

Mark L. Melcher Publisher
melcher@thepoliticalforum.com

Stephen R. Soukup Editor
soukup@thepoliticalforum.com

THEY SAID IT

That some of this money was applied to the corruption of parliament, cannot, indeed, be either disproved or disbelieved. That the votes of the House of Commons are often influenced by employments and pensions held or hoped for, promised or refused, was true in the age of Charles the Second, in that of Walpole, and may be now. The form of corruption, indeed, has changed, but its spirit is unaltered. In the earliest of these periods, a small gratuity sufficed; in the next, a large pension was required; the more fastidious vice of our own days spurns at money, and accepts patronage. The quantity and kind of corruption depend, perhaps, fully as much on the corrupted as the corrupter, or, in other words, on the average virtue of the age: Walpole himself said that ministers were as often tempted as tempters . . .

Whether he said "all men have their price," or "all those men have their price," pointing to his adversaries, he assuredly left it to be believed that if his enemies consisted of ungratified solicitors, his friends were the gratified. Nay, to a gentleman, who told him that in Holland a question was left to its own merits, he remarked, that if he were to do so, half the shops in London would be shut up the next day; thus implying that corruption was necessary to the maintenance of the House of Hanover. By this manner of speaking he contributed to lower the tone of public life, and taught men of hesitating virtue not to shrink from a contamination shared by the great majority of their contemporaries. In point of fact, it may be doubted whether his government was either more or less corrupt than those of the half century which preceded or followed him.

"On the end of the Walpole administration, referring to the charges of corruption, Lord J. R., among other observations makes the following," *The London Literary Gazette*, Saturday, January 3, 1829.

COMING SOON: A LOWER TONE OF PUBLIC LIFE.

It's gonna happen, you know. The Hillary presidency, that is. Sure as God made little green apples, it's coming. We said this last January ("It's Miss Hillary All The Way") and again in June ("It's Hillary All The Way, Redux"), and each time we offered myriad reasons in support of our prediction. So we won't go through that entire litany again this week. We will simply note the following.

American presidential races tend to be very close anymore, very close. This means that a handful of "undecideds" determine the outcome of these races at the last minute, which is another way of saying that a handful of nitwits do so.

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Subscriptions are available by contacting:

The Political Forum LLC 8563 Senedo Road, Mt. Jackson, Virginia 22842

Phone 540.477.9762 Fax 540.477.3359 melcher@thepoliticalforum.com www.thepoliticalforum.com

Why assume they're nitwits? Well, we would simply rely on the wisdom of Al Smith, four-time governor of New York and the guy who had the good sense to lose the presidential election in 1928 to Herbert Hoover. (We apologize, in advance, for the off-color word used by the always-colorful Smith.) In response to a friend who said to him, "To tell you the truth, Al, this election campaign has not helped me to make up my mind." Smith replied, "To tell you the truth, Charlie, if you need an election campaign to make up your mind, you must be a dumb son-of-a-bitch."

Now we know what you're thinking. You're thinking, there they go again, picking on Mrs. Clinton. Here comes the "only an eggplant would be dumb enough to vote for Hillary" theory. But that isn't it. Our contention is not that the nitwits will vote for Hillary because they are nitwits. Our contention is that nitwits will vote for Hillary because they will make the decision for whom to vote based on entertainment value, the same way they decide whether to watch the reality show where people lick bugs off a windshield or the one about the dope-addled British "rock star" and his dysfunctional family. And on this basis, Mrs. Clinton wins this contest hands down against any of her challengers from either party. She is entertaining, a celebrity of sorts, and they aren't. And that, among other things, will win the day for her.

Face it. Bob Dole lost because he looked like a "before" ad for Viagra. And Bill reminded people of the warning label – "if your erection lasts for more than four hours you should seek medical help." No one knew it then, but in retrospect it is clear that Bill had the election in the bag as soon as Americans learned that he couldn't keep his pants on. Moreover, he was running against Bob Dole, who looked like he might have trouble getting his off. No contest, as the saying goes.

Now George Bush was no laugh riot, we'll admit that. In fact, during Bush's first campaign for the presidency, rumors circulated that there were pictures of him drunk, dancing on a bar in his underwear, to which we responded that if there were no such pictures, he should have some taken, and circulate them. Nevertheless, Bush was as entertaining as Larry

the Cable Guy when compared to Al Gore and John Kerry, both of whom looked like they should have bolts sticking through their necks.

Okay, okay, we know. All by herself, Mrs. Clinton is about as entertaining as road kill. But the word boring doesn't even begin to describe the Republicans against whom she is up. Nice guys, all. Experienced. Sincere. Well meaning. Competent. Expensive suits. They would spend their first term in office trying to do the "right thing," under a constant, mind numbing barrage of criticism from Democrats and charges of "being just like Hitler." How much fun is that likely to be for spectators? Been there. Done that. Seen the movie. Know how it comes out.

With Hillary, you have to look at the total package. And she has it all. Not only does she come with a priapic husband with the morals of a feral tomcat, but she will play Ma Barker to a mob of shysters, sharpies, fly-by-nighters, international thieves and schemers, Chinese spies, crooked arms dealers, dope peddlers, union pluguglies, commodity market crooks, harridans, harpies, perjurers, liars, corrupt real estate magnets, and porn peddlers, the likes of which haven't been seen in Washington since Bill pardoned 144 friends, relatives, fugitives from justice, cocaine dealers, terrorists, crooked congressmen, and sleazy former business associates before he and Hillary stole everything that wasn't nailed down from the White House and headed for their bungalow in Chappaqua.

We will, of course, vote for the Republican candidate, whomever it is. But we must admit that the prospect of another Clinton presidency holds the same appeal for us that exploding mountains have for volcanologists and rotting corpses have for forensic entomologists.

One can read about Walpole and "Old Corruption," as the system that he established in early 18th century England was commonly called. Or one can read about "the great barbecue," as Mark Twain described the period of mass corruption that followed the Civil War in the United States. But the chance to actually witness out-of-control corruption, in real life, up close and personal, in the form of another Clinton

administration is an opportunity of a lifetime, not just for political writers like us but for Americans who, compliments of the 24-hour news cycle, have discovered politics to be every bit as interesting as any of their favorite spectator sports and every bit as morbidly absorbing as watching the antics of degenerate Hollywood celebrities with brains the size of a walnut.

The stakes in Washington will be higher this time around. For one thing, the global mob network is much stronger today, better organized, better connected with each other and with political entities around the world, and richer by far. From Wall Street to Main Street, from Mexico to Canada to China to Russia to India to Eastern Europe and to all points in between, crooked enterprises are flourishing and the amount of money involved is almost beyond belief.

The United Nations is a clearinghouse for international corruption, as are myriad NGOs and “charities” and “research institutes.” From drugs to prostitutes, from government contracts to military secrets, from investment banking deals to money laundering, the world is a playground for corrupt billionaires, fly-by-night cheats, and crooked politicians, and it’s hard to tell one from the other. The game is big, and the Clinton crowd has contacts at all levels all over the world, from the most opulent boardrooms in New York to the back allies of Indonesia.

The first time around the Clintons were amateurs involved in tax cheating, real estate fraud, Savings and Loan knock offs, small time labor union scams, fund raising fraud, and the like. Bill’s been on the road now for eight years and there’s no one worth knowing in the world that he doesn’t know and few doors that aren’t open to him as one of the world’s top “fixers.” And when he’s the “First Lady” of America, there will be no limit on the demand for his services and no limit on the price.

Moreover, there’s a big war going, and nothing feeds corruption and big government like a war. And, believe it or not, and whether moveon.org likes it or

not, the war is going to go on under Mrs. Clinton’s watch. And probably get bigger. During wars, billions upon billions of dollars get lost in the horse latitudes, as the saying goes, contracts get bought and sold like commodities, money dribbles both down and up, filling the pockets of politicians, bankers, and little guys alike, both crooked and legitimate. The government gets bigger and more powerful, as do the folks that run it. And national security concerns facilitate the building of barriers that keep even the faintest rays of sunlight from exposing the rot.

With Jamie Gorelick as Attorney General, Harold Ickes as a senior White House adviser, Terry McAuliffe running the party, George Soros providing “private-sector” support, Goldman Sachs running the Treasury, the Democrats in control of the House and the Senate, and the liberal media running interference for them, there will be very little check on the Clintons and their friends, other than their principles, scruples, consciences, ethics, upbringing, and morals. Which translates into the likelihood of an extraordinary and absolutely fascinating challenge to the health and success of the world’s grandest and most elaborate experiment in government by the people.

In the meantime, investors should keep in mind that this will not be the end of the world as we know it. Corruption is a constant threat to societies and governments and has been since that fateful day when the snake and the apple and the little lady named Eve happened upon each other in the Garden. It will, in fact, be the beginning of a new and highly exciting time, with new paradigms, new rules, and new players. And if you are wondering how to survive until it passes (which it will), begin with the premise that in the world of President Hillary, nice guys will finish last.

DOOMSDAY FOR DEMOCRATS?

As you may recall, earlier this month, there was a severe breach of the nation's nuclear security procedures. A B-52 bomber flew from Minot Air Force base in North Dakota to Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana *with six nuclear tipped cruise missiles on board*, a violation not only of security procedures but of a Cold War-era treaty prohibiting the airborne transport of nuclear weapons as well. CNN reported:

Military officials told CNN that the incident was a major breach of security rules surrounding nuclear weapons. One official said that he could not recall anything similar happening. The Air Force announced that all flights of fighters and bombers in the United States will be halted on September 14 to allow for a review of procedures.

Once the mistake was discovered, the Air Force immediately began an inventory of all of its nuclear weapons, a military official said. Maj. Gen. Douglas Raaberg, director of Air and Space Operations at the Air Combat Command in Langley, Virginia, has been ordered to investigate how the nuclear-tipped missiles were flown across the country without anyone knowing, officials said.

The squad commander responsible for the munitions has been relieved of duty, and several others have been "decertified" from handling nuclear weapons, officials said.

According to CNN, military officials went on to explain that though this was a serious incident, it was not necessarily a dangerous one, and that "there was no nuclear risk to public safety because the weapons were not armed." The officials couldn't say for certain that a plane crash or the accidental release of one or more of the missiles would not have resulted in a nuclear explosion, but they did tell CNN that they "believed" that in such an event the nuclear material "would remain inert" and not produce a "nuclear detonation."

Now, under normal circumstances and in normal times, we'd be just as likely as anyone to accept the military's dismissal of this incident and forget entirely about the "serious but not dangerous" mistake. But as we've noted over and over in these pages, these are not normal circumstances, nor are they normal times. The world is at war. American troops are abroad, fighting on two fronts against a determined and vicious enemy. The world's two other major nuclear powers, Russia and China, have taken and continue to take advantage of America's distraction to extend their own spheres of influence. And, perhaps most important, just a week before this "mistake" took place, we read an article by Ron Rosenbaum that, in light of the rogue nuke flight, made us feel eerily uncomfortable.

For those of you who don't know, Ron Rosenbaum is a journalist by trade and one of the nation's finest writers of nonfiction. He is a leading expert on anti-Semitism and the author of, among other books, *Travels with Dr. Death and Other Unusual Investigations*. In that book (and in an article originally published in 1978 by *Harper's*), Rosenbaum earned his stripes as a sort of amateur expert on nuclear safety procedures, revealing the flaw in the "failsafe" procedures then in place to prevent a rogue American soldier from unilaterally launching an unauthorized nuclear strike, or as Rosenbaum has termed it, "the 'command and control' 'permissive action' system that was supposed to prevent a madman missile commander from launching his 'birds' and starting an apocalyptic nuclear war all by himself."

As Rosenbaum reported, the procedure was premised on the idea that "two keys must be inserted simultaneously into their slots by two separate launch officers, and that the slots for the keys were located at a sufficient distance from each other that one madman couldn't, say, shoot the other crewman and then use both his arms to twist both the keys simultaneously." The problem was that, according to the crewmen he interviewed, there was a remarkably simple way to defeat the failsafe: "You just shoot the other guy and 'rig up a thing where you tie a string to one end of a spoon . . . and tie the other end to the guy's key. Then

you can sit in your chair and twist your key with one hand while you yank on the spoon with the other hand to twist the other key over.”

In any case, the current piece by Rosenbaum deals not with the nuclear failsafe, but with precisely the opposite contrivance, the “doomsday machine.” As Rosenbaum notes, the best known presentation of the doomsday machine concept comes from the movie *Dr. Strangelove*, in which the Soviets had rigged a “system that automatically detonated some 50 cobalt-jacketed hydrogen bombs pre-positioned around the planet if the doomsday system’s sensors detected a nuclear attack on Russian soil.” The problem with the doomsday machine (other than the obvious nuclear holocaust) was that “even an accidental or (as in *Strangelove*) an unauthorized U.S. nuclear bomb could set off the doomsday machine bombs, releasing enough deadly cobalt fallout to make the Earth uninhabitable for the human species for 93 years. No human hand could stop the fully automated apocalypse.”

Most people assumed, of course, that the doomsday machine was pure fiction, an “extreme fantasy.” Even Rosenbaum admits that he had always believed that the idea was an “apocalyptic film fantasy.” At least that’s what he believed until the tenth day of this past August, when he “came upon a startling essay in the London *Times Literary Supplement*. It was a review (titled ‘Deadly Devices’) of a book recently published in the United Kingdom: *Doomsday Men: The Real Dr. Strangelove and the Dream of the Superweapon* by nuclear-age historian P.D. Smith of University College London.” Rosenbaum describes the book review thusly:

The TLS reviewer, Christopher Coker (who is on the faculty of the London School of Economics), asserted that the book demonstrates that “only after the Berlin Wall had been breached and . . . the Cold War began to thaw did military analysts realize the Russians had actually built a version of the [doomsday] device. The details of this top-secret Soviet system were first

revealed in 1993 by Bruce G. Blair, a former American ICBM launch control officer, now one of the country’s foremost experts on Russian arms. Fearing that a sneak attack by American submarine-launched missiles might take Moscow out in 13 minutes, the Soviet leadership had authorized the construction of an automated communication network, reinforced to withstand a nuclear strike. At its heart was a computer system similar to the one in *Dr. Strangelove*. Its code name was Perimetr. It went fully operational in January 1985. It is still in place.

That last line there is, quite clearly, the kicker: “It is still in place.” The Soviet Union is long since defunct. The Russian Federation is a mess, to say the least. The nation is run by a handful of corrupt and avaricious oligarchs and sadistic KGB thugs. Demographically, the Russian population is shrinking at an alarming and unprecedented rate. Life expectancy in Russia is actually dropping, and dropping quickly. AIDS is rampant. Many Russians are so poor and so desperate that they’ve taken to drinking anything they can get their hands on, even ethyl alcohol. Weapons security – and nuclear security in particular – is so spotty throughout Russia that some – perhaps many – nuclear weapons are reportedly unaccounted for. And yet, the Soviet-era doomsday machine “is still in place.”

Rosenbaum notes that the expert cited in the above review, Bruce G. Blair, has written several papers and a book on the subject of doomsday devices and is “not a wild-eyed Cassandra raising unsupported suspicions.” He is, Rosenbaum claims, someone whom “colleagues in his field regard . . . as a serious and cautious scholar raising real questions.” And his principal concern is the accidental engagement of a doomsday device, either Russian *or American*. Blair has described in startling detail the “‘launch on warning’ bias built into our nuclear command structure, and foresees the possibility of a doomsday that results from our attempt to pre-empt *their* doomsday plan, all of which might be touched off by accident, mistake, or malfunction on either side.”

Does this mean that Blair or Coker or even Rosenbaum believes that a doomsday accident is imminent? Well, no. And neither do we. Indeed, though we haven't yet read *Doomsday Men* (its American release is scheduled for December), we can't help but think that accidental activation of a nuclear doomsday device is pretty far down the list of things about which we should worry. That said, all of this sort of puts a different and more ominous spin on the accidental flight of nuclear armed B-52 early last month.

More importantly, it raises a broader point, namely that the world is a dangerous place, and is growing more dangerous by the day. If a "doomsday device is pretty far down the list of things about which we should worry," that means that there are other very serious and potentially very deadly problems over which to fret.

In addition to possessing a still active nuclear doomsday machine, the Russians, under the leadership of Comrade Putin, continue to slip back into old habits. "Enemies of the state" continue to disappear with alarming regularity, and only just recently, Russian nuclear bomber pilots resumed their Cold War-era strategic missions, with Putin telling reporters "our pilots have been grounded for too long. They are happy to start a new life." The Chinese, for their part, are currently propping up the military *junta* in Burma, thereby ensuring the slaughter of hundreds if not thousands of peaceful democracy protesters, including a high percentage of Buddhist monks. Thus the "Butchers of Beijing" are, once again, living up to their name, supporting brutal autocracies prone to slaughtering their own people on at least two continents. Beijing appears unconcerned about any long-term repercussions, and is instead bent exclusively on meeting China's growing need for natural resources at any cost.

The North Koreans, despite their pledge to curtail their nuclear weapons programs, have nonetheless jumped into the weapons proliferation game. The Syrians, in addition to being the Norks' biggest buyer, recently upgraded their air-defenses, buying and

activating the newest and most advanced Russian system. Boy Assad and his Baathist goons were hiding something very dangerous and very clandestine at Dayr az-Zawr; dangerous enough for the Israelis to risk starting a regional war to destroy it and clandestine enough for the Syrians not to make a big stink about a devastating Israeli air attack (an act of war, mind you), for fear of having to explain what it was the Israelis felt so strongly about having to destroy.

The Mad Mullahs in Tehran are fighting – and losing – a multi-front civil war at home, all the while risking greater and graver international censure and more severe economic sanctions relating to their pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez, who recently changed his country's laws to allow him to be "president for life," also recently cemented his relationship with Iran's Mullahs, forming a tripartite anti-American bloc, signing energy cooperation agreements with neighboring Bolivia and Iran during last week's visit from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

And all of this, we remind you, is *in addition to the two major fronts on which the war on terror is being fought and the ongoing threat of Islamist terrorism*. It is enough to keep us awake at night. And we suspect that we're not alone.

As things stand today, the inside-the-Beltway consensus is that the Democrats will win next year's presidential race easily, irrespective of whom they nominate. We doubt it. All of the problems noted above have the potential to mushroom, to cause tens of thousands of casualties, and to destabilize thoroughly the global order. And all will require a national security policy on the part of the next president that will consist of more than "be more diplomatic and negotiate better."

In the above piece, we reiterate our expectation that Hillary Clinton will win the Democratic nomination and then the presidency. Democrats had better hope

that we are right. If they nominate anyone else, be it Barack or Edwards or Dennis Kucinich, the American people are very likely once again to defy the conventional wisdom and reject the politics of frailty.

There has been a great deal of discussion of late about the repercussions of American withdrawal on Southeast Asia. And though we think it is important to have that discussion, we think it important to recall as well the effect that the American retreat from Vietnam had on the rest of the world. In the face of American fecklessness and in the full knowledge that a toothless Uncle Sam would not retaliate, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan; Ahmadinejad and his fellow proto-terrorists overran and occupied sovereign American territory and kidnapped American citizens; Castro and Brezhnev fomented and supported Marxist insurgencies throughout the Third World, from Angola to Ethiopia to Nicaragua. In short, things went from bad to worse in regions of the globe far removed from Vietnam.

Given this history and state of the world, an American retreat from Iraq – or even the perception of American weakness in the face of the Islamist “insurgency” – would once again encourage other global “bad actors” to take advantage of the circumstances and pursue their own agendas more aggressively than they would otherwise. And though we don’t have unlimited confidence in either the

American electorate or the slate of potential GOP nominees, we do think that they are smart enough to recognize this broader threat to national security and to act accordingly.

We have long maintained that the smartest thing the Democrats could do with regard to Iraq and the greater war on terror is to support the efforts and to encourage their positive conclusion as quickly as possible, thereby removing the national security variable from the political equation. Unfortunately for them, they missed their chance. Now, their only hope is to nominate the one candidate who doesn’t convey the impression of utter and complete weakness.

Democratic “insiders” have been complaining for months about Mrs. Clinton’s “polarizing” personality and her very high negatives. They worry that she will prove a poor nominee and will be unable to attract the independent voters that she will need to win the presidency. If true, that’s too bad for them. But the fact is, she’s all they have at this point, and if they choose to abandon her, we feel confident that they will once again snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

The world is a dangerous place. And though most of the Democratic presidential wannabes may not know this, the voters undoubtedly do. And they will act accordingly.

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