

Mark L. Melcher Publisher
melcher@thepoliticalforum.com

Stephen R. Soukup Editor
soukup@thepoliticalforum.com

THEY SAID IT

People generally accept high levels of oppression and misery if they expect such discomforts to be their natural lot in life. Only when people expect a better life, and have their expectation frustrated, are they likely to develop feelings of aggression and resentment. Therefore, any change in a society that raises peoples' expectations for a better life without providing the means of meeting those expectations can be politically destabilizing. Such expectations may include cultural contacts with more advanced societies or rapid but uneven economic growth. [J.C.] Davies argued that one combination of events in particular – a period of growing prosperity that raises people's expectations for a better life, followed by a sharp economic downturn that dashes those expectations (the "J-curve" of economic growth) – would yield exceptionally sharp feelings of deprivation and aggression.

Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies,
Edited by Jack A. Goldstone, Second Edition, 1986.

In this Issue

The Back Door to Capitalism.

Health Care and Global Warming:
Too Important to Tell the Truth.

THE BACK DOOR TO CAPITALISM.

In case you hadn't noticed, the Obama administration is building the foundations for the construction of a large, underground, *laissez-faire*, libertarian economy. Yes, you heard us correctly. A large, underground, *laissez-faire*, libertarian economy, operating, extra-legally within the existing one, in the manner that similar economies operate in other banana republics.

Crazy, you say? Well, maybe. But we thought we would toy with the idea a little this week. We will begin by noting that last August we suggested in these pages that "history will view the opening decades of the 21st century as the period in which the 'administrative state' was broadly field tested and found to be an inadequate model for satisfying the social, economic, and spiritual needs of the little human animal." To clarify the meaning of the term "administrative state," we said the following:

Oh! You're wondering about the phrase "administrative state." Well, you see, that just happens to be the political system in which you and we and the citizens of all the major, developed nations of the world are living today, including not only the United States, but China and Russia as well.

Each version of the administrative state is different, of course, but they all share the common goal of attempting to combine a reasonably generous but closely proscribed portion of individual freedom, a modest tolerance for democratic dialogue, limited property rights, and

carefully regulated capitalism all under the umbrella of a enormously powerful elite corps of politicians, bureaucrats, and “experts” who, to paraphrase Tocqueville, have taken upon themselves the complicated task of becoming the sole agent and the only arbiter of the pleasures, concerns, industry, property rights, and inheritances of the populations over whom they govern.

In defense of our position that the administrative state will not stand the test of time, we said the following.

The most obvious difficulty with this model is that it combines the gross corruption and inefficiencies that are inherent in large-scale central planning with the gross corruption and inefficiencies that are equally inherent in the kind of capitalism that is overregulated by bureaucrats and unfettered by any sense of justice, patriotism, honesty, and honor, there being no entity within the administrative state that can command such homage . . . finally, the administrative state is destined to fail because its overweening insistence on controlling and regulating virtually all aspects of daily life leaves no room for the influence of society’s ancient guardians of order, including but not limited to the family and the nation’s religious institutions, or for its traditional customs and mores, those which Robert Nisbit described in his 1975 book *Twilight of Authority* as “being the very stuff of morality, and hence of resistance to oppression and corruption.”

We made no serious attempt in that article to predict how or when the American version of the administrative state would collapse under the weight of citizen disgust with the inefficiencies, the corruption, the restrictions on individual freedom, the politicization of everything including national security,

and the arrogance that inevitably accompanies such large, virtually unchecked concentrations of power. But lately we have begun to wonder if perhaps the Obama administration is so badly mismanaging and corrupting America’s administrative state that that time is nearer than we thought.

We know this is somewhat far-fetched. But on the other hand, Americans are not disposed to sit back and do nothing to protect themselves, their freedoms, and their property against an administration that is rapidly spending the nation into bankruptcy, planning to impose huge increases in both corporate and individual taxes at a time when unemployment and underemployed are at near post-war highs, heaping grand new federal obligations on states that are already facing bankruptcy as a result of their own fiscal irresponsibility, sending America’s fighting men and women into a war that the President himself has already all but decided that he has no intention of winning, and injecting the federal government directly into the most minute details of the day-to-day health care needs of virtually ever American.

It is customary when addressing issues such as this to concentrate on the political ramifications. But we think the long-term effect of the Obama administration’s bungling will be to substitute a deep and possibly long lasting antagonism between the majority of Americans and their government in place of the patriotism that once was the hallmark of American democracy.

If we are right, then we can expect tax avoidance, both legal and illegal, to become as much a part of the American culture in the future as bootlegging was during prohibition. We can expect government corruption to grow by leaps and bounds and to be increasingly viewed by Americans not as a crime or a barrier to honest competition but as an opportunity to gain an advantage in the marketplace. We can expect the underground economy to expand well beyond the traditional realm of services and the trades. We can expect doctors, hospitals, other health care providers and patients to establish both formal and informal means of breaking the rules made in Washington,

both for profit and for access to better care. In short, we can expect the United States to join the ranks of the world's banana republics and post-communist dictatorships, where bribery and "knowing someone who can do you a favor" are not just part of life but necessary for survival.

In one sense, this stinks. On the plus side, however, it may be the only way that Americans can preserve the spirit of free market capitalism during the coming dark days of economic stagnation, sky high taxes, huge deficits, spreading corruption, forced wealth redistribution, and the loss of global influence, all thanks to Barack's commitment to "change."

HEALTH CARE AND GLOBAL WARMING: TOO IMPORTANT TO TELL THE TRUTH.

So the Democrats went and passed a procedural vote on health care over the weekend, agreeing to begin debate on Majority Leader Harry Reid's "reform" bill when the hard-working folks in Congress return from their Thanksgiving break a week from today. There is much that can be said about this vote and about the bill on which the vote was held. And indubitably we will say a great deal of it, as we follow this attempt at reform through to its conclusion. For now, though, we'd just like to remind you, gentle readers, of the real impetus behind the bill (or bills, to be entirely accurate), the real reason why reforming the health care system has been a near-century-long obsession for the political left.

Oddly, this reminder will not take the form of a discussion of broad health care principles or even of the specifics of the reform proposals currently on offer. Why would we bother? The debate raging on Capitol Hill is of little interest to us, given its divergence from reality.

Only in Washington could a bill that will cost somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2.5 trillion be "scored" by the budget overseers as costing a "mere" \$800-900 billion. Only in Washington could this latter number – nearly a trillion dollars – be proudly claimed

as a "deficit reducer," a veritable savings bonanza. And only in Washington could the man responsible for this fiscal mockery insist that what he really wants is to reduce the nation's debt and to cut back unnecessary spending. The whole debate is bizarre. And more to the point, it's boring. Mind-numbingly boring.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the policy ledger and on the other side of the Atlantic, there is some fun – some genuine, 100%, good, old fashioned fun – taking place in the current discussion of an abstractly, though notably related issue, the environment.

Now, we know what you're thinking: there is nothing even vaguely "fun" about the environment, about the policies pertaining to the environment, or about those who advocate policies pertaining to the environment. Indeed, when you think of the environment and of environmentalists, "fun" is the last word that pops into your head. A more dour and un-fun group of people likely never lived.

And generally, that's true. But not right now.

You see, late last week, a considerable amount of data, including several papers, reports, and emails, was stolen by hackers from the servers of the Climate Research Unit of East Anglia University, one of the world's most respected and leading advocates of the theory of Anthropogenic (i.e. man-made) Global Warming. And as the purloined documents have been made available to the public, a pattern has emerged, a pattern which suggests that even the world's most prominent global warming "scientists" know that their theories, their data, and their solutions are based less on actual science than on faith and deception.

Before we get into the details of the evidence, we should provide a little context, some background against which the current global warming debate is taking place. As you well know, the "science" regarding global warming is said to be settled. Al Gore told us that it was. He made a movie about it. He won an Oscar. He won a Nobel Peace Prize. And the entire global community – at least the purportedly "thinking" portion of it – has long agreed that global

warming is real, that it is man-made, and that the only way to address it is to alter the behavior of those in the developed world to reduce Greenhouse gases.

Unfortunately for Al Gore and his minions, the actual global climate has refused to cooperate. None of the models developed based on the “facts” of global warming have ever proven even remotely accurate. And things have only grown more complicated over the last several years, as the warming trend that was supposed to cause us all to be fried to a crisp has simply stopped or, in some cases, reversed itself. As *Der Spiegel* reported just last week:

Global warming appears to have stalled. Climatologists are puzzled as to why average global temperatures have stopped rising over the last 10 years. Some attribute the trend to a lack of sunspots, while others explain it through ocean currents.

At least the weather in Copenhagen is likely to be cooperating. The Danish Meteorological Institute predicts that temperatures in December, when the city will host the United Nations Global Climate Change Conference, will be one degree above the long-term average.

Otherwise, however, not much is happening with global warming at the moment. The Earth’s average temperatures have stopped climbing since the beginning of the millennium, and it even looks as though global warming could come to a standstill this year.

Ironically, climate change appears to have stalled in the run-up to the upcoming world summit in the Danish capital, where thousands of politicians, bureaucrats, scientists, business leaders and environmental activists plan to

negotiate a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Billions of euros are at stake in the negotiations.

Rand Simburg, a self-described “recovering aerospace engineer” notes this morning that throughout modern Western history, essentially since the dawn of the Modern Era, science has played a critical role in civilization’s development. Scientists try to explain various phenomena. And when the theories they develop are proved wanting, either by testing or observation, the theory is adjusted or revised to fit the data. “Over thousands of years, at each step,” he writes, “the response of the scientists was to continually adjust and refine their theories to conform to the data, not the other way around. This is how science is done and how we developed the knowledge that has given us such tremendous and accelerating scientific and technological breakthroughs in the past century.”

Until now.

As *Der Spiegel* reports, “a few scientists simply refuse to believe” the new data that demonstrates a respite from global warming. And, unfortunately but also unsurprisingly, these are the remarkably honest ones – relatively speaking, that is. Many of the rest have decided to hide the problems with their models, to attempt to distract the public and policy makers with bogus controversies, to manipulate or hide their data, to try to discredit their critics, to bully publishers regarding the publication of contradictory evidence, and to intimidate critics. And all of this is confirmed by the stolen documents from the East Anglia Climate Research Unit.

We won’t bore you with the details of the documents here, largely because they are available in tremendous detail all over the internet (see here, for example: <http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2009/11/19/huge-climate-story-breaking.html>). But we will provide a brief summary of the conclusions that can be drawn from them, as provided by Charlie Martin, a computer scientist, writer, and science blogger:

It appears that the three scandals are:

First, a real attempt by a small group of scientists to subvert the peer-review process and suppress dissenting voices . . . This is at best massively unethical.

Second, a willingness to manipulate the data to make a political case. This is certainly misconduct and possibly scientific fraud. This, if it proves true, should make these scientists subject to strong disciplinary action, even termination of their tenured positions.

Third, what gives every appearance of an actual conspiracy to prevent data from being released as required by the Freedom of Information Acts in the US and UK. If this is proven true, that is a federal crime.

These emails and the data associated, taken together, raise really important questions about the whole scientific structure of AGW. Is the data really valid? Has the data been effectively peer reviewed and have attempts to falsify been fairly treated? Is CO2-forced AGW really the best hypothesis?

Until these questions are answered, the various attempts to “deal with the climate change crisis” have no acceptable *scientific* basis.

Now, we wouldn't go quite so far as did James Delingpole, a journalist for *The Telegraph* of London, who declared that the Climate Research Unit scandal will be “the final nail in the coffin of ‘Anthropogenic Global Warming.’” But we might be willing to agree with Andrew Bolt, a columnist for the *Melbourne Herald-Sun*, that this scandal has the potential to be “the greatest in modern science.” In any case, there are very serious allegations being tossed around about the folks in the global warming crowd, many of them apparently substantiated by their own hands. In terms of scientific debate, this is huge indeed. In terms of

the political debate over the science, only time will tell if the politicians on the statist left – those who have long been pushing the theory of man-made global warming and who are proposing draconian measures to alleviate the crisis – will much care.

If pressed, we'd guess the politicians won't much care, in large part because the entire policy debate on global warming or climate change or the environment in general was never about the science anyway. Indeed, it was never about much of anything other than control. And that, of course, is why it is, as we noted above, “abstractly, though notably related” to the health care policy debate.

As we noted in a handful of pieces this summer, the health care debate is, in truth, not about health care so much as it is about controlling what it is that people do to themselves and how they do it. It is, quite simply, about control and about the state's ability to control its citizens' behavior to make them behave the way the government thinks they should. The health care debate, in short, is about turning free-born citizens into charges or wards. As we put it in an August piece entitled “Stupid is as Stupid Does”:

If you look closely at all Progressive and liberal movements down through the ages, you will notice that they are premised on the idea that decisions about governance are far too important to be made by ordinary citizens working together under the auspices of a democratic government. From Woodrow Wilson's artificially constructed politics-administration dichotomy to the current debates over energy and health care policy, the driving goal has been to remove power and responsibility from the people and to place the decision-making responsibilities with the elites, with professionals expressly trained and directed to ensure that outcomes suit the “common good,” whether the population at large likes it or not. In their minds, individuals (that's

you) are too selfish, too self-driven, too ignorant of the complicated and intricate nuances of policy and procedure to be allowed to make the important decisions or even – as Wilson so carefully articulated – influence those who make the decisions. “Choice” is a fine slogan when discussing reproductive rights, but it is hardly a reasonable tenet on which to base the governance of a complicated modern nation.

Just within the context of the health care debate it is easy to see the importance of experts and the exercise of expert control to the smooth operation of contemporary society. If our new and glorious health care system is to function properly, you people will have to manage yourselves properly, which is to say that the government will have to manage your appetites and your proclivities for you, since you are clearly incapable of managing them for yourselves . . .

The same thing, of course, can be said about global warming or climate change or whatever they want to call it. It’s not about the environment. It’s about control. Again from “Stupid is as Stupid Does,”

Coincidentally, the government will make you healthier by making the world healthier. They’ve already given away billions in free cash to save the planet by eliminating old SUVs. And soon, they’ll have to conclude that the next step is eliminating or reducing beef production. Cows “make” methane, which contributes to global warming. And cow meat (aka beef) plugs your colon and makes you costlier . . . errr . . . unhealthier. Cows are bad for Gaia. And they’re bad for you.

As the inimitable Mark Steyn noted over the weekend, “‘Climate Change’ and ‘health care’ are different ends of the same stick: They’re both all-purpose pretexts for regulating every aspect of your life.”

And that’s why the theories about manmade global warming and its potential cures must be accepted by any “real” scientists, whether they’re true or not. It’s for your own good, we tell you, just shut up and accept it. Never mind that the numbers don’t add up. Just sit there and be quiet already.

You may recall that in 2004, when President Bush was running for re-election, Super-journalist/uber-hack Dan Rather did a story for CBS news that purported to show horrible, awful things about Bush and his service in the Air National Guard. The report relied on forged documents, of course, but that didn’t stop the forger, Rather, and Bush’s opponents from pretending that the story was fair and truthful-ish anyway. The forged documents and the report based on them were described as “false but accurate,” which was offered as a defense but became a mocking description of the political left’s willingness to embrace any of various falsehoods to advance its political agenda.

With the hacking and posting of documents from the Climate Research Unit late last week, it is looking more and more like man-made global warming, may well be just another case of “false but accurate,” a story that is, by any objective measure, a lie, but which must nonetheless be preserved in order to save the world from its stupid and selfish residents.

The same can be said for health care. The costs of “reform” have been extraordinarily and blatantly underreported and manifestly manipulated to achieve a desired result. The means of paying for “reform” have been equally fudged. The idea that reform will bring help to the “needy” is a barefaced lie; the needy already have Medicaid. The idea that reform will make coverage universal is likewise a blatant lie. Better care? A lie. Cheaper coverage? A lie. Fair competition? A lie.

Lies upon lies upon lies.

But it's all for your own good, you see.

The mistake that many right-leaning journalists and commentators make is in presuming that the political left operates from nefarious motives. It doesn't. It operates, as the right does, with the sincerest concern for the good of the people and the nation. But in the final analysis, that's beside the point. A great deal of damage can be borne of good intentions and of efforts undertaken in the name of "the people."

It is important, we think, to keep in mind as the health care debate grinds on that those who are promising "reform" are truly interested in fixing problems. The problems they are interested in fixing, though, are not necessarily the same problems that you and we and the rest of the country think need fixing. They're the problems they want to fix, and they'll do or say whatever they have to in order to get the opportunity fix them, democracy and republicanism be damned.

They're Plato's Guardians, after all, and lying to the masses is sometimes necessary, in order to do what's best for the ignorant slobs (that's you and we, by the way).

Get used to it.

Copyright 2009. The Political Forum. 8563 Senedo Road, Mt. Jackson, Virginia 22842, tel. 540-477-9762, fax 540-477-3359. All rights reserved.

Information contained herein is based on data obtained from recognized services, issuer reports or communications, or other sources believed to be reliable. However, such information has not been verified by us, and we do not make any representations as to its accuracy or completeness, and we are not responsible for typographical errors. Any statements nonfactual in nature constitute only current opinions which are subject to change without notice.