

Mark L. Melcher Publisher
melcher@thepoliticalforum.com

Stephen R. Soukup Editor
soukup@thepoliticalforum.com

THEY SAID IT

The general preoccupation with money led to several curious beliefs which are now so firmly rooted that one hardly sees how anything short of a collapse of our whole economic system can displace it. One such belief is that commodities, goods, and services can be paid for with money. This is not so. Money does not pay for anything, never has, never will. It is an economic axiom as old as the hills that goods and services can be paid for only with goods and services; but twenty years ago this axiom vanished from everyone's reckoning, and has never reappeared. No one has seemed in the least aware that everything which is paid for must be paid for out of production, for there is no other source of payment.

Albert Jay Nock, *The Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*, 1943.

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EVERYBODY HAS WON, AND ALL MUST HAVE PRIZES.

This election has all the markings of a revolution. Yes, we know, there are no barricades, no guns, no flag burnings, no riots, no public executions, no one knifed in a bathtub, indeed, no violence whatsoever. But according to Webster, to qualify as a "revolution," all that must happen is for "those governed" to overthrow the existing form of government and replace it with another. The defining characteristic is not the means by which this is done but the fact that it is done. So, as we said earlier, this election has all the markings of a revolution.

Clearly, a large segment of the American public has decided that the limited role that the founding fathers envisioned for the federal government, even though it has grown dramatically in the past two centuries, is still woefully out of synch with the times and must be significantly expanded, immediately if not sooner. And they are in the process of seizing control of the government in order to make that happen.

As with all successful revolutions, the movement that is driving this one has been around for a very long time. Until recently, however, these revolutionaries have had to contend with an opposition movement that kept them from assuming complete control of the levers of government. But, for all practical purposes, this conservative opposition has been routed. There are still a few conservative troops skulking around like those Japanese soldiers who hid out in the Pacific Islands after World War II, refusing to surrender. But there are no conservative generals left. They have faded away, so to speak.

To put this another way, regardless of the outcome of the November election – Obama, Clinton, or McCain -- the federal government will soon be in the hands of a president who eschews virtually all Constitutionally imposed limits on its power, a liberal who believes that noble ends justify ignoble means.

Indeed, judging by the campaign rhetoric of all three candidates to date, the United States will have a president who believes that he or she not only has the means but the responsibility, as president, to right wrongs and fix problems that were never considered by any of the founding fathers, or any president for the first 150 years or so of the nation's existence, to have anything whatsoever to do with the responsibility of the federal government.

And this, brothers and sisters, is every bit as much of a revolution as the one that occurred in France in 1789 and in Russia in 1917. The Marquis de Launay has sent the keys to Bastille down to the mob. Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov's train has arrived at Finland Station.

It is hard to say when the first shot was fired in this revolution, but we remember well the moment when it became publicly clear that this revolution was well underway and that it would eventually succeed. It was 16 years ago in Richmond, Virginia during a televised debate between Bill Clinton and George Bush, when a questioner from the audience said the following. "We are symbolically your children, we have our needs, what will you do to take care of us, and take care of our needs?" And neither candidate had the good sense or the fortitude to contest the idea that the federal government, much less the President of the United States, had any responsibility whatsoever to take care of this fellow's "needs;" that, in fact, the best way for him to meet his "needs" would be to take bath, get a haircut, and go get a job.

Nor did either Bill or George take the opportunity to provide the young man and the American people with some much-needed insight into the practical limits of government by citing the wisdom, if not the passage itself, contained in Burke's classic memorandum entitled "Thoughts and Details on Scarcity," written in 1795 to Prime Minister Pitt expressing his opposition to various governmental "projects" being proposed to manipulate the economy during the economic crisis that struck Britain in 1794 and 1795.

To provide for us in our necessities is not in the power of government. It would be vain presumption in statesmen

to think they can do it. The people maintain them, and not they the people.

And, of course, neither man mentioned that personal happiness and fulfillment, or what the Greek philosophers called eudaimonia, can be achieved through individual effort alone, by striving to realize one's innate capabilities through productive work and moral discipline, and that all that government can do is try to provide an environment in which each individual can fully realize the fruits of his labor and his God-given talents.

It is possible, of course, that somewhere, hidden deeply in the psyche of each of today's three remaining candidates for the presidency there resides some understanding of the intractability of human nature, which would in turn provide each with a realistic and healthy respect for the limits of government power. But we doubt it. We think that each sincerely believes that the federal government "isn't doing enough," and hopes that he or she will be the chosen one, who will remedy this shortfall and in doing so make the world a better place.

Needless to say, this is not a happy thought. Our guess is that it will likely lead to increased tensions between the government and the citizenry, as the former builds great expectations and then, inevitably, fails to deliver.

In the meantime, public demands on the government will continue to exceed the government's resources, there being virtually no conservatives around to explain to the public that their demands are foolish, unrealistic, and ultimately harmful. The government's answer to this conundrum will, of course, be to borrow money to meet the increasing demands of the public, there being no individual or organization around that is capable of preventing it, with the exception of the credit markets themselves, but by the time they act, it will be too late to prevent a crisis.

As we said two weeks ago, the one hope we have is "blessed gridlock." With demands on government far exceeding its wherewithal to deliver, it is possible that competition among the petitioners may become

so intense and filled with animosity that no single supplicant will be able to make it to the front of the line. One can only hope.

BARACK THE NON-APPEASER.

Barack Obama wants you to know that he's not an appeaser. He has never been an appeaser. He never will be an appeaser. He doesn't even like the word appeaser. In fact, he hates it. Although we can't confirm it, we are told by those in the know that when he is not campaigning, he walks around the house all day muttering about what a loser Neville Chamberlain was. It is also said that he carries a picture of Neville around and hits it with his shoe every so often. Wilt Chamberl...errr...the Stilt? Are you kidding? Obama may be a huge basketball fan, but he's doesn't much care for old number 13. It's the name, you see.

And except for the affront to the Jayhawk nation, of course, that's fine by us. We never said Obama was an appeaser. The thought never even crossed our minds. But then again, it may never have crossed President Bush's mind either. He certainly never called the good Senator an appeaser.

Mind you, that didn't stop Obama and his dear friend Nancy Pelosi from jumping up and down, screeching like owls that Bush is a big jerk who has somehow brought disgrace to the office of the President. (You know, the office previously occupied by a man who used interns' dresses for . . . ummmm . . . target practice.)

At first blush, this seems like a strange reaction. After all, if you don't want people to think you're an appeaser, why would you, immediately upon hearing that "some" people are susceptible to the "false comfort of appeasement," jump up and scream "It's me! It's me! The 'some' people he's talking about is me!" That seems kind of stupid to us. Honestly, if voters didn't associate Obama with "appeasement" before, they almost surely do now that he's put on such a display about it.

Upon further reflection, though, it occurred to us that maybe Obama and his advisors are smarter than we gave them credit for being. It is quite possible, likely even, that the whole "appeasement" argument was actually meant to be a distraction, a bit of what President Bush might call "trickeration," whereby the Obama team implies that their guy has been accused of appeasement, makes clear that he would never, ever appease the enemy, and then declares the entire foreign policy argument closed, hoping thereby to get a pass on the Senator's most glaring and candidacy-threatening weakness.

To be perfectly honest, it is entirely possible that Obama's little ruse worked or, at the very least, that it bought him some time to polish his act and thus avoid looking like the typical, limp-wristed anti-warrior. Take a look, if you will, at the type of responses Obama's little tantrum has drawn.

Numerous conservatives, including some pretty big-shot diplomats, like former United Nations ambassador John Bolton, have replied to Obama, and most, if not all, have attempted to give him a lesson in the potential dangers of diplomacy. What these respondents have done – and quite well, we should note – is explain that negotiations are simply not cost free and therefore cannot be undertaken lightly and certainly not "without conditions" as Obama has suggested would be his presidential policy.

The catch here is that Obama had already begun the walk-back from his "without conditions" statement before Bush's speech, and he will all but certainly continue to do so now that he and his allies have managed to equate "appeasement" with "unconditional negotiations" in the public's mind. Once the walk-back is complete, of course, Obama is off the hook. He's not an appeaser, and the issue is settled. Next question.

To repeat: that's fine with us. He's not an appeaser. Good. But so what?

The fact that Obama is playing a shell game with foreign policy, answering a question no one asked, doesn't mean the guy has any business being President

of the United States. If he's not an appeaser, what is he? And why would he rather focus on the appeasement nonsense than discuss what he actually does believe?

In truth, those are easy questions to answer. In his domestic policy, Obama is a progressive multiculturalist, and in his foreign policy, he's a liberal multilateralist. And the reason he doesn't want to talk about it is because, as a liberal multilateralist, he believes or at least professes to believe things that are absurd, demonstrably untrue, detrimental to the well being of the United States and its most dedicated allies, and most notably, repugnant to most voters. Let us explain.

Four years ago, in a debate with President Bush, Democratic nominee Senator John Kerry, a proud multilateralist like Obama, suggested that America's foreign actions should be subject to some sort of "global test." It is entirely possible that this single line cost him the election.

The angle the Bush administration played up was that the American government shouldn't have to ask anyone's permission to do what is necessary to protect, defend, and expand its interests. And that not only made sense, but it worked. From that point on, John Kerry was the guy who would have to check in with the "global community" before he could sit, stand, or go to the bathroom. Indeed, one could argue that the "global test" killed whatever chances he had to defeat the wartime president.

And though we're happy that it worked, we think that approach missed the larger point. It's not the act of asking for input from others that matters. It's not the act of seeking advice or even consent. What matters is whom one asks. And here is where Kerry, Obama, and all of the rest of the "enlightened" multilateralists run into problems, major problems.

Invariably, when a political leader – Republican or Democrat – refers to the "global community" or promises to seek global consent for an action, he or she is referring specifically to the United Nations.

When George H.W. Bush wanted legitimacy for his battle against Saddam, he went to the United Nations. When Bill Clinton wanted legitimacy for his air raids against Saddam, he went to the United Nations. When George W. Bush wanted to depose Saddam, he went to the United Nations. And although he didn't get everything he wanted from the United Nations, he got enough. And to this day, Saddam's violation of the U.N. resolutions that ended the first Gulf War remain among the most oft cited legal justifications for the American invasion. Whatever the reason, but especially if it involves grave foreign policy decisions, American leaders seek legitimacy by seeking the support of the United Nations.

Why this should be the case is beyond us. We could run down for you a litany of U.N. disgraces, from child rape to sex slavery to elephant poaching. But others have done such lists far better and far more comprehensively than we ever could. For our purposes, it should suffice to say that we have, to this date, never found a more apt description of the "problem with the U.N." than that offered by the inimitable Mark Steyn just over three years ago: "It's a good basic axiom that if you take a quart of ice-cream and a quart of dog feces and mix 'em together the result will taste more like the latter than the former." The United Nations is a sick institution. A scandal-plagued den of vipers. A pathetic club in which thugs, murderers, and despots wield as much "democratic" power as the handful of actual democracies.

In the June 21, 2004 issue of this newsletter, we ourselves described the United Nations as a "dung heap," borrowing the phrase from Jack Burton, the narrator in Robert Penn Warren's great political novel, *All the King's Men*, describing how the roots of corruption in Louisiana seemed to be strangely linked to a business in New York, not unlike the way global corruption always seems to be linked to the United Nations.

So I plucked the flower out of its cranny and discovered an astonishing botanical fact. I discovered that its delicate little root, with many loops and kinks, ran

all the way to New York City, where it tapped the lush dung heap called the Madison Corporation.

Yet these are the people with whom Barack Obama and his fellow Democrats would prefer to have a tighter, more convivial relationship. When the “global test” is given, it’s these reprobates Obama wants doing the grading.

That would be a minor inconvenience of minor importance, if the United Nations were merely a social club where everyone went simply to complain about the United States. For example, the United Nations is currently “investigating” the United States for signs of “racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.” The United Nations’ special rapporteur for Human Rights, Doudou Diene, will conduct his investigation, recount his findings, and publish a report. And no one will care even in the slightest. Left-wing bureaucrats denouncing the U.S. government is hardly anything extraordinary. Besides, there is absolutely nothing that the United Nations, which still derives the bulk of its budget from U.S. taxpayers, can possibly do to the United States.

Unfortunately, the United Nations is more than a social club, and there are those whom it can, in fact, hurt.

Foremost among those the United Nations can hurt is, of course, Israel. Sixty years exactly since the United Nations made possible the birth of modern Israel, that same institution appears to be trying its damndest to correct its “mistake.” The Geneva-based group UNWatch has labeled the United Nations “Ground Zero for today’s new anti-Semitism, which is the irrational scapegoating of Israel with the true intended target being Jews.” For more than four decades now, the United Nations has focused its human rights campaign on this tiny, democratic nation, virtually equating its very existence with “racism.” The United Nations’ 2001 Durban World Conference Against Racism was an overtly anti-Israel affair, from which both the United States and Israel pulled their ambassadors. The successor to that conference, which

will again be held in Durban next year, is off to a rocky – or should we say “normal” start – with Libya and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s Iran being named to the Conference planning committee.

In yesterday’s *Wall Street Journal*, Bret Stephens noted that there is a sense among political observers that Barack Obama has to “get right” with Jewish voters. Obama’s campaign has been tied repeatedly to foreign policy academics who have links to or have had discussions with groups (e.g. Hamas) that many American Jews and nearly all Israeli Jews find loathsome and treacherous. Additionally, there is a sense – explicitly stated by the candidate himself – that he knows better what is good for Israel than do the Israelis themselves.

But the bigger question and the greatest concern surrounding Obama and the Jews is his apparent fealty to an organization explicitly committed to harming the Jewish state. Stephens notes that Obama says that he is dedicated to “the idea of a secure Jewish state.” It is hard, though, to reconcile this dedication with the similar dedication to multilateralism and the body that serves as the default mechanism for that multilateralism.

The goal of the anti-Zionists at the United Nations and elsewhere in the global community is subtle. Obviously, most don’t openly pursue Israel’s destruction. Indeed, short of a nuclear holocaust perpetrated by the Mad Mullahs of Iran, it is hard to imagine how such destruction would be accomplished. What they seek, rather, is more “evenhandedness” from the United States in its dealings with Israel; they ask that American leaders be more willing to “hold up a mirror and tell the truth” about Israel’s failings, precisely what Obama says would be his principle job as a “friend” to the Jewish state.

The dangers in such “evenhandedness” might not seem obvious, but they are nonetheless real. For starters, any wavering in support for Israel from the United States would, all but certainly, compel the Israelis to take further steps to ensure their own security. An Israel left to stand alone in the den of

wolves that is the Middle East would be both more nervous and more assertive than an Israel with the world's only superpower guarding its back. And a nervous and assertive Israel is a dangerous Israel, one that would be unable to take any chances with its security or to run the risk of underestimating a hostile neighbor's intentions or capabilities. To say this would destabilize an already incredibly unstable region is an understatement if ever there was one.

As we said, it is hard for Westerners like us to imagine how the destruction of Israel might be accomplished. But the slow-motion destruction of the state, the unspectacular yet unremitting destruction of its infrastructure and slaughter of its citizens, is something the Israelis don't have to imagine. It's something they live with every day. Every year. Since 1948.

The right of a nation to defend its citizens from foreign attack is one of the very definitions of statehood. And to deny Israel that right is to effectively deny its existence. And to effectively deny its existence is to invite it to take matters into its own hands and encourage it to fight, literally, to recover that existence.

But there's more.

As more than one observer has noted over the past couple of weeks, the fate of Israel is indisputably tied to the fate of the West in general. As the longshoreman-philosopher Eric Hoffer put it more than four decades ago, "as it goes with Israel, so will it go with all of us."

We can't say for certain whether the multilateralists are undaunted by Hoffer's warnings because they are ignorant of the fact that Israel is, indeed, the vanguard of and intellectual and moral progenitor of the Euro-American West, or because they really believe that the rest of West needs a good dose of evenhandedness

and requires someone to "hold up a mirror and tell the truth." In either case, any perceived neglect of Israel will encourage its enemies, who also happen to be the enemies of the West in general, to escalate their assaults, and not just in Israel.

To abandon Israel would be to suggest to the Islamists that their tactics work and that the West is unable and unwilling to defend its own, just as they have always believed. Already, the Islamists have witnessed Westerners fecklessness in the face of their threats, as demonstrated in everything from European schools dropping the Holocaust from history classes for fear of offending Muslims, to Burger King changing its British ads based on the absurd idea that the swirl on its chocolate ice cream too closely resembled the Arabic script for God, to the vaunted Western media's refusal to publish cartoons because of the very real fear of violent reprisal. In short, then, the Islamists hardly need any encouragement to continue their war against the West, but any wavering on the matter of Israel would nonetheless provide it in spades.

So Barack Obama is not an appeaser. He will not, as the *Jerusalem Post's* Caroline Glick suggests, "reward others for their bad behavior." He will merely restore America's status in the world by conducting a foreign policy that is less hubristic, less unilateralist, more in line with the hopes and aspirations of the global community, as expressed in the will of the United Nations, and more evenhanded. He will not negotiate unconditionally with Israel's enemies. In fact, he will be Israel's best friend, holding up the mirror no one else will hold up, telling it the things that no one else will say, but which have to be said. He will merely be more honest, more practical, more of a "realist."

At which point, we will all get to see how skilled he is at being a Commander-in-Chief during a major war. Maybe he is not Chamberlain. But we doubt seriously whether he is Churchill either.

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