least feign objectivity. When they dedicated inordinate coverage to the fatalities and mayhem in Iraq, for example, and by and large ignored all signs of progress, they could at least fall back on the old journalists' maxim that “if it bleeds, it leads.” And when they revealed classified information about intelligence-gathering programs designed to thwart terrorists and protect the American public, they could insist that their motive was a benevolent one based exclusively on concern for Americans' precious civil liberties.

Lately, though, such pretenses have become harder and harder to maintain. Between the staged casualties, the altered pictures, and the falsified reports of “massacres,” the international media made no bones about the fact that it sided against America

and with the puppet of the American enemy in the recent conflict in Lebanon. Closer to home, the nation's paper of record, in a fit of Bush-induced derangement, last week bemoaned the fact that the violence spawned by the President's "mishandling" of the war in Iraq prevented the world from paying proper attention to the victims of "the Anfal," Saddam Hussien's attempted genocide against Iraqi Kurds. Were it not for Bush, of course, Saddam would still be in power and still have the means to slaughter Kurds (and others) by the thousands. But such details don't matter when there is a president to discredit and a war to lose.

In perhaps the most stunning admission along these lines, journalist Kevin Drum conceded recently that he consciously refrains from writing about specific aspects of the war, about the nature of the threat posed, and about the enemy and its objectives for fear that his words might actually be helpful to President Bush. In an appalling though largely ignored confession, Drum wrote:

Should I be more vocal in denouncing Iran? Sure. It's a repressive, misogynistic, theocratic, terrorist-sponsoring state that stands for everything I stand against. Of course I should speak out against them.

And yet, I know perfectly well that criticism of Iran is not just criticism of Iran. Whether I want it to or not, it also provides support for the Bush administration's determined and deliberate effort to whip up enthusiasm for a military strike. Only a naif would view criticism of Iran in a vacuum, without also seeing the way it will be used by an administration that has demonstrated time and again that it can't be trusted to act wisely.

So what to do? For the most part, I end up saying very little . . . because like it or not, my words — and those of other liberals — would end up being used to advance George Bush's distinctly illiberal ends.

Now, for the record, Drum is a "new media" type best known for his blog (found on the web site of *The Washington Monthly*), but he's hardly a hard-left crackpot. And he'd rather keep quiet than run the risk of helping George W. Bush.

Of course Drum isn't alone in doing so. Last week, for example, we also learned that President Bush's erstwhile allies are also, at times, unwilling to discuss fully the enemy in this war in part out of fear of helping the despicable American warmonger. According to a UPI wire story, "a Swedish Foreign Ministry report says Norwegian officials knew Iraq was demanding kickbacks from the U.N. 'Oil for Food' program." UPI reported (emphasis added):

The report says Ole Peter Kolby, Norway's U.N. ambassador at the time and head of the sanctions committee, remained quiet for fear of angering Iraq and big companies involved in the program, *Aftenposten* said . . . *Henrik Thune of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs told Aftenposten that Kolby was caught between competing interests, including fear of fueling the push for war in the Bush administration if he revealed corruption in the Oil for Food program.*

Norway, of course, is a member of NATO and as such is a treaty-bound ally and one of the nations currently carrying out combat operations against the Taliban in Iraq. One wonders how effectively the Norwegian soldiers can be in pursuing the enemy, given their government's apparent fear of doing anything that might be perceived as helpful to George W. Bush.

It may be, as we and others have long argued, that Bush has a communications problem. But it's hard to imagine any leader — Clinton, Reagan, Roosevelt, even Churchill — would be terribly effective in dealing with the public with large swaths of the political and media establishments working at cross purposes with him. Yes, in maintaining support for the war effort, George Bush faces largely unprecedented obstacles. But many of those obstacles are external and extraneous,

meaning that they have little to do with the war itself or with its merits and have everything to do with elite opinion-makers' bizarre disdain for George Bush.

Now, one may argue that the hostility Bush faces in this effort is not all that dissimilar from efforts made by many of the same entities, most notably the media, to undermine the war effort in Vietnam. And there is no doubt that many in the media opposed that war and did what they could to ensure that the policy of containment failed in Southeast Asia. But even that was different.

Vietnam was half-a-world away. One could reasonably posit that an end to the war and a return of American troops would actually be in the nation's best interests and certainly would have no negative impact on the daily lives of most Americans. Today, of course, we know that such arguments were fatally flawed and, once implemented, led to disaster upon disaster, including the deaths of millions in "the killing fields" of Cambodia. But at the height of the war, such projections were not entirely unreasonable.

The same simply cannot be said today. To suggest that America should surrender in Iraq is to tell Americans to get ready for the war on terror to begin in earnest and within our borders. There's no question that this time, the war would indeed follow us home.

Yet even that possibility does not deter those who hate the President and wish to see him fail. Indeed, for some, the mass slaughter of Americans seems a small price to pay to see George Bush humiliated and his policies beaten back. Sound impossible? We wish. Last week, Russell Shaw, a writer on the topics of technology and politics and a regular poster on the influential left-wing Huffington Post blog, openly admitted that he fantasizes about the idea of another terrorist attack and the effect that such an attack might have on the Bush presidency and the course of American politics. To wit:

I hope and pray we don't get hit again, like we did on September 11. Even one life lost to the violence of terrorism is too much.  
If I somehow knew an attack was coming,

I wouldn't pause for a second to report it in order to prevent it from occurring [sic].

But on the other hand, I remind myself that without the ultimate sacrifice paid by 400,000 U.S. soldiers in World War II, tyranny could well have an iron grip on the world, and even on this nation. If the Nazis had prevailed, tens, if not hundreds of millions more would have been killed.

That realization has led my brain to launch a political calculus 180 degrees removed from my pacifist-inclined leanings. An entirely hypothetical yet realpolitik calculus that is ugly, and cold-hearted but must be posited: What if another terror attack just before this fall's elections could save many thousand-times the lives lost?

I start from the premise that there is already a substantial portion of the electorate that tends to vote GOP because they feel that Bush has "kept us safe," and that the Republicans do a better job combating terrorism. If an attack occurred just before the elections, I have to think that at least a few of the voters who persist in this "Bush has kept us safe" thinking would realize the fallacy they have been under. If 5% of the "he's kept us safe" revise their thinking enough to vote Democrat, well, then, the Dems could recapture the House and the Senate and be in a position to: Block the next Supreme Court appointment, one which would surely result in the overturning of Roe and the death of hundreds if not thousands of women from abortion-prohibiting states at the hands of back-alley abortionists; Be in a position to elevate the party's chances for a regime change in 2008.

The obvious response to this is that Shaw is a wacko whose views are hardly representative. And that's almost certainly true. But that doesn't change the fact that the hatred many influential people – in the media, in politics, here at home, and abroad – feel for George

Bush has led them to embrace some pretty heinous positions. Very few of these people would agree with Shaw and embrace the idea of trading a terrorist attack for the political defeat of President Bush and his policies. But that's largely beside the point, since it is quite likely that the two are inextricably linked. Failure or surrender in Iraq or Afghanistan would all but guarantee that the Islamists would be further emboldened to strike at the heart of the "Great Satan."

We don't doubt for a second that the war effort could be greatly aided by a serious upgrade to the Bush administration's communication effort, though the addition of Tony Snow has actually gone a long way in that direction. That said, we're not entirely convinced right now that any level of communications proficiency would be sufficient to overcome the hostility that many in the media and elsewhere feel toward George Bush and the reckless positions that hostility has led them to embrace.

On the one hand, we're grateful that most Americans, despite the concerted efforts of the President's opponents, still support the broad goals of the war on terror and still believe that war can and should be won. We're also grateful that this war takes place in an era in which the old monopoly power of the elite institutions has been broken by technology and the "new media," which have been invaluable in support of the cause.

On the other hand, we're deeply troubled that personal animosity and ideological opposition to the President and his policies have led many to embrace positions that would precipitate defeat in the war on terror. We are troubled as well that any discussion of this subject remains taboo. As a nation, we can pretend that communication alone is the problem and that better communication is the solution. But that will not make overcoming the challenges in this war any easier. Nor will it bring victory any closer.

## **MIDNIGHT BASKETBALL FOR DEMOCRATS.**

We have both seen numerous references on the Web recently to a new political book jointly authored by two Illinois Congressmen: Rahm Emanuel, who is Chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and a former Clinton White House aide;

and Bruce Reed, who is President of the Democratic Leadership Council. Due largely to our shared antipathy for Rahm when he was one of Bill Clinton's young toadies at the White House, we each had the same initial reaction to this news, which was to ignore it.

But then one of us actually read a review of the book, called the other, and, after a bit of discussion we decided that not only were we wrong to disregard this opus but that we should actually call it to the attention of the readers of "Politics, Et Cetera." So here goes.

The name of the book is *The Plan, Big Ideas for America*. Amazon describes it as follows:

*The Plan* offers a bold vision of what America can be. It shows the way for both parties to move beyond the old political arguments and make progress for the American people. And it offers an innovative agenda for America – with ideas that address the nation's most pressing challenges by doing more for Americans and asking Americans to do more for their country in return. Each of these ideas offers a clean break with the status quo, yet all are positive, practical, and can be put into action right away. Built on the authors' firm beliefs that politicians owe the people real answers, that citizenship is a responsibility, not an entitlement program, and that the Democratic Party succeeds when America succeeds, the highly anticipated *Plan* delivers, challenges, and inspires.

Now there is very little chance that either of us will ever read this book, the reason being easily summed up in the phrase, "so many pretty books, so little time." But lest this statement be interpreted as a negative comment about its contents, we would quickly add that we sincerely and enthusiastically applaud both this book and its authors. It is, we believe, exactly what the Democratic Party needs right now and, by extension, exactly what the country needs right now from the Democratic Party.

Time and again, we have argued in these pages that nothing could be more beneficial to the United States at this point in time than the adoption by Democrats of an agenda that is positive, specific, and might we

say, sane by liberal standards, especially if this agenda were accompanied by a willingness of a few of the more rational members of the Party to engage in a public debate with Republicans over these issues. Time and again, we have argued in these pages that the absence of such an agenda has opened the way for a dedicated band of lunatics to take over the Democratic Party, which in turn has severely weakened the nation in the face of a very serious threat by its enemies.

Moreover, we believe that a Democratic Party that is serious about a handful of real life issues and willing to debate them earnestly would do wonders for a Republican Party, which in recent years has grown exceedingly dotty, both intellectually and ideologically, at least partially as a result of having no serious opposition.

As we said, we haven't read this book, but we acquired the gist of it from a recent article in the *Chicago Sun-Times* by Steve Huntley. Naturally, most of the ideas advanced by Rahm and Reed envision an expansion in the size and influence of the federal government. And naturally, as conservatives we strenuously oppose those. A few other proposals, however, are interesting, especially coming from liberal Democrats.

In any case, we would not only welcome a lively, political discussion over each one but would herald such a debate as a sign of the start of a great healing in the national body politic, believing, as we do, that it might – just might – provide Democrats with a distraction from the destructive behavior that currently occupies them.

We think of it as sort of like Bill's 1994 initiative to provide federal money to build basketball courts for inner city youths as a means of giving them an alternative to a life of drugs and crime. In the same vein, it might be useful if Democrats could spend some time fighting for an old-fashioned, liberal agenda as an alternative to constantly obsessing over the ways that President Bush reminds them of Hitler and engaging in euphoric dreams of a glorious retreat from Iraq, replete with black helicopters and the bloody corpses of former allies left behind.

Huntley's approach to reviewing the book was to specify one of Emanuel and Reed's proposals and then comment on it. We will follow his lead, not with the intention of presenting a definitive position on each item but for the simple, nostalgic pleasure of discussing commonplace political issues put forth by the liberal wing of the American political establishment. Old timers may recall that this was once a favorite pastime of ordinary Americans in barbershops across the nation.

We invite you, gentle reader, to join in the fun via e-mails on any single issue, or, as they say at auctions, on the lot. Let us know whether you wish your name to be published with your contribution or if you would like to be anonymous. So here goes. (Paragraphs in italics are quoted from Huntley's *Sun-Times* article)

*Universal citizen service: Americans 18 to 25 would be required to do three months' civilian service of "basic training, civil defense preparation and community service." Emanuel asserts this service could avoid a return to the draft because the experience it provides might persuade more young people to volunteer for the military.*

This is a very bad idea. Of course, it sounds good, at first. I mean, wouldn't mandatory national service do wonders for the youth of America? Wouldn't it help to instill in them a sense of patriotism and a respect for the work ethic? Isn't that what mandatory military service did for the men of "the Greatest Generation?" Theoretically yes.

But the fact is that a new federal program of this magnitude would be nothing more than a liberal indoctrination center for the nation's youth and a giant feeding trough for tens of thousands of otherwise unemployable college graduates with degrees in "women's studies" and "modern film," who would spend their days finding make-work, do-good projects for their little charges to perform and dreaming up ways to use their temporary positions of influence to fill all of these impressionable young minds with the kind of politically correct trash and propaganda that was the mainstay of Orwell's "Ministry of Truth." Why wait for the corporate America to provide "sensitivity training" classes to a small portion of the nation's youth when the government could provide it for all?

As for helping the military with recruiting, that's nonsense. More probably, it would shift part of the burden of babysitting these 90-day-wonders to the U.S. military, which is one of the few large government organizations that can still be trusted to perform its duty and which is already overburdened because of this.

*Universal college access.*

This is another terrible idea. The problem right now is not that the nation does not have enough college graduates; it is that the nation does not have enough college graduates who are educated. Among others things, universal college access would give the secondary education system another excuse not to teach, since the first two years of free college would then become the equivalent of the last two years of high school, as is already the case in all too many "institutions of higher learning."

This proposal, like the one above, sounds good at first. But it reminds us of the following comment by the great Malcolm Muggeridge, in a 1979 essay entitled "The Great Liberal Death Wish."

To the liberal mind, education provides the universal panacea. Whatever the problem, education will solve it . . . If we try hard enough, and are prepared to pay enough, we can surely educate ourselves out of all our miseries and troubles, and into the happiness we seek and deserve . . . The bustling campuses multiply and expand, as do their faculties and buildings. More and more professors instruct more and more students in more and more subjects, producing barely articulate graduates, who irresistibly recall to the bezprisonny I remember so vividly from my time in the USSR--those wild children whose parents and guardians had died in the great Russian famines of the early twenties, but who had somehow lived on themselves to race about Moscow and Leningrad and Kiev like wolf packs . . . Pursing knowledge, we find ignorance, and join hands across the civilized centuries with our own primitive, savage origins.

Of course, finding a Republican today to make this point would be difficult if not impossible, which would make the debate less interesting but still fun.

*Universal retirement savings: Emanuel has been pushing for some time the idea of automatic enrollment into employer 401(k) plans and it's a good one. There's evidence that while some workers don't sign up for these plans, if they are automatically enrolled they don't usually exercise the option to drop out.*

Three cheers for Emanuel and Reed, say we. Not only is the promotion of thrift good for the nation, it is good for the Republican Party and capitalism. This is pure "ownership society" stuff. For years, Republicans have been aware that people with "defined contribution" retirement plans are more likely to vote Republican than those with "defined benefit" plans. As far as we're concerned, the more shareholders the merrier.

*Universal children's health care: Emanuel lauds the new All Kids program launched by Gov. Blagojevich in Illinois. Unfortunately, like Blagojevich, he doesn't list a reliable funding source for this admirable goal. Acknowledging that our current system of employer-provided health care is a relic of World War II wage controls, Emanuel proposes scrapping it in favor of health-care vouchers for everyone. Now that's an innovative idea. But again, he doesn't name a dedicated long-term funding source, instead talking about savings from adopting electronic medical records and other economies.*

Now there's a "big idea for America" if there ever was one. Let's have another grand, political debate over reforming the entire health care system. Woopee! Let's add both a new entitlement and a new layer of federal bureaucracy to the already over laden health care infrastructure. Let's add billions of additional dollars to the gigantic gap that already exists between funding sources and outlays. *And let's do it all for the children.*

On the plus side, as we noted above, the debate would give Democrats something to do that wouldn't cause a great deal of harm. As Miss Hillary found, massive "reform" of the health care system is a non-starter. Too many people have too big a stake in the current system. Our only suggestion would be that this new

“plan” be accompanied by dozens upon dozens of new federal “studies” and “commissions to review the issue.” Beating a dead horse is thought to be a waste of time by many people, but if it keeps the beater from beating a live horse, it may have some value after all.

*End hack government: Emanuel recognizes political gerrymandering guarantees seats in Congress to incumbents and less responsive government for the rest of us. He proposes Congress require states to use bipartisan panels to draw compact, contiguous districts.*

Ah yes, “bipartisan panels” to draw up congressional districts. Now there’s a plan. One wonders why Emanuel and Reed did not suggest that these mythical groups be staffed by unicorns and fairies. In their spare time, perhaps these “panels” might settle the conflicts between Shiites and Sunnis and Capulets and the Montagues.

This “big idea” has zero chance of even being seriously debated. Would that it did. Watching members of the U.S. House of Representatives from both parties debating changes in the laws governing gerrymandering would be an unforgettable life experience, something akin to having seen Little Egypt dance at the 1893 Chicago World Fair.

We would ask two questions. Why, pray tell, would anyone believe that replacing old incumbent politicians with fresh new ones would make government “more responsive.” What knowledge or instinct would lead one to this conclusion? This suggestion reminds us of Plutarch’s story of Themosticles’ effort to persuade the Athenians not to throw off the yoke of taxation. He cited the tale of the fox that refused the offer of a hedgehog to remove the blood-sucking flies from his body, arguing that they would only be replaced by new flies that had not yet had their appetites sated.

*Tax reform: Emanuel proposes whacking the 1.4-million-word tax code with its myriad loopholes and replacing it with a system that would mean a one-page tax form for the average family.*

Again, three cheers for Emanuel and Reed. Certainly the details of the plan that they would favor would be different from those that we would support. But let’s

get the flat tax idea back on the table. Shame on the Bush administration for letting it drop.

*The hybrid economy: Besides support for various hybrid vehicles and alternative fuels, he suggests we need a commitment to risky energy development along the lines of the one for space exploration made after the Soviets beat us into orbit with Sputnik.*

This sounds like another federal boondoggle to us. But we admit to knowing very little about the need for heavy federal involvement in the search for energy alternatives. In any case, it is better to have Democrats focusing on producing more energy than having apoplectic fits over “global warming.” Of course, if the Democrats were truly serious about developing energy and ending the current energy crunch, they’d abandon their preposterous and purely political opposition to greater domestic drilling, particularly in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve (ANWR). But don’t hold your breath.

*The war on terror: Emanuel reasonably proposes a 100,000-man increase in the army and advances the useful argument that given the criminal-investigation mind-set of the FBI, we need a domestic intelligence agency like Britain’s MI5.*

It’s good to hear Democrats speak of expanding, rather than cutting the size of the U.S. Army. Questions about need and availability of new recruits can be addressed during the debate. In the meantime, this is a good idea.

As for the proposed change at the FBI, we would rely on our old friend Buck Revell, who spent 30 years with the Bureau, finishing his career as Associate Deputy Director, the FBI’s number-two career post. In the following, he argues against the proposal made in a recent *Washington Post* op-ed piece by U.S. Appeals Court Judge Richard A. Posner, who claims that the FBI is oriented toward “arrest and prosecution rather than toward the patient gathering of intelligence with a view to understanding and penetrating a terrorist network.” Here is part of Buck’s reply.

During the 10 years that I was responsible for the direction and oversight of the FBI’s Counter-Terrorism Program we were able



to prevent 56 specific planned acts of terrorism; including the assassination of a head of State, a PanAm 103 type Airline bombing plot, and a theater bombing that could have killed 4-500 victims. The FBI accomplished these and many other successes in the CT program, in spite of being the most hamstrung CT Agency in the Western World. We penetrated and largely neutralized all of the domestic groups involved in terrorism and had substantial success against International Terrorist organizations such as the Abu Nidal and PFLP Palestinian organizations. Judge Webster authorized and made Counter-Terrorism a FBI National priority in 1982 and we carried out our duties as vigorously as the law, regulations and guidelines allowed. The Infamous FISA "Wall" was not created by the FBI and the erroneous rulings by the FISA Court further diminished the Bureau's ability to collect intelligence without violating the Court's restrictions. The Patriot Act and a Circuit Court Ruling finally gave the Bureau the authority to be proactive in the collection of intelligence to prevent acts of terrorism. However, it should be known that we never failed to take action to prevent a terrorist act when we had any information indicating that a plot was underway. During my time as the FBI's senior operations executive I dealt with virtually all of the Security Services and National Police Agencies of our allied nations. Each indicated that the Bureau's dual role of investigations and intelligence collection was a model that they envied and would like for their governments to emulate. Arrests were never our primary goal, but were used as necessary to end plots or resolve acts that had been committed.

Perhaps the most successful counter-intelligence case in history was Operation Solo; in this case two American citizens, Morris & Jack Childes were utilized by the FBI to penetrate the American Communist

Party and eventually the most senior ranks of the Soviet government. Their intelligence was instrumental in the formulation of President Kennedy's strategy in the Cuban Missile Crisis and they continued to provide quality intelligence on the Soviets until 1980. We never intended to use the intelligence for arrest purposes and never did. In fact, recruitment in place, RIP, of hostile intelligence officers or members of international terrorist organizations was and still is the highest priority of the CI & CT programs.

There were many impediments before 9/11 to the FBI's ability to collect intelligence and the Bureau must (and should) obey the law, but it should not be blamed for a lack of capability when it was denied the authority to act by law and court restrictions before that terrible date in our Nation's history. A revitalized and fully functional FBI is our Nation's best defense against terrorism in the domestic arena.

Now, if you think that all of this makes for a reasonable starting point from which to begin the rehabilitation of the Democratic Party, we agree. It is no mere coincidence, in our opinion, that Rahm has become one of the most important members of the House Democratic Caucus despite his relatively brief tenure. He is smart, ambitious, and well experienced in political trench warfare. If the Democrats fail to take the House this year, don't be surprised if Rahm emerges as an even more powerful and prominent figure over the next election cycle, perhaps even challenging Nancy Pelosi for control of the caucus. And given both Pelosi's penchant for the absurd and the focus of this latest offering from Rahm and Reed, we'd say that'd be a positive step for the party.

In the meantime, would that all Democrats buy a copy of *The Plan, Big Ideas for America*, as a first step in the long trek back from insanity. Or they could buy a basketball.