

The Perversity of Diversity

a talk by Tom Tancredo, 27 Jan 2009

Just a few weeks ago, the former Congressman from Colorado gave a wonderful 37-minute talk to a gathering of Young America's Foundation, at the Reagan Ranch Center. He spoke quite seriously about the problems of illegal immigration and multiculturalism run amok. But Mr. Tancredo was calm and cogent at all times. There was none of the nativist firebrand of the mainstream media's officially approved Tancredo Narrative. Listen: you'll love this talk. You can hear it online, or download it for your computer or iPod.

<http://yaf.org/blog/?p=312>

Mr. Shapiro gives the Obamessiah all due respect.

The Day America Lost the War on Terror

by Ben Shapiro, 31 Jan 2009

President Barack Obama's feckless, pathetically apologetic perspective on foreign policy has America's enemies celebrating their great good fortune in the election of this platitudinous, morally relativistic, Jimmy Carter carbon copy in the midst of battle. Less than a week into his term President Obama granted his first television interview as president of the United States to Al Arabiya, the Dubai-based television network part-owned by the Saudi government. In the interview, President Obama demonstrated with the utmost clarity that **his understanding of the War on Terror is inversely proportional to his arrogance...**

Read the rest: <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=30452>

The UN's Insanity Continues

by Anne Bayefsky, 30 Jan 2009

The United Nations "anti-racism" forum, known as Durban II, is becoming a more important test for President Obama's multilateralist ambitions with each passing day. Durban I was the anti-Semitic hatefest that ended three days before 9/11. Durban II—the UN equivalent of the Son of Sam—will take place in April in Geneva...

...Negotiators have now put on the table claims that (1) a homeland for the Jewish people is racism—a "racially based law of return," (2) Israel is guilty of "apartheid" and (3) the veracity of the murder of one-third of the Jewish people during the Holocaust is subject to question... In total, six provisions are dedicated to demonizing Israel as racist. Not one of the other 191 UN states is mentioned. The intention is clear: the political defeat of Israel in the same vein as apartheid South Africa, because repeated attempts at a military defeat of Israel have failed.

But Israel is not the only target of Islamic and Arab states and their developing world partners. The draft takes straight aim at freedom of expression and counterterrorism. Free speech should supposedly be curtailed by new laws against "projecting negative, insulting and derogatory images of religions and religious personalities" and the introduction of "a code of ethical conduct" for the media. Counterterrorism activities are "obstacles hampering progress in the collective struggle against racism."

At the top of the agenda is the creation of a hierarchy of human rights victims with "Muslim minorities" topping matters of concern. "The intellectual and ideological validation of Islamophobia" is a "most disturbing phenomenon," the agenda says. "Anti-Arabism" is introduced as intolerance of a religious minority... **In other words, Durban II is a frontal assault on universal human rights and freedoms by religious fundamentalists...**

Read it all: http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2009/01/30/2009-01-30_the_uns_insanity_continues.html

Does The Ledbetter Law Benefit Workers, Or Lawyers?

Democrats and the media have distorted the facts underlying the new equal-pay law.

by Stuart Taylor Jr., 31 Jan 2009

This has been a good week, and may be a good year, for lawyers, civil-rights groups and others who think that America needs many more lawsuits to combat what they portray as pervasive job discrimination against women, minorities, the elderly, and the disabled.

Things are not going so well for those of us who fear that the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which President Obama

co-sponsored as a senator and signed on Thursday, and other job discrimination bills in the congressional pipeline may be bad for most workers and may benefit mainly lawyers.

These measures seem likely to make it harder than ever for employers to defend themselves against bogus (as well as valid) discrimination claims, effectively adding to the cost of each new hire.

This would be justified if job discrimination were indeed pervasive. But the evidence suggests otherwise. **Study after study has, for example, cast grave doubt on what appears to be the myth that sex discrimination in the workplace remains rampant** more than 40 years after Congress adopted one law broadly banning job discrimination and another requiring equal pay for women and men doing equal work.

Congressional Democrats, liberal groups, and the media have thoroughly distorted the facts underlying the Ledbetter law to advance their agenda of opening the door wide to all manner of job-discrimination lawsuits...

Read on: http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/or_20090131_9126.php

Bush Hatred and Obama Euphoria are Two Sides of the Same Coin

by Peter Berkowitz, 31 Jan 2009

...At first glance, Bush hatred and Obama euphoria could not be more different. Hatred of Mr. Bush went well beyond the partisan broadsides typical of democratic politics. For years it disfigured its victims with open, indeed proud, loathing for the very manner in which Mr. Bush walked and talked. It compelled them to denounce the president and his policies as not merely foolish or wrong or contrary to the national interest, but as anathema to everything that made America great.

In contrast, the euphoria surrounding Mr. Obama's run for president conferred upon the candidate immunity from criticism despite his newness to national politics and lack of executive experience, and regardless of how empty his calls for change. At the same time, it inspired those in its grips, repeatedly bringing them tears of joy throughout the long election season. With Mr. Obama's victory in November and his inauguration last week, it suffused them with a sense that not only had the promise of America at last been redeemed but that the world could now be transfigured.

In fact, Bush hatred and Obama euphoria—which tend to reveal more about those who feel them than the men at which they are directed—are opposite sides of the same coin. Both represent the triumph of passion over reason. Both are intolerant of dissent. Those wallowing in Bush hatred and those reveling in Obama euphoria frequently regard those who do not share their passion as contemptible and beyond the reach of civilized discussion. Bush hatred and Obama euphoria typically coexist in the same soul. And it is disproportionately members of the intellectual and political class in whose souls they flourish...

The whole essay: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123336391229335459.html>

Irresponsible Government Continues

by Ben Stein, 31 Jan 2009

I love this. The new kind of politics of hope. Eight hours of debate in the House of Representatives to pass a bill spending \$820 billion—or roughly \$102 billion per hour of debate. Only 10 percent of the "stimulus" to be spent on 2009. Close to half goes to entities that sponsor or employ (or both) members of the Service Employees International Union, federal, state, and municipal employee unions or other Democrat-controlled unions.

This bill is sent to Congress after President Obama has been in office for seven days. It is 680 pages long. According to my calculations, not one member of Congress read the entire bill before this vote. Obviously, it would have been impossible, given his schedule, for the president to have read the whole thing.

For the amount spent, we could have given every unemployed person in the United States roughly \$75,000. We could give every person who had lost a job and is now passing through long-term unemployment of six months or longer roughly \$300,000.

There has been pork-barrel politics since there has been politics, but the scale of this pork is beyond what had ever been imagined before—and no one can be sure it will actually do much stimulation. Further, no one can be sure that we are not already at the trough of the recession—such that this money will be spent mostly after the recovery is well under way. How long until the debt incurred under this program is so immense that it causes a downgrade in the nation's sovereign debt? What happens to us then?

This has been a punch in the solar plexus to the kind of responsible, far-seeing, mature government processes that are needed to protect America. This is more than pork-barrel—this is a coup for the constituencies of the party in power and against the idea of a responsible government itself. A bleak day. Unfortunately, it is only the latest in a long series of such

days stretching across decades of rule by both parties, to the point where truly responsible government is only a distant echo of our forgotten ancestors.

http://www.nypost.com/seven/01312009/postopinion/opedcolumnists/politics_of_payoff_152831.htm

Moonbat Rips Reagan's Mideast Record:

<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/blogs/?p=52431&cp=1#comment-2832202>

Patriot Corrects Him:

<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/blogs/?p=52431&cp=2#comment-2832922>

"War On Terror" Ends, Obama Starts "Case Against Terror"

by Scott Ott, 23 Jan 2009

... "The battle will now be joined in the Case Against Terror," he said, "not with lethal weapons, but with subpoenas and motions and detailed arguments. The next time one of these criminals destroys one of our skyscrapers, detonates himself in a shopping mall, poisons our water supply or unleashes a dirty bomb in a crowded subway station, he does so with the knowledge that the full power of the U.S. legal system will be unleashed on him, with no limit to the cash damages that his victims' families can collect."

While Bush administration tactics produced nothing measurable, beyond seven years of attack-free living on American soil, the source said, the Case Against Terror will be effective, legal and morally right, thus engendering respect among those who wish to destroy America's way of life...

Full story: <http://www.scrappleface.com/?p=3219>

Mrs. Grievance

by Mark Steyn, 20 Jan 2009

Michelle, *ma belle*: these are words that go together well. She looks fabulous, like a presidential spouse out of some dream movie—glossy hair, triple strand of pearls, vaguely retro suits that subtly remind you she'd be the most glamorous First Lady since Jackie Kennedy.

Michelle, "fear," "cynicism," "corporate America," "downright mean": these are words that go together more problematically...

... Pretend for a moment that the name of the candidate had been excised from the following remarks. Would it seem part of the natural discourse of a constitutional republic of citizen legislators? Or does it sound more appropriate to the leadership cult of Basketkhazia or some other one-man stan?

"[INSERT NAME OF MESSIANIC LEADER HERE] will require you to work. He is going to demand that you shed your cynicism. That you put down your divisions. That you come out of your isolation, that you move out of your comfort zones. That you push yourselves to be better. And that you engage. Barack will never allow you to go back to your lives as usual, uninvolved, uninformed."

Barack, eh? Barack Jong-II? Unlikely. Not too many "comfort zones" in Pyongyang. Barack Turkmenbashi, the late dictator of Turkmenistan? Possibly. But he would have exhorted his people to push themselves to grow more melons (a particular source of national pride). **No, the above words were his wife's vision of life under the Administration of Barack Obama, the transformative Presidential candidate offering change you can believe in—or else.** I hate to sound like I'm walled up in the Shed of Cynicism, but the constitutional right to be "uninvolved" and "uninformed" is one of the most precious, at least if the alternative is being "required" to work at coming out of your isolation and engaging with fellow members of the uninvolved, uninformed masses as we push ourselves to move out of our comfort zone...

More (a lot more!): <http://www.steynonline.com/content/view/1198/>

Listen to Michael Steele guest-hosting the Hugh Hewitt Show on 29 Feb 2008: **Hour 1, Hour 2, Hour 3.**

It's Steele!

by Alexander Burns, 30 Jan 2009

Former Maryland Lt. Gov Michael Steele triumphed over four opponents in the race for Republican National Committee chairman Friday, giving the party its first black chairman as well as a forceful communicator at a time of political weakness.

"This is awesome," Steele told RNC members in a victory speech. "It is with a great deal of humility and a sense of service that I accept and appreciate and thank all of you for the opportunity to serve."

Steele emerged victorious from a lengthy, six-ballot voting process. Running against him were incumbent RNC Chair Mike Duncan, South Carolina Republican Party Chair Katon Dawson, Michigan Republican Party Chair Saul Anuzis, and former Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell.

The Marylander, who entered the race in November, received 46 votes on the first ballot, but gained momentum in later rounds after Duncan faltered on the third ballot and Anuzis withdrew after the fifth. He was declared the winner after collecting 91 votes from a total of 168 on the committee...

More: <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0109/18216.html>

Outreach? Yes. Apology? No.

by Charles Krauthammer, 30 Jan 2009

...In these 20 years, this nation has done more for suffering and oppressed Muslims than any nation, Muslim or non-Muslim, anywhere on earth. **Why are we apologizing?...**

...If Barack Obama wants to say, as he said to al-Arabiya, I have Muslim roots, Muslim family members, have lived in a Muslim country—implying a special affinity that uniquely positions him to establish good relations—that's fine. But it is both false and deeply injurious to this country to draw a historical line dividing America under Obama from a benighted past when Islam was supposedly disrespected and demonized...

...George Bush went to the Islamic Center in Washington six days after 9/11, when the fires of Ground Zero were still smoldering, to declare "Islam is peace," to extend fellowship and friendship to Muslims, to insist that Americans treat them with respect and generosity of spirit...

... In these seven years since 9/11—seven years during which thousands of Muslims rioted all over the world (resulting in the death of more than 100) to avenge a bunch of *cartoons*—there's not been a single anti-Muslim riot in the United States to avenge the greatest massacre in U.S. history. On the contrary. In its aftermath, we elected our first Muslim member of Congress and our first president of Muslim parentage...

...When his self-inflation as redeemer of U.S.-Muslim relations leads him to suggest that pre-Obama America was disrespectful or insensitive or uncaring of Muslims, **he is engaging not just in fiction but in gratuitous disparagement of the country he is now privileged to lead.**

All of it: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/29/AR2009012903444.html>

Mark Steyn on Obama's al-Arabiya interview

Hugh Hewitt Show, 29 Jan 2009

...Well, you don't have to be gay, an oppressed homosexual about to be executed. You don't have to be a woman who's being sold to an arranged child marriage. You just have to be a moderate, centrist Arab intellectual in, say, Cairo or Amman, and you listen to **Obama sucking up to these creeps**, and there's nothing for you in it.

What he's doing is he says, he's saying to hell with the Bush freedom agenda. We just want to get back to schmoozing the fetid Arab dictatorships and the mullahs in Tehran all over again. And so if you're a gay or a woman, you're out of there. And as I said, if you're a moderate Arab who just would like to have a free society in Cairo or Amman or wherever, you're out of it, too. You're on the Obama horizon. It was a pathetic, disgraceful Jimmy Carter speech...

<http://hughhewitt.townhall.com/talkradio/transcripts/Transcript.aspx?ContentGuid=b01cee7b-83d0-4315-af88-5eb93fdab5a4>

Dodd of Indignation

Wall Street Journal editorial, 30 Jan 2009

Senate Banking Chairman Chris Dodd has been in typically indignant form this week, opining on the financial crisis. Before his Tuesday hearing on Bernard Madoff, he demanded that regulators get to the bottom of any crime: "American investors deserve an explanation and the responsible parties must be held accountable!" And yesterday the Connecticut Senator denounced Wall Street bonuses and said, "I am urging—in fact, not urging, demanding—that the Treasury Department figure out some way to get the money back."

Pardon us, Senator, but how about taking your own advice?

We refer to his promise to release mortgage documents for the two properties that he and his wife refinanced with Countrywide Financial in 2003. In June a former Countrywide loan officer charged that Mr. Dodd received preferential rates and had fees waived on those loans as part of a VIP program the company had for "friends" of the company's then-CEO Angelo Mozilo. Mr. Dodd first issued a denial and then, days later, acknowledged that he was a "VIP" with Countrywide but said he thought it was "more of a courtesy." **In late June he pledged to make all pertinent documents public "at some point." We're still waiting.**

Increasing accountability is critical to rebuilding public trust in the financial system, as the Senator keeps telling us. Countrywide was one of the most irresponsible lenders in the subprime frenzy but it did not act alone. One reason it could pump out so much bad paper is because Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were around to buy it and then resell it with a taxpayer guarantee. Messrs. Dodd and Mozilo were two of Fan and Fred's biggest supporters, with Mr. Dodd playing a role in pushing the companies to take on "affordable housing" loans from outfits like Countrywide...

More: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123327803577131539.html>

President Obama Made a Rash Decision on Gitmo

by John Yoo, 29 Jan 2009

...His new order amounts to requiring—on penalty of prosecution—that CIA interrogators be polite. Coercive measures are unwisely banned with no exceptions, regardless of the danger confronting the country.

Eliminating the Bush system will mean that we will get no more information from captured al Qaeda terrorists. Every prisoner will have the right to a lawyer (which they will surely demand), the right to remain silent, and the right to a speedy trial.

The first thing any lawyer will do is tell his clients to shut up. The KSMs or Abu Zubaydahs of the future will respond to no verbal questioning or trickery—which is precisely why the Bush administration felt compelled to use more coercive measures in the first place. Our soldiers and agents in the field will have to run more risks as they must secure physical evidence at the point of capture and maintain a chain of custody that will stand up to the standards of a civilian court...

Full article: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123318955345726797.html>

Trust me—the experts here at Davos don't know either

Steer clear of economic forecasts—but remember that things are unlikely to be as bad as the doom-mongers say

by Anatole Kaletsky, 29 Jan 2009

...After each of these unthinkable disasters, the prophets of doom declared that capitalism was finished, that markets would never recover and this was the biggest crisis since the Great Depression. Yet every time the world economy recovered and capitalism survived. A lovely illustration of this syndrome was brought to my attention this week.

Denis Gartmann, a prominent US investment adviser, quoted an academic friend who had studied media reports of the US recession of the 1990s. This was a selection of comments from the US press in early 1991: "There is no question that this is the worst economic time since the Great Depression"; "Forecasts for a weak recovery in 1992 suggest the period since 1990 will be the worst for the economy since the Great Depression"; "This recession is hitting white-collar workers more heavily than any since the Great Depression of the 1930s." And so on.

Most of these comments were published near the low point of the 1990-91 recession—a recession that, far from being the deepest and longest since the 1930s, turned out to be the shallowest and shortest to date...

...The upshot is that world economy does now face the greatest deflationary pressures since the 1930s. But against these deflationary forces some equally unprecedented expansionary forces are arrayed: the lowest interest rates in history; the fastest fall in oil and commodity prices; the biggest peacetime public works programmes; and, most importantly, a willingness and ability by governments to print money and support their financial systems with open-ended guarantees...

Full column: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/anatole_kaletsky/article5607339.ece January 29, 2009

Obama Reassures Arabia's Despots They're Safe

America's diplomacy of freedom is officially over.

by Fouad Ajami, 28 Jan 2009

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123310499999722371.html>

The European Social Welfare State Bill

by *Jim Manzi*, 27 Jan 2009

...What does this sound like to you? It sounds to me like a wish list for the left wing of the Democratic Party.

I tried to go quickly through the spending for all categories and crudely map them to the **OECD classification system** that allows for the comparison of spending across governments in the developed world. The huge categories of spending under this bill that I could map to categories other than "General Spending" are in Social Protection (~\$90 billion), Education (~\$90 billion) and Environment (~\$55 billion). Interestingly, Defense represents only about 3% of the spending in the bill (as opposed to 12% of U.S. government spending overall, or about 3% of French overall government spending as a point of comparison) and Public Safety represents only about 1% of spending in the bill (as opposed to about 6% of U.S. government spending overall, or about 2% of French government spending overall).

In other words, the net effect of this bill is to shift the distribution of U.S. government spending as a whole away from defense and public safety and toward social programs: for good or ill, to make the U.S. into more of a European-style social welfare state. Because the amount of spending is so huge, this will be a material, not notional, shift. Eventually, we will emerge from this recession/depression/whatever it's going to be. When that happens, is this really the kind of government we're going to want?...

<http://corner.nationalreview.com/post/?q=NDBiYjY3OWJjOWMyMWFjYmZjMjU2MTAwNDg1OGExNTA=>

The Amazing Story Behind the Global Warming Scam

by *John Coleman*, 28 Jan 2009

<http://www.kusi.com/weather/colemanscorner/38574742.html>

Trying to Bulldoze Free Speech

by *Carla Main and Roger Kimball*, 28 Jan 2009

...Eminent domain—the taking of private property by the state for public use—has always been a contentious subject. It was recently thrust into the spotlight in the aftermath of *Kelo v. New London*, when the Supreme Court ruled, 5-4, that the Constitution allows the government to take private property from one person to give to another private person when doing so may improve the local economy, raise tax revenue, or have some other hypothetical public "benefit."...

Bulldozed explores an economic development "taking" in the small city of Freeport, Texas. It follows the struggle of a family named Gore to save the shrimp processing business founded by their grandfather from being destroyed. A plan to build a commercial marina in Freeport would seize critical waterfront property from the Gores, making it impossible for their business to survive.

By deciding to fight, the Gores embarked on a years-long odyssey that cost them nearly half a million dollars in legal fees and took them to federal court, state court, the state legislature in Austin, and finally to the streets of Freeport in a grassroots effort to organize citizen ballots to stop the marina from being built. When they set up a website that talked about Royall, he sued them for libel. In fighting all of these battles, they experienced the slow-moving, complex mechanism of the American judicial system...

More: http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/01/trying_to_bulldoze_free_speech.html

McDowell warns against re-imposing Fairness Doctrine, cites Obama's opposition

Reimposition Could Undermine Kids TV Regulations, Public Radio.

by *John Eggerton*, *Multichannel News*, 28 Jan 2009

http://www.broadcastingcable.com/article/162912-McDowell_Warns_Against_Re_Imposing_Fairness_Doctrine_Cites_Obama_s_Opposition.php

Hill Republican: Stimulus aids illegal immigrants

AP, 29 Jan 2009

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2009/01/29/america/Stimulus-Illegal-Immigrants.php>

Mr. Bolt revisits, in words and pictures, that famed "respect and partnership." Mr. Boot provides more details.

Obama dreams of a past that's rosy—with blood

by Andrew Bolt, 29 Jan 2009

An astonishing line from Barack Obama in his first TV interview as president, that suggests **he knows next to nothing about American history or the Middle East:**

...the same respect and partnership that America had with the Muslim world as recently as 20 or 30 years ago, there's no reason why we can't restore that...

Continue: http://blogs.news.com.au/heraldsun/andrewbolt/index.php/heraldsun/comments/obama_dreams_of_a_past_thats_rosy_with_blood

20 or 30 Years Ago?

by Max Boot, 28 Jan 2009

...It turns out that in 1989 U.S. fighters shot down two Libyan jets over the Gulf of Sidra. The last Soviet troops left Afghanistan, creating a vacuum that would eventually be filled by the Taliban. Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa calling for Salman Rushdie's death for "blasphemy." Hundreds died in Lebanon's long-running civil war while Hezbollah militants were torturing to death U.S. Marine Colonel William "Rich" Higgins, who had been kidnapped the previous year while serving as a UN peacekeeper in Lebanon...

Read it all: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/blogs/index.php/boot/52431>

Barack Obama fails in his first week as President

<http://paracom.paramountcommunication.com/hostedemail/email.htm?h=f06d28414f5c0702ebb8e4dc9b482112&CID=3474569408&ch=E88FE20809E1C351BC2E600F9D017D81>

This month, someone is looking up at America, from his eternal residence in the depths of Hell, and smiling.

"The American people will never knowingly adopt socialism. But, under the name of 'liberalism,' they will adopt every fragment of the socialist program, until one day America will be a socialist nation, without knowing how it happened...I no longer need to run as a Presidential Candidate for the Socialist Party. The Democratic Party has adopted our platform."

—Norman Thomas, six-time Socialist Party candidate for President, 1944

(*Hat tip: Greg K.*)

Hollow victory: Republicans deliver slap in the face to Barack Obama

by Toby Harnden, 29 Jan 2009

President Barack Obama got the \$825 (or \$1.2 trillion over a decade) stimulus package through the House of Representatives, but the 244 to 188 vote is a hollow victory indeed. Without a single Republican voting for the bill, his high-profile visit to Capitol Hill on Tuesday came to exactly naught—at least on the House side.

Obama vowed to change Washington and usher in a new post-partisan era. The mood music and optics were pitch perfect as he trekked up to the Hill. Republicans praised his gesture, welcomed his sincere demeanour and appreciated his willingness to listen. Problem was, he wanted only to listen and did not want to act on what Republicans said...

...His failure to get even the squishiest moderate Republican—including the 11 entertained in the White House by Rahm Emanuel last night—to back him is not merely a big score for Rep Eric Cantor, Republican Whip, and the rest of the GOP leadership. It also shows that it is not just Fox, the loony Right or Rush Limbaugh—or however else you might want to characterise the opposition in order to marginalise it—who had grave misgivings about the content of the bill.

The Democratic leadership on Capitol Hill badly miscalculated by treating the bill as a victor's charter. Not that it seemed to bother Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House, who grinned from ear to ear as she announced the result of the vote. Obama said yesterday he did not feel he had ownership of the bill. Be that as it may, if it goes through the Senate in similar fashion and is signed into law then—the efforts of Pelosio and Senator Harry Reid notwithstanding—it will be his and his alone.

http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/toby_harnden/blog/2009/01/29/hollow_victory_republicans_deliver_slap_in_the_face_to_barack_obama

Hiking fuel rules won't get America working

Detroit News editorial, 27 Jan 2009

...Common sense would suggest that automakers submerged in red ink won't be able to pony up the estimated tens of billions of dollars the latest government mandates will require in research and development costs. And that allowing individual states to supersede federal tailpipe emission standards will make a joke of interstate commerce.

And yet Obama went ahead with orders to the Environmental Protection Agency to review whether California and other states should be allowed to set their own emissions standards. The EPA is expected to quickly grant the states that power, something the Bush administration opposed.

That will place the automakers at the mercy of the most environmentally goofy states—such as California and Vermont—and subject them to regulations that vary across the country. For example, California's standard would translate to 44 miles per gallon in 2020 compared with the federal standard of 35 mpg...

...The technology required to meet the standards Obama and California are imposing will add another \$5,000 to \$15,000 to the sticker price of a vehicle. That will make owning a new car a very elite experience. Average Americans, who will also see the price of nearly everything else they purchase soar as regulatory extremism spreads to other areas of the economy, will be priced out of the new car market. And American auto workers will lose jobs...

All of it: <http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090127/OPINION01/901270309/1008>

Economic Cures Are Like Booze for an Alcoholic

by Caroline Baum, 27 Jan 2009

Someone returning to Earth from a yearlong sojourn in outer space could be excused for feeling disoriented.

After all, when said space traveler departed our fair planet, the U.S. economy was buckling under the weight of the burst housing bubble. The blame game was in full swing, with the villains ranging from **Alan Greenspan** and his easy money policies to consumers borrowing and spending beyond their means to financial institutions enabling profligate spending to a misallocation of capital to housing.

Fast forward one year, the crisis is still going strong, the villains are still under attack, yet something curious has happened: The policies and actions responsible for the economy's illness are now being prescribed as cures...

Read on: http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&refer=columnist_baum&sid=aPJkziibdxM8

Obama, Fight The Green Agenda

by Joel Kotkin, 27 Jan 2009

...We should not underestimate the power of these extreme greens. They can count on the media to cover climate and other green issues with all the impartiality of the Soviet-era *Pravda*. Stories that buttress the notion of man-made global warming—like reports of long-term warming in Antarctica—receive lavish attention in *The New York Times* and on Yahoo!

Meanwhile, other reports, such as **new NASA studies** indicating cooling sea temperatures since 2003, or the implications of two unusually cool winters, are relegated to the mostly conservative blogosphere...

...In fact, lockstep "official" science is often very wrong—from the pre-Copernican view of the solar system, to the decades spent ridiculing the now undisputed reality that continents drift over time, to eugenics or even, back in the 1970s, concern over "**global cooling**."

The past also suggests we should be particularly leery of purveyors of impending natural apocalypse. Holdren, the new science czar, for example, is a longtime disciple of the largely discredited neo-Malthusian Paul Ehrlich, who in the early '80s bluntly predicted that global mass starvation was imminent and that critical metals would suffer severe shortages. Neither calamity has occurred—even as both global population and economic activity have surged dramatically...

...We can only solve America's energy needs by blending a variety of alternative solutions—renewables, conservation, nuclear—with fossil fuel-based energy. This approach, which would vary by region, would also help revive manufacturing, agriculture and other productive industries. A renewables-only approach, in contrast, would impose very high prices and require massive subsidization, leading to greater dependence on overseas energy and also, perhaps, to a permanently shrunken economy...

Complete article: http://www.forbes.com/2009/01/26/green-climate-energy-oped-cx_jk_0127kotkin.html

Tell the Democrat Party

what you think of the arrogant Lord Obama, the clueless Nancy Pelosi, the feckless Harry Reid...and the great Rush Limbaugh. You can do it **here** and **here**. Do it at both places, just for good measure. But first, familiarize yourself with **The Obama-Limbaugh Bipartisan Stimulus Plan of 2009**, which Mr. Limbaugh unveiled on Monday

—Don John, 28 Jan 2009

Pliability Journalism

Change Comes to the Associated Press.

by James Taranto, 26 Jan 2009

More than 144 hours into Barack Obama's presidency, the economy is still in recession, the country is still at war, and in many parts of the country it's still cold outside. Citizens are growing impatient: Wasn't President Obama supposed to bring change?

Yet one institution has changed dramatically, and in a very short time: the press. After spending the Bush years as a voice of opposition, American journalists have by and large turned on a dime and become cheerleaders for the man in power.

A case in point is the Associated Press, perhaps the nation's premier "straight news" outfit. During the Bush years, the AP introduced a new reportorial idiom called "**accountability journalism**," whose goal is "to report whether government officials are doing the job for which they were elected and keeping the promises they make." Turns out they weren't.

But the AP's new idiom, which we hereby name "pliability journalism," aims to show that everything is completely different from the bad old days of a week ago and before. A Saturday dispatch by **Liz Sidoti**, titled "Obama Breaks From Bush, Avoids Divisive Stands," shows how it works:

Barack Obama opened his presidency by breaking sharply from George W. Bush's unpopular administration, but he mostly avoided divisive partisan and ideological stands. He focused instead on fixing the economy, repairing a battered world image and cleaning up government...

Read the rest: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123299188671616299.html>

This beautiful group of 15 photos shows a country that's recovering—relatively quickly—from 40 years of hell. For the first time since the 1960s, personal safety and freedom are rising rapidly. A responsible and representative government is developing. Public confidence is growing, and it may well lead to a free and prosperous economy before long. It's funny, though, that apparently none of this was happening before November 4, 2008. No sireee! *Time* and CNN only saw fit to show us these wonders a month *after* the U.S. presidential election.

Life Returns to Iraq's Streets

by *Time* photographer Yuri Kozyrev, 2 Dec 2008

http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1863348_1809057,00.html

(Hat tip: Tony C.)

Moonbat of the Month: Bob Herbert

Don John, 27 Jan 2009

It is clear that the *New York Times*' Bob Herbert grew up in a culture of victimhood, where no one had any responsibility for his own lot in life or any of his own problems—except "the rich"—who were responsible for EVERYONE's problems. His January 26 column "**The Same Old Song**" is so full of simplistic, economically illiterate, paint-by-numbers inanities because he views the entire world through the lenses of class warfare.

This sort of economic commentary is worthless, because it takes no account of what motivates people to get out of bed every morning and go out and produced something of value to other people. It ignores the factor of *incentives*—in other words, human nature. This, and not government, is what fuels economic prosperity.

Here are eight recent economic columns that are based not on the false religion of Mr. Herbert's *Old Time Liberal*

Hymnal, but the real-life track record of economic experience and practices.

Watch Out for Stimulus 'Leaks,' by *George Melloan*

Growing Ourselves Out of a Recession, by *Michael S. Malone*

Planning is Chaos: the Fraud of Government Intervention, by *Robert Tracinski*

Obama's Race to the Past, by *Peter Ferrara*

Skeptical of Obama's Stimulus Plan, by *Jonah Goldberg*

The GOP Wises Up, by *Jennifer Rubin*

The Federal Department of Economic Recovery, by *Robert Tracinski*

Tax Cut Mirage, by *Peter Ferrara*

Apparently, 70 years of the centrally-planned Soviet economy and 40 years of Iron Curtain slavery are not enough to convince Mr. Herbert of the vanity of Marxist theories. They're enough, though, for **Vaclav Klaus**, who had to live under the jackboot of the class-warfare commissars for the first 48 years of his life, but is now President of the Czech Republic.

Of all Bob Herbert's thoughtless and blind assumptions, perhaps the most pernicious is the notion that the Panic of 2008 and the ensuing recession were caused by Republican policies, not Democrat ones. That canard is utterly Fisked, rebutted, disproved, and refuted **here, here, here, here, here, and here.**

Lastly, here's a wonderful video clip of **Margaret Thatcher** on 22 Nov 1990, exposing the entire left side of the House of Commons as nothing but a pack of envy-driven Marxist class-warriors.

How pro-life proceeds in Obama era

by *Ruth Ann Dailey, 26 Jan 2009*

...Polls continue to show Americans deeply conflicted. When questioned about general attitudes (for or against abortion, in all cases, in most cases), a slight majority continues to favor abortion rights, but according to the Pew Research Center, the percentage has fallen overall from 59 to 54 percent since 1995. That was the year the term "partial-birth abortion" was coined.

In August 2007, five months after the Supreme Court upheld the federal ban on partial-birth abortions, Pew found that 75 percent of Americans believe this abortion method should be illegal. Almost as many (73 percent) favor parental notification laws.

Though we're divided on whether abortion should be legal, overwhelmingly numbers of us approve measures to discourage it. We recoil from methods of performing it when confronted with their barbarism. Turning public opinion away from partial-birth abortion was a significant victory for pro-life activists, and it happened as Mr. Clinton, a Democratic pro-choice president, repeatedly vetoed the bipartisan legislation. Such victories should point the way forward.

With a president now in office whose votes on "born alive" legislation put him to the left of the entire U.S. Senate, perhaps pro-lifers' next step should focus on the controversial area of fetal pain. Rather than just defending current pro-life measures against threatened repeal, pro-lifers should ask compassionate Americans to extend to sentient fetuses (those at the midpoint of gestation, and possibly earlier) the same protections we extend to newborns—even to newborns of non-human species...

All of it: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09026/944511-152.stm>

Instead, they should have been dropped from a plane over the North Atlantic.

Ex-Guantánamo inmates return to militancy in Yemen

Militants in Yemen threatened Monday to strike the U.S. Embassy for a second time.

by *Caryle Murphy, 26 Jan 2009*

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0127/p01s03-wome.html>

Gunshots Fired Near U.S. Embassy in Yemen

by *Ahmed al-Haj, 26 Jan 2009*

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090126/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_yemen_embassy_shooting;_ylt=AiydA8E1Yr5Rn2s3xm.w17BH2ocA

Watch Out for Stimulus 'Leaks'

The architect of Kennedy's tax cuts would have been skeptical of the Obama plan.

by *George Melloan, 26 Jan 2009*

In economics textbooks the "leaky bucket" principle holds that when government transfers income or wealth from rich to poor a lot leaks out and is wasted. Some estimates put the leakage at most of what is meant for the poor, especially if you measure the damage to economic efficiency from the reduced work incentives of both the donor and the recipient...

...Circumstantial evidence that "stimulus" packages actually delay recovery can be derived from the Keynes-guided New Deal of the 1930s, which put large faith in federal deficits as a Depression cure. Federal debt climbed to 43.86% of GDP in 1939 from 16.34% in 1929 with very little relief from hard times. Huge Keynesian deficits in the 1970s did not arrest stagflation. The misery index, combining inflation and unemployment, soared above 20%...

...The central defect of government bailouts and stimulus packages is that the money is allocated through a political process...

...Socialist economies, where governments decide how to allocate resources, are notoriously less efficient than market-capitalist economies. As in Washington, every politician demands his share. The late Abram Bergson of Harvard, after prodigious research, concluded that the old Soviet Union—the ultimate in socialism—employed capital only about half as efficiently as the U.S. That is one reason the Soviets collapsed from economic exhaustion...

Full essay: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123293070246014141.html>

Three Economic Crises In One

by *Robert Samuelson, 26 Jan 2009*

...In practice, the stimulus could disappoint. Parts of the House package look like a giant political slush fund, with money sprinkled to dozens of programs. There's \$50 million for the National Endowment for the Arts, \$200 million for the Teacher Incentive Fund and \$15.6 billion for increased Pell Grants to college students. Some of these proposals, whatever their other merits, won't produce many new jobs.

Another problem: construction spending—for schools, clinics, roads—may start so slowly that there's little immediate economic boost. The Congressional Budget Office examined \$356 billion in spending proposals and concluded that only 7 percent would be spent in 2009 and 31 percent in 2010.

Assume, however, that the stimulus is a smashing success. It cushions the recession. Unemployment (now: 7.2 percent) stops rising at, say, 8 percent instead of 10 percent. Still, a temporary stimulus can't fuel a permanent recovery. That requires a strong financial system to supply an expanding economy's credit needs. How we get that isn't clear.

The pillars of a successful financial system have crumbled: the ability to assess risk; adequate capital to absorb losses; and trust among banks, investors and traders...

...If government oversight becomes too intrusive or punitive, it might deter much-needed infusions of private capital into banks...

...If China and other Asian nations try to export their way out of trouble, they're likely to be disappointed. Any import surge into the United States would weaken an incipient American recovery and probably trigger a protectionist reaction...

...Indeed, if the rest of the world doesn't buy more from America, any U.S. recovery may be feeble. What's needed are policies that correct the imbalances in spending and saving...

All of it: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/25/AR2009012501772.html>

A TV ad with a surprise ending.

Life: Imagine the Potential

video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2CaBR3z85c>

The pertinent historical facts which are always denied by the *bien-pensant* class.

Israel's Fight for Survival

by *Bruce Thornton, 23 Jan 2009*

...The media coverage of the current Israeli offensive against Hamas and its rockets in Gaza bears all the signs of this

irrational and incoherent hatred of the only country in the Middle East in which the rule of law, human rights, and political freedom — all the boons we Westerners take for granted — are respected in ways impossible to duplicate in any Muslim Arab country.

Just as with the Lebanon offensive of 2006, the Western media report events in terms of a prefabricated narrative shorn of historical fact and context. In this mythic paradigm, Israel is the neo-colonial, neo-imperialist minion of late capitalism, an outpost of Western aggression and exploitation of the dark-skinned Third-World "other" whose land has been stolen and whose people have been displaced...

...This narrative is gratifying to those Westerners who think that a hatred of one's own civilization is a sign of intellectual sophistication. But it's possible only by dint of massive historical ignorance. Take, for example, the very term "Palestinian," used as though it referred to a distinct people. Yet the majority of so-called Palestinians are indistinguishable from the Arab Muslims in Syria, Jordan, or Lebanon. The very word itself is from the Latin word for "Philistine," and was the Orwellian name the Romans gave the region after it destroyed what was left of the Jewish nation that had existed in the region for a thousand years. Later the term was an Ottoman name for an administrative district, and as such was used to describe the Jews who lived there as well as the Arabs.

...The current usage of "Palestinian," then, does not reflect historical reality but rather political propaganda whose purpose is to obscure historical fact, just as the Romans had attempted to erase the Jewish nation. Once the Arab world painfully realized that it could not defeat Israel militarily, it cast the war against Israel in terms that would appeal to Western ideals — as a struggle of national self-determination, an ideal, by the way, alien to Islamic history and ideology. Now those wretched "Palestinian refugees," who are in fact a creation of the Arab states that refused to integrate their brother Arabs into their own nations, became photogenic icons of suffering used to undermine Israel's legitimacy in the eyes of Westerners addled by noble-savage multiculturalism and trite Marxist critiques of capitalism and "imperialism."...

Read it all: frontpagemag.com/articles/Read.aspx?GUID=AEA03498-5631-4581-84C9-ADB121851CA6

Delightful vitriol from the *Asia Times*.

President Oxybarama

by Spengler, 22 Jan 2009

United States President Barack Obama "signaled a commitment to pragmatism not just as a governing strategy but as a basic value," according to unintentionally hilarious inauguration dispatch by the New York Times' Washington bureau chief David Sanger. Pragmatism, of course, is not a value, but rather the triumph of expediency over values. To call pragmatism a "basic value" is an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms, like "studied ignorance," or "impassioned apathy." Obama had plenty of that today, too...

...This half-Luo tribesman from Hawaii whose African father had no connection whatsoever with the West African ancestors of American slaves, was not imbued, but rather hued, with significance. His melanin carried the meaning, which is to say that he was judged by the color of his skin rather than the content of his character, in a precise reversal of Martin Luther King Jr's famous phrase. America's African Americans, who have failed to produce a credible leader in the two generations since the Civil Rights Act of 1965, broke America's last color bar, hailed this carpetbagger as a savior...

...Words failed not only Obama, as Sanger noted, but his preacher and poetess as well... you can visit the [Adolescent Poetry Generator](http://elsewhere.org) at elsewhere.org and get a new (and often better poem than Alexander's) every time you refresh the page...

...When Kennedy warned that Americans would bear any burden and pay any price in the cause of freedom, he faced a ruthless and powerful contender in the Soviet Union, whose power still was ascending. Obama observes that "our power alone cannot protect us" (something else than power is supposed to protect the United States?). He added oxymoronically that "our power grows through its prudent use," and through "the tempering qualities of humility and restraint."

I am trying to recall the humility and restraint that Franklin D Roosevelt displayed towards Japan and Germany during World War II, or Ronald Reagan towards the Soviets during the Cold War. Perhaps I misheard what Reagan said in Berlin: "Mr Gorbachev, in all humility, and without trying to be provocative, I would like to suggest that perhaps you should consider the possibility of tearing down this wall, if that wouldn't be inconvenient, of course."...

The whole thing is brilliant: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Front_Page/KA22Aa01.html

A devastating takedown of the pretentious Hollywood pansies who roll over for Dear Leader Obama.

I Pledge

by Iowahawk, 20 Jan 2009

This Is No Time to Panic

Our economy has recovered before and can do so again.

by John Stossel, 25 Jan 2009 (Feb 2 issue)

...The words "economic crisis" are accepted as fact. Why? Why is America in "crisis"?...In the summer of '82, the Dow was at 776. At 8,228, as of this writing, stocks have risen 1,047 percent in 25 years. America is still way ahead of the game...Today's 7.2 percent unemployment rate is higher than we've grown used to, but we've experienced that rate 16 times over the past 35 years. And it pales in comparison to the 25 percent rate of the Depression era.

...Have we become so fragile that we can't handle any recession? The 11 recessions since World War II are part of the "creative destruction" that ultimately drives our economy, yet today politicians act as if they can insulate us from pain with bailouts and "stimulus packages." Even smart people like Paul Volcker say, "This crisis is different." Politicians say things like this because they're too close to the problem. They've panicked. I saw this again and again doing consumer reporting: People closest to problems often panic beyond reason...

...Vice President Biden informed ABC News that "Everyone...says the scope of this package has to be bold. It has to be big." Everyone? Hardly. More than 100 prominent economists signed a petition against the stimulus package, and more than 200 signed a petition against the financial bailout...

Read it all: <http://weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/016/060scqkh.asp>

The Gay Community Is Losing Friends

by Debra Saunders, 25 Jan 2009

I voted against Proposition 22, the same-sex marriage ban, in 2000. I figured that if same-sex couples want to marry, why not let them? I believe in marriage. I don't want gay people to feel marginalized. But 61 percent of California voters thought otherwise...

...A slow burn has been building since 2004, when San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom decided that he could flout the state marriage laws and authorize same-sex weddings in City Hall...

...Then in 2008, by a 4-3 margin, the California Supreme Court decided to reward Newsom's law-breaking... Justice Marvin Baxter's dissenting opinion scolded the majority, noting that the court "does not have the right to erase, then recast, the age-old definition of marriage, as virtually all societies have understood it, in order to satisfy its own contemporary notions of equality and justice."

That sentence hit home. There has been too little recognition of the fact that marriage has been limited to unions with the opposite sex since about as long as there have been laws. Activists would argue that Prop. 8 "took away" their rights—as if the five months between the George decision and Prop. 8's passage outweigh thousands of years of human history.

After Canada legalized same-sex marriage in 2005, the government commissioned a study to debunk the argument that same-sex marriage laws could lead to the unintended consequence of legalized polygamy. Oops. The authors supported recognizing polygamy...

The whole thing: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/01/25/INT315E22O.DTL&type=printable>

A 9/11 family member chides the new President for closing Guantanamo terror camp

by Michael Burke, 25 Jan 2009

With his shameful order to close Guantanamo Bay, President Obama has perfectly filled the stereotype of the classic clueless ultra-Liberal—the one who can generate great passion for the rights of the guilty defendant and none for the innocent victim.

With a single stroke of the pen, Obama has delayed justice for the victims of 9/11, and in essence granted a reprieve for Al Qaeda mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the architect of 9/11.

America does not honor our "rule of law and the rights of man" as he put in his inauguration speech by such an action. Instead, this nation abdicated its duty to justice...

Continue: http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2009/01/25/2009-01-25_a_911_family_member_chides_the_new_presi.html

Limbaugh Responds to Obama

posted by Byron York, 24 Jan 2009

According to an [account](#) in the New York Post, President Barack Obama yesterday told Republican leaders, "You can't just listen to Rush Limbaugh and get things done." With George W. Bush now off the stage, it may be that Obama and some of his fellow Democrats view Limbaugh, and not John Boehner, Mitch McConnell, or any other elected official, as the true leader of the Republican opposition. This morning I asked Rush for his thoughts on all this, and here is his response:

There are two things going on here. One prong of the Great Unifier's plan is to isolate elected Republicans from their voters and supporters by making the argument about me and not about his plan. He is hoping that these Republicans will also publicly denounce me and thus marginalize me. And who knows? Are ideological and philosophical ties enough to keep the GOP loyal to their voters? Meanwhile, the effort to foist all blame for this mess on the private sector continues unabated when most of the blame for this current debacle can be laid at the feet of the Congress and a couple of former presidents. And there is a strategic reason for this.

Secondly, here is a combo quote from the meeting:

"If we don't get this done we (the Democrats) could lose seats and I could lose re-election. But we can't let people like Rush Limbaugh stall this. That's how things don't get done in this town."

To make the argument about me instead of his plan makes sense from his perspective. Obama's plan would buy votes for the Democrat Party, in the same way FDR's New Deal established majority power for 50 years of Democrat rule, and it would also simultaneously seriously damage any hope of future tax cuts. It would allow a majority of American voters to guarantee no taxes for themselves going forward...

Lots more, from America's Doctor of Democracy:

<http://corner.nationalreview.com/post/?q=OTU5MjE3MmQ0NWU1Zjc1YzYyMDE1NzNmZmM2MzYxMmI=>

Freedom looms for terrorist

Associated Press National Investigative Team,, 24 Jan 2009

In 1973, a young terrorist named Khalid Duhham Al-Jawary entered the United States and quickly began plotting an audacious attack in New York City.

He built three powerful bombs — bombs powerful enough to kill, maim and destroy — and put them in rental cars scattered around town, near Israeli targets.

The plot failed. The explosive devices did not detonate, and Al-Jawary fled the country, escaping prosecution for nearly two decades — until he was convicted of terrorism charges in Brooklyn and sentenced to 30 years in federal penitentiary. But his time is up...

Read on: <http://www.comcast.net/articles/news-general/20090124/Mystery.Terrorist/print/>

A Free Pass for the Indispensable Man

by Jonah Goldberg, 24 Jan 2009

During the hothouse days of the presidential campaign, Joe Wurzelbacher became famous because he got Barack Obama to confess that he likes to spread the wealth around. Better known as Joe the Plumber, the Toledo, Ohio, laborer became the target of bottomless venom and scorn because he seemed like an obstacle to Obama's coronation.

One of the main talking points, particularly among left-wing bloggers, was that Wurzelbacher was a tax cheat because, it was revealed by ABC News, he had a tax lien of \$1,182 for back Ohio state taxes. This fueled the argument that he was a fraud, his opinion didn't matter. Nothing to see here, folks. Move along.

Fast-forward to today. Timothy Geithner, President Obama's choice to be the next treasury secretary, quite clearly tried to defraud the government of tens of thousands in payroll taxes while working at the International Monetary Fund...

...Obama has made much of Wall Street greed. He and his vice president talk about paying taxes like it is a holy sacrament. They both belittled Wurzelbacher for daring to suggest that the Democratic Party isn't much concerned with how the little guy can get ahead.

Heck, Obama and pretty much the entire Democratic party insist that they speak for the little guy. But it appears they fight for the big guys...

The whole story: http://www.jewishworldreview.com/cols/jonah012309.php3?printer_friendly

Barney Frank's hypocrisy

Boston Herald editorial, 24 Jan 2009

Ah, the dirty little secret is out. That \$700 billion TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program) bill was in part simply a variation on congressional pork—except this time the recipients were banks with friends in high places.

One of those powerful friends was Rep. Barney Frank (D-Newton), chairman of the House Financial Services Committee. And one of the recipients of a \$12 million infusion of federal cash was the troubled OneUnited Bank in Boston—a bank that had already been accused of "unsafe and unsound banking practices." Its CEO, Kevin Cohee, had also been criticized by regulators for "excessive" pay that included a Porsche.

Frank admits he included language in the TARP legislation specifically designed to bail out OneUnited. He also acknowledges contacting officials at the Treasury Department about the bank's bailout application. "I believe it would have been a very big mistake to put the only black bank (in Massachusetts) out of business," Frank said. Besides, he insists, "It was a case of the federal government causing the problem."

Causing the bad loans OneUnited made? Or would that go back to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which Frank so staunchly defended earlier on?

Frank has never failed to amaze us with his ability to defend the indefensible and to staunchly uphold the double standard. It's his special talent.

http://www.bostonherald.com/news/opinion/editorials/view/2009_01_24_Frank_s_hypocrisy/

Mr. Bawer ably recounts the fates of the Netherlands' three previous anti-Islamist leaders: Pim Fortuyn, murdered by a leftist; Theo van Gogh, murdered by an Islamist; and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, hounded out of the country. Geert Wilders has lived under round-the-clock armed guard for years. But apparently that's not enough for the multicultural ninnies who wish to surrender to the onslaught of intolerant Islam.

Submission in the Netherlands

The trial of Geert Wilders represents another blow against Dutch freedom.

by Bruce Bawer, 22 January 2009

<http://www.city-journal.org/2009/eon0122bb.html>

Watch Geert Wilders' short film, *Fitna*: <http://www.floppingaces.net/2008/03/29/fitna-goes-viral/>

Our Struggle for the Soul of our Nation

by Robert P. George, 21 Jan 2009

Thirty-six years ago tomorrow, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down its infamous decision in *Roe v. Wade* and its companion case *Doe v. Bolton*. In the name of a generalized "right to privacy" allegedly implicit in the Due Process Clause of the Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment, seven justices created a license to kill the unborn.

These men probably had no idea that they were unleashing a struggle for the soul of the nation. Five had been appointed by Republican presidents—two by Eisenhower, three by Nixon. Four of these five were regarded as "conservative," "law and order" judges: Warren E. Burger, Potter Stewart, Lewis F. Powell, and Harry Blackmun. All no doubt believed that legal abortion was a humane and enlightened policy, one that would ease the burdens of many women and girls and relieve the enormous cost to society of a high birth rate among indigent (often unmarried) women. They seemed blithely to assume that abortion would be easily integrated into the fabric of American social and political life. They were wrong on all counts...

Read the entire essay: <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/viewarticle.php?selectedarticle=2009.01.22.001.pdart>

Like, what's up with the NYT? Maybe, like all partisan Democrats, they *now* feel it's OK to be patriotic again.

Freed by the U.S., Saudi Becomes a Qaeda Chief

by Robert F. Worth, 23 Jan 2009

BEIRUT, Lebanon — The emergence of a former Guantánamo Bay detainee as the deputy leader of Al Qaeda's

Yemeni branch has underscored the potential complications in carrying out the executive order President Obama signed Thursday that the detention center be shut down within a year.

The militant, Said Ali al-Shihri, is suspected of involvement in a deadly bombing of the United States Embassy in Yemen's capital, Sana, in September. He was released to Saudi Arabia in 2007 and passed through a Saudi rehabilitation program for former jihadists before resurfacing with Al Qaeda in Yemen...

Much more: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/23/world/middleeast/23yemen.html?th=&emc=th&pagewanted=print>

My Big Fat Patriotic Promise

by *Christine M. Flowers, 23 Jan 2009*

... We non-Obama voters shouldn't be bullied into supporting our new president...

... I won't be pressured into being quiet when I see him straying off course, pushing this country in what I believe is the wrong direction. And if success means he'll challenge the fundamental nature of everything I believe in and cherish, I won't root for his success.

So I hope he fails in trying to force Catholic hospitals to provide abortion services... FOCA should actually be called "The Freedom to Impose My Choice on Others Act." ... And I hope he fails in intimidating employees to unionize... To replace the allegedly intimidating tactics of employers, we'll now be giving the same tactics to the unions. It would be sad and chilling if our new president condoned them... And highest on my wish list is that No. 44 fails in closing Guantanamo... just because a passel of liberal lawyers believe it's an embarrassment (with no definitive answer from the courts) doesn't mean it should be shut, particularly when no one has figured out what do with the "guests."

For eight years, many people insisted that they'd lost their country. They detested Bush, hated his politics and condemned his choices when they disagreed. Loudly.

Good for them. Now, it's my turn...

Full column: http://www.philly.com/dailynews/opinion/20090123_Christine_M_Flowers_My_big_fat_patriotic_promise.html

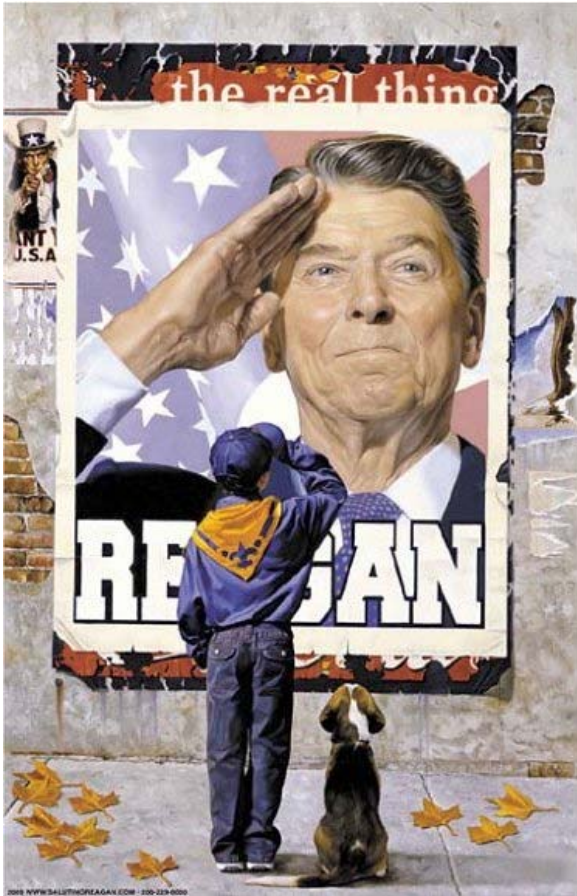
Many fools and liars have written for *The New Republic*. But Walter Russell Mead isn't one of those. He's a widely respected analyst of world politics and economics. [Read this, and get informed!](#)

Only Makes You Stronger

Why the recession bolstered America.

by *Walter Russell Mead, 22 Jan 2009 (Feb. 4 issue)*

<http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=571cbbb9-2887-4d81-8542-92e83915f5f8>



Obama Should Emulate Ronald Reagan, Voters Tell Pollster

by Pete Winn, 21 Jan 2009

Americans would like to see incoming President Barack Obama use Ronald Reagan as a role model. When given the choice of Abraham Lincoln, FDR, George Washington, Andrew Jackson, JFK, Dwight Eisenhower, Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman and Ronald Reagan—registered voters overwhelmingly said they want the new Democratic president to emulate the late conservative Republican president, who held office in the 1980's...

... "People on the far left—and I emphasize 'far' left—who are critical of Reagan, don't realize how extreme they are," Kengor said. "The vast majority of Americans like Reagan—and a very large majority of that adores Reagan. Kengor, author of *The Crusader: Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism*, said Reagan was the top choice of an AOL online survey on Greatest American of All Time. "This wasn't 'Who's the greatest president?' This was, 'Who's the greatest American?' Ronald Reagan won."...

Read it all: <http://www.cnsnews.com/public/content/article.aspx?RsrcID=42244>

Anything That's Peaceful

by John Stossel, 22 Jan 2009

This week the Left arrived in Washington, excited about the wonderful things it will do to us—I mean, for us. They always do it for us.

Liberals say that they, unlike those reactionaries who've held power for too long, want to give us more choices. Abortion-rights advocates want women to have the "right to choose." Gay-rights advocates want the choice of marrying someone of the same sex and serving in the military.

Choice is good. As a libertarian, I'm all over choice. But strangely, today, liberals are mostly about what Americans should not be allowed to choose...

Read on: <http://www.creators.com/opinion/john-stossel/anything-that-s-peaceful.html>

Obama Calls for Repealing Defense of Marriage Act

by Matt Cover, 21 Jan 2009

President Barack H. Obama is poised to be **the most pro-homosexual chief executive in history**. Unveiling his agenda Tuesday on the newly refurbished version of the White House Web site, Obama called for the repeal of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), as well as the extension of more than 1,000 federal marriage benefits and of adoption rights to homosexual couples...

More: <http://www.cnsnews.com/public/content/article.aspx?RsrcID=42233>

Terrorists killed my dad

Atty. Gen.-nominee Eric Holder helped pardon terrorists linked to my father's murder in 1975.

by Joseph F. Connor, 16 Jan 2009

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-connor16-2009jan16,0,7962063.story>

Two great columns from Jennifer Rubin:

Obama: Centrist or Liberal? Five Key Tests

by Jennifer Rubin, 22 Jan 2009

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/obama-centrist-or-liberal-five-key-tests/>

The GOP Wises Up

by Jennifer Rubin, 19 Jan 2009

...The House Democrats' bill will cost each and every household \$6,700 additional debt, paid for by our children and grandchildren...The total cost of this one piece of legislation is almost as much as the annual discretionary budget for the entire federal government...President-elect Obama has said that his proposed stimulus legislation will create or save three million jobs. This means that this legislation will spend about \$275,000 per job. The average household income in the U.S. is \$50,000 a year...

...Much of the funding within the House Democrats' proposal will go to programs that already have large, unexpended balances. For example, the bill provides \$1 billion for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which already have \$16 billion on hand. And, this year, Congress has plans to rescind \$9 billion in highway funding that the states have not yet used. In 1993, the unemployment rate was virtually the same as the rate today (around seven percent). Yet, then-President Clinton's proposed stimulus legislation ONLY contained \$16 billion in spending.

Here are just a few of the programs and projects that have been included in the House Democrats' proposal: \$650 million for digital TV coupons. \$6 billion for colleges/universities — many which have billion dollar endowments. \$166 billion in direct aid to states — many of which have failed to budget wisely. \$50 million in funding for the National Endowment of the Arts. \$44 million for repairs to U.S. Department of Agriculture headquarters. \$200 million for the National Mall, including grass planting. \$400 million for "National Treasures."

Almost one-third of the so called tax relief in the House Democrats' bill is spending in disguise, meaning that true tax relief makes up only 24 percent of the total package — not the 40 percent that President-elect Obama had requested.

\$825 billion is just the beginning — many Capitol Hill Democrats want to spend even more taxpayer dollars on their "stimulus" plan...

Read the whole piece: <http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/the-gop-wises-up/>

Geert Wilders to be Prosecuted for "Hate Speech"

by Baron Bodissey, 21 Jan 2009

If any one person personifies the resistance against the Islamization of Europe, that person is Geert Wilders. His message is simple, honest, and straightforward: the people of the Netherlands (and other nations) have a right to protect the traditional character of their native countries and demand a halt to mass immigration...

More:

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2009/01/geert-wilders-to-be-prosecuted-for-hate.html>

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2009/01/this-is-black-day-for-freedom.html>

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2009/01/i-will-not-stand-trial-alone.html>

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2009/01/man-behind-curtain.html>

God bless Geert Wilders!

Protect him from Moslem savages and self-loathing Euro-fascists!

Watch his short film, *Fitna*: <http://www.floppingaces.net/2008/03/29/fitna-goes-viral/>

Democrat Class!



20 Jan 2009:

New White House Commissar Rahm Emanuel thumbs his nose at normal American values and culture. A beautiful young girl looks on, appalled.

Sometime Dick Morris is right. Sometimes he is stunningly wrong—as when he **predicted** that Condi Rice would be the only candidate who could keep Hillary Clinton from winning the 2008 presidential election. This detailed and well-reasoned essay contains two predictions that I doubt will come to pass: (1) card-check union organizing, and (2) the revival of the Orwellianly-named "Fairness Doctrine." But he also predicts a number of other disasters that seem far more plausible. If even half of them happen, America will be in real trouble.

The Obama Presidency: Here Comes Socialism

by Dick Morris, 21 Jan 2009

<http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=30359>

How the GOP Can Rise Again

There's no need to abandon basic Republican principles. Instead, just cool the scorched-earth rhetoric and focus on reclaiming the educated middle class.

by David Frum, 19 Jan 2009 (Jan. 26 issue)

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/180043>

Mark Your Time, Hu-Mans!

16 Jan 2009

Special Guest Commentary

by Waxulon-6, Lord High Admiral of the Kremulakian Earth Invaders

The Being Formerly Known as Congressman **Henry Waxman** (D-CA)

<http://iowahawk.typepad.com/iowahawk/2009/01/mark-your-time-humans.html>

Simply a "must-read" essay, from start to finish.

Bush and the Bush-Haters

by J. R. Dunn, 19 Jan 2009

http://www.americanthinker.com/2009/01/bush_and_the_bushhaters.html

Thank President Bush for his service to our country:

<http://mission1accomplished.com/>

I Pledge to Ridicule Celebrities Who Refuse to Recognize We Are At War With People Who Want to Kill Them, Too

by Andrew Breitbart, 19 Jan 2009

Many of the celebrities that were central to demonizing and making life impossible for President Bush for eight loathsome years NOW want to help with the heavy lifting of bringing America back together under President Barack Obama. Witness Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher's cavalcade of shiny, happy situational patriots appearing in a derivative public servitude announcement: A "Presidential Pledge" to President Barack Obama...

More text, and video: <http://bighollywood.breitbart.com/breitbart/2009/01/19/where-were-you-celebrities-after-911/>

German "Police" Join Jew-Hating Muslim Mob

10 Jan 2009

<http://jewishodysseus.blogspot.com/2009/01/german-police-join-jew-hating-muslim.html>

video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkHdSI70aNA>

The Obama Countdown: <http://obamaclock.org/>

15 DOs and DON'Ts of New Progressive Order

by Opiate of the People, 7 Jan 2009

<http://www.thepeoplescube.com/red/viewtopic.php?t=2771>



by Michael Ramirez, 14 Jan 2009

<http://www.ibdeditorials.com/CartoonPopUp.aspx?id=316726155324879>

Obama's Dangerous Detainees

How will the president-elect deal with the Guantanamo prisoners who can be neither prosecuted nor released?

by Stuart Taylor, 17 Jan 2009

...The "prosecute or release" approach demanded by groups such as the ACLU and Amnesty International "fails to recognize the United States' legitimate interest in holding individuals fighting against it in armed conflict," in the words of a recent commentary by Georgetown law professor David Cole, whose view on this carries extra weight because he is a leading human-rights lawyer and Bush critic.

"There are...as many as 100 detainees, who may not be prosecutable for a specific offense but who are too dangerous to release—e.g., admitted Al Qaeda or Taliban fighters who have said that they would return to the battle in Afghanistan if released," Cole added. "These individuals can continue to be held for the duration of the ongoing armed conflict with the Taliban and Al Qaeda—as prisoners of war, without criminal charge or criminal trial."...

...If—as urged by the ACLU, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and others—Obama rejects both the Bush approach and proposals for a new detention law, it could lead not only to release of dangerous Guantanamo detainees but also to a perverse unintended consequence: Military units in the field would have an incentive to kill more people, take fewer prisoners, and hold those they do take in remote places beyond the reach of the courts.

Such prospects may not trouble the self-appointed guardians of human rights. But they should trouble the president-elect...

Read it all: <http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/openingargument.php>

Four reports from Scott Ott:

Gitmo Closing, States Vie to Woo Inmates as Residents
Millions Flock to D.C. for Historic VP Swearing-In
[Video] SNN 1: Geithner's Not Uncommon Tax Error
Obama to Re-Hire Those Unemployed by His Election

In His Hands

by Charles Hurt, 18 Jan 2009

Stand your ground, Obama.

If there's one campaign promise the new president must keep—especially in these tough times—it's his plan to cut taxes for 95 percent of Americans...

Continue: http://www.nypost.com/seven/01182009/postopinion/opedcolumnists/in_his_hands_150735.htm

The Only Thing We Have to Fear...is Obama.

by Fred Barnes, 18 Jan 2009 (Jan. 26 issue)

Barack Obama is the apostle of hope. But he also arouses the flipside of hope—fear. And while the fear he stirs may turn out to be unfounded, it's not irrational. People don't know who Obama really is or where his ideological center of gravity rests, to the extent it rests anywhere. He was a liberal in the Senate and the campaign, a centrist in the transition, and who knows what he'll be as president. He's elusive.

I count four separate fears. Whether he's a crypto-Marxist is not one of them. Neither is the absurd fear that he's secretly a Muslim, even a closet jihadist. Nor is the groundless claim Obama was actually born outside the United States and isn't really an American citizen. Forget all those. They're nonstarters...

Fred's real fears: <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/016/017vzepy.asp>

Barack Obama the enigma must point the way to the future

by John O'Sullivan, 17 Jan 2009

...Most recent analyses of Obama's politics are too star-struck. They wish away the contradictions. Resolving the contradictions, however, boils down to choosing between the politics of Obama's record until the 2008 campaign and the politics of Obama's 2008 campaign.

Until 2008, Obama was a reliable supporter of the left-liberal policies of the national Democrat party and its allies in labour unions and ethnic interest groups. He depicts himself in his memoirs as committed to policies of black empowerment during those years. Yet, in 2008, he campaigned as a new kind of post-racial and post-partisan healer.

On Tuesday, he will take the oath of office before an official Washington dominated by liberal Democrats. They are eager to reverse not only the conservative trends of the Reagan-Gingrich-Bush years but also the Democrat appeasement of the Clinton years. There will be enormous pressure on Obama to stick with his past record, go along with the congressional Democrats, and reward his party's labour and ethnic allies with policies such as strengthening racial preferences and union recruitment.

On the other side of the scale is the likely influence on Obama of his own election victory. He fought and won as a post-racial post-partisan. His rhetoric swayed many previously apathetic voters. Might it not have influenced Obama himself?...

Full column: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/4278983/Barack-Obama-the-enigma-must-point-the-way-to-the-future.html>



What Went Right for Bush

by Greg Sheridan, 17 Jan 2009

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24922372-5013460,00.html>

The September 12th Presidency

by Mark Steyn, 12 Jan 2009

<http://www.steynonline.com/content/view/1637/28/>

The 9/11 Presidency

Wall Street Journal editorial, 16 Jan 2009

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123206685391388221.html>

43, For a Final Time

He takes his leave neither angry nor forlorn but rather with the serenity of someone sustained by a providential sense of history.

by George F. Will, 18 Jan 2009 (January 26 issue)

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/180032>

Bush kept U.S. safe, guided nation through turbulent seas

A man of good character and grace, he'll be seen as success.

by Peter Wehner, 16 Jan 2009

<http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2009/01/bush-kept-us-sa.html>

Exit Bush, Shoes Flying

by Charles Krauthammer, 16 Jan 2009

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/15/AR2009011503149.html>

We owe a debt to Bush

by David Warren, 14 Jan 2009

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/story.html?id=1174423>

Thank You, Mr. President

by Mark Davis, 14 Jan 2009

http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/opinion/viewpoints/stories/DN-markdavis_14edi.ART.State.Edition1.302ab2f.html

Ten Bush Mistakes

by Rich Lowry, 13 Jan 2009

<http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=NTQyZTkxY2Q0MzQwZDVhMTZlMmFIMTU0YjQxMWFmOWE=>

Bush's Better World

by Peter Brookes, 11 Jan 2009

http://www.nypost.com/seven/01112009/postopinon/opedcolumnists/bushs_better_world_149578.htm?page=0

Sept. 11 shaped some of Bush legacy

by Hugh Hewitt, 6 Jan 2009

<http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=A7E56153-18FE-70B2-A8158E15A2E8FBD7>

Conservative Successes

Some domestic policy achievements to be proud of.

by Matthew Continetti, 26 Dec 2008 (5 Jan 09 issue)

<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/964zddkh.asp>

George W. Bush: winning the war on terror

by Nile Gardiner, 26 Dec 2008

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3965454/George-W-Bush-winning-the-war-on-terror.html>

George W. Bush the uniter

by David Frum, 24 Dec 2008

http://www.theweek.com/article/index/91866/3/George_W._Bush_the_uniter

Bush's Legacy May End Up Better Than You Think

by Kevin Hassett, 22 Dec 2008

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=washingtonstory&sid=acJBjLS7oKAc>

Bush's enduring legacy in Africa

by Andrew Natsios, 4 Sept 2008

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/09/04/bushs_enduring_legacy_in_africa/

George W. Bush's legacy in Iraq: Credit where credit is due

by Jonathan Kay, 1 Sept 2008

<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2008/09/01/jonathan-kay-on-george-w-bush-s-legacy-in-iraq-credit-where-credit-is-due.aspx>



Obama prayer leader from group U.S. linked to Hamas

Associated Press, 17 Jan 2009

A Muslim scholar chosen to speak at President-elect Barack Obama's inaugural prayer service Wednesday is the leader of a group that federal prosecutors say has ties to terrorists.

Ingrid Mattson, president of the Islamic Society of North America, is one of many religious leaders scheduled to speak at the prayer service at Washington's National Cathedral.

Mattson has been the guest of honor at State Department dinners and has met with senior Pentagon officials during the Bush administration. She also spoke at a prayer service at the Democratic National Convention in Denver.

But in 2007 and as recently as last July, federal prosecutors in Dallas filed court documents linking the Hartford, Conn.-based Islamic Society to the group Hamas, which the U.S. considers a terrorist organization.

Neither Mattson nor her organization have been charged. But prosecutors wrote in July that they had "a wide array of testimonial and documentary evidence expressly linking" the group to Hamas and other radical groups...

<http://www.iht.com/bin/printfriendly.php?id=19445658>

Is a Change in Migration Patterns at Hand?

by Michael Barone, 17 Jan 2009

...Demographic forecasters tend to assume that the long-term future will look a lot like the short-term past. That's why the Census Bureau estimates that there will be more than 100 million people classifying themselves as Hispanics in 2050, compared to 45 million today. But history tells us that trend lines don't go on forever. Sometimes they turn around and go downward...

Read the rest: <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?print=yes&id=30315>

"Going over the cliff, flags flying, is still going over the cliff."

—Ronald Reagan

Beware the Big-Government Tipping Point

Socialized health care fundamentally changes the relationship between citizens and state.

by Peter Wehner and Paul Ryan, 16 Jan 2009

...The last several months are a foreshadowing of a new era of government activism, rather than an unfortunate but necessary (and anomalous) emergency action. We will soon shift from a market-based economy to a political one in which the government picks winners and losers and extends its reach and power in unprecedented ways.

This shift is exemplified by the desire of President-elect Barack Obama and the Democratic Congress to push us toward government-run health care...

...Nationalizing health care will be profoundly detrimental to the quality of American medicine. In the name of cost control, the government would make private investment in medical innovation far riskier, and thus delay the development of potentially lifesaving treatments.

It will also put America on a glide path toward European-style socialism. We need only look to Great Britain and elsewhere to see the effects of socialized health care on the broader economy. Once a large number of citizens get their health care from the state, it dramatically alters their attachment to government. Every time a tax cut is proposed, the guardians of the new medical-welfare state will argue that tax cuts would come at the expense of health care—an argument that would resonate with middle-class families entirely dependent on the government for access to doctors and hospitals.

Of course, this health-care plan is occurring against our particular fiscal backdrop: Without major reform, our federal entitlement programs will soon double the size of government. The result will be a crushing burden of debt and taxes. In short, we may be approaching a tipping point for democratic capitalism...

Read the whole essay: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123207075026188601.html>

Growing Ourselves Out of a Recession

Silicon Insider: If the government lifts the burdens on small business, more jobs will follow.

by Michael S. Malone, 16 Jan 2009

...How did we get into this trouble? The standard explanation these days—or at least the one being promulgated by our elected officials, who have a good reason for doing so—is that it was unbridled capitalism, unconstrained by regulation, that freed Wall Street and the banking industry to revert to their true greedy characters and run amok. The truth, I happened to believe (though you, dear reader, may disagree), was that this mess was actually the result of: 1. Government interference in the marketplace; and, 2. Political demagoguery—"A chicken in every pot, and an unqualified buyer in every house"—which goaded, when it didn't outright force, the banking industry to make increasingly risky deals until it all came crashing down.

If I'm right, and I suspect I am, then we are already learning the wrong lessons from this crash—and because of that, we are already implementing the wrong solutions.

Let's put that aside for a moment. What really matters is that to get out of this recession we need to create jobs. And that's going to be tough because not only will we lose several million more jobs before this is over, but we'll also be adding several million new workers to the economy, thanks to the Baby Boom Echo right now passing through college. That's going to be big deficit to make up...

The whole column: <http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=6647488>

AP: Bush's Inaugural 'Extravagant,' Now It's Spend, Baby, Spend

by Rich Noyes, 15 Jan 2009

Four years ago, the Associated Press and others in the press suggested it was in poor taste for Republicans to spend \$40 million on President Bush's inauguration. AP writer Will Lester calculated the impact that kind of money would have on armoring Humvees in Iraq, helping victims of the tsunami, or paying down the deficit. Lester thought the party should be cancelled: "The questions have come from Bush supporters and opponents: Do we need to spend this money on what seems so extravagant?"

Fast forward to 2009. The nation is still at war (two wars, in fact), and now also faces the prospect of a severe recession and federal budget deficits topping \$1 trillion as far as the eye can see. With Barack Obama's inauguration estimated to cost \$45 million (not counting the millions more that government will have to pay for security), is the Associated Press once again tsk-tsking the high dollar cost?

Nope. "For inaugural balls, go for glitz, forget economy," a Tuesday AP headline advised....

More: <http://www.mediaresearch.org/cyberalerts/2009/cyb20090115.asp#2>

TV Ad: Not the Change Obama Promised

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKrTBwcgLjY>

Debate Over; It's Freezing

by David Harsanyi, 16 Jan 2009

The carbon footprint of Barack Obama's inauguration could exceed 575 million pounds of CO₂. According to the Institute for Liberty, it would take the average U.S. household nearly 60,000 years of naughty ecological behavior to produce a carbon footprint equal to the largest self-congratulatory event in the history of humankind.

The same congressfolk who now are handing out thousands of tickets to this ecological disaster mandated only recently the phased elimination of the incandescent light bulb—a mere carbon tiptoe, if you will. The whole thing seems a bit unfair...

Read on: http://www.denverpost.com/opinion/ci_11465498

Europeans better pay up and realize it's *their* War On Terror

by Ralph Peters, 16 Jan 2009

...Europe "voted" for Obama. It's time for the continent's deadbeats to start giving blood. Obama must get Germans, Italians and Spaniards to fight, get the French to increase their troop commitment to match their rhetoric, and encourage every NATO member to do more.

To be fair, the Brits, the Canadians, the Dutch, the Danes and even the Estonians have been deep in the fight. But other elements—think olive-oil producing countries south of the Alps—reportedly cut their own deals with the Taliban and local warlords: "You don't bother us, and we won't bother you . . . We're just here to show the flag." Afghanistan and NATO can't afford that kind of check kiting...

...It's great that the Germans have finally shown the flag. Now they need to show some guts. The German government had to do things one step at a time, but now it's time to take the step that matters, and *fight*...

http://www.nypost.com/seven/01162009/postopinion/opedcolumnists/europeans_better_pay_up_and_150325.htm

The Intifada is globalized as the Gaza War becomes a world war

by *Zombie*, 16 Jan 2009

On January 10, the war between Israel and Hamas became a global conflict. No longer confined to the Gaza Strip, the fighting **spread to cities around the world**: what were billed as "anti-war" demonstrations from Los Angeles to Copenhagen and beyond were in fact overtly pro-Hamas demonstrations, and on Saturday, January 10 there was a **unprecedented eruption of violence and extremism** in dozens of European and American cities, surpassing anything seen at anti-war rallies in recent years:

In **London**, protesters physically attacked police officers with unrestrained abandon and no fear of arrest;

In **Copenhagen**, Hamas supporters screamed in public that they want to kill all Jews;

In **Calgary**, neo-Nazis marched alongside leftists and Muslim extremists, in a grand coalition of anti-Semites;

In **Los Angeles**, a car full of Israel-supporters barely escaped serious harm when an enraged mob tried to attack them;

In **Duisberg** (Germany), police broke into a private home and tore down a flag displaying a Star of David, to appease stone-throwing protesters;

In **Belfast**, an Israel-owned mall kiosk was surrounded and menacingly harrassed;

...to name just a few, as you will see in the reports listed below.

One wonders: Why January 10? Was the aggression somehow coordinated among the various far-left and Islamic groups which organized the protests in each city — an attempt to "**Globalize the Intifada**"? Or did the simultaneous outbreak of violence and anger in several places occur naturally?...

More, including pix and videos: <http://www.zombietime.com/zomblog/?p=230>

Skeptical of Obama's Stimulus Plan

Consensus, or dangerous groupthink?

by *Jonah Goldberg*, 13 Jan 2009

...Obama is interested in any idea, as long as its peddler starts from the same "non-ideological" assumption that government experts know best...

...It's the consensus that scares me. Chin-stroking moderates and passionate centrists often glorify consensus to the point where they sound like it's better to be wrong in a group than to be right alone—an example of ideological dogmatism as bad as any.

Obviously, consensus can be good. But it also can lead to dangerous groupthink. Everyone knew that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Everyone at *60 Minutes* knew those memos about George W. Bush and the Texas Air National Guard had to be right. Everyone knows everything is right, until everything goes wrong. If that's not one of the great lessons of the financial collapse of 2008, I don't know what is.

Last fall, the smartocracy said the Treasury Department had to be given \$700 billion for the Troubled Asset Relief Program because the government had to buy all that bad paper right away. Since then, Treasury has bought no toxic assets, done nothing to help with foreclosures and, a congressional report released Friday revealed, can't adequately explain what it did with the first \$350 billion...

Complete column: <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oc-goldberg13-2009jan13,0,1994872.column>

Questions Holder Needs To Answer

by *Jed Babbin*, 15 Jan 2009

Eric Holder—President-elect Obama's choice for attorney general—displays a liberal ideology which often conflicts with the Constitution, the war on terror, and common sense. Tomorrow, Holder will face the first of what may be several sessions of his confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The Attorney General is the chief law enforcement officer of the United States. Before Holder's nomination is voted on by the committee, he should answer searching inquiries that may reveal his unfitness for that post.

Going through Holder's record is a huge task, but some of his speeches, legal writings and other actions—as investigated by a House committee almost seven years ago—quickly reveal some of the most important questions. Holder should be required to answer the following questions in the very first hearing...

Continue: <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=30261>

What are the best conservative movies of the past 25 years?

by *Ed Morrissey*, 15 Jan 2009

<http://hotair.com/archives/2009/01/15/what-are-the-best-conservative-movies-of-the-past-25-years/>

When up is down, &c.

by *Jay Nordlinger*, 13 Jan 2009

...Consider one more public figure: Sarah Palin. I keep hearing and reading, in various quarters, that she is a "bimbo." That is the word I hear about her, rather a lot: "bimbo." This is a woman, of course, who has been married since her early 20s. She and her husband, Todd, have five children. Sarah is governor of her state; Todd works in the oil fields. From what anyone can tell, they delight in each other, and in their family. They seem almost an advertisement for monogamy: for the married life. And yet people say "bimbo." In a nation full of bimbos, Governor Palin is one of the few who aren't...

...A country that believes that Cheney's a monster, W.'s stupid, and Palin's a bimbo is a country with its head up its...
<http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=MDczOWU0ZTUzMGJjMjNiYjQxZjMyMDQ3NzZhMWFhOTA>

Trillion-dollar spree is road to ruin, not rally

by *Kevin Hassett*, 12 Jan 2009

...This year may establish a government-spending black hole with gravity strong enough to suck the U.S. economy over the event horizon. Such a spending path has two possible endgames. Neither is pretty.

The Federal Reserve could print enough money to accommodate all of that debt, in which case the dollar will collapse and the U.S. will be looking at a South-America-style run on its debt. Or the U.S. government could get its fiscal act in order with higher taxes. For that to happen, income taxes would approximately have to double.

While advocates of Keynesian-style stimulus are correct that this economy is terrible enough to warrant dramatic action, it is hard to understand how such a fiscal path might help. So what if second-quarter gross domestic product blips up a little bit? What business is going to expand its operations with the mother of all tax hikes peeking over the horizon? If government spending provided such a wonderful boost to the economy, we would be in Nirvana already.

If we want to create optimism about our future, we need to provide a reason. Putting a ring road around every city in the U.S. will not accomplish that. The only sensible path is for the U.S. to put its long-term fiscal house in order. Without that, this year's stimulus will likely be a historic flop...

http://bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&sid=aGgZR28hHCPk&refer=columnist_hassett

Mr. Paulsen is professor of law at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, and former associate dean of the University of Minnesota Law School.

The Minnesota Recount Was Unconstitutional

There's still plenty of time for the state to get it right.

by *Michael Stokes Paulsen*, 15 Jan 2009

...As matters stand now, the Minnesota recount is a legal train wreck. The result, a narrow Franken lead, is plainly invalid. Just as in *Bush v. Gore*, the recount has involved "unequal evaluation of ballots in several respect" and failed to provide "minimal procedural safeguards" of equal treatment of all ballots. Legally, it does not matter which candidate benefited from all these differences in treatment. (Mr. Franken did.) The different treatment makes the results not only unreliable (and suspicious), but unconstitutional.

What is the remedy? Unlike *Bush v. Gore*, there is no looming national deadline. Minnesota can take its time and do things right...

...And what if there is no reliable way to determine in a recount who won, consistent with *Bush v. Gore's* requirements? The Constitution's answer is a do-over. The 17th Amendment provides: "When vacancies happen in the representation of any State in the Senate, the executive authority of such State shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: Provided, That the legislature of any State may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointments until the people fill the vacancies by election as the legislature may direct." In a sense, a vacancy has already "happened." The U.S. Senate convened on Jan. 6 with only one senator from Minnesota...

Read it all: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123197800446483619.html>

Obama's Race to the Past

by Peter Ferrara, 14 Jan 2009

...This is political propaganda coldly calculated to distract the public from Obama's highly ideological agenda that studiously avoids everything that would work, because Obama and his ultraliberal Democrats ideologically object to it, and studiously focuses only on what was tried and failed long ago, because Obama and the retro Ds are all ideologically so nostalgic for that...

...Obama argues that he is going to get the country booming by creating new green alternative energy industries like solar and wind. If there are any regulatory barriers to these alternative energy industries, removing them would be fine. But what Obama is talking about is creating new industries dependent on government spending and corporate welfare for survival. That is not going to promote economic growth, that is just going to be another drain on the economy.

On government spending, while Obama talks about this or that minor spending reduction, overall he is promoting the greatest increase in government spending in world history, again just the opposite of Reagan, again to serve his big government ideology. Obama's budget in a couple of weeks will propose a spending increase over the fiscal 2008 budget of at least 50%, with a budget deficit at least 50% as large as the entire 2008 budget, close to \$1.5 trillion or more, again the largest in world history by far. This is true fiscal insanity. Liberals weeped and wailed for years that Reagan's \$200 billion deficits would be the end of the world...

...Obama is trying to stimulate the economy through increased welfare, government spending and deficits, based on the old-fashioned Keynesian economics of the past. His stimulus package includes such hot new ideas as hundreds of billions for infrastructure, building new roads, bridges, schools, and buildings, like Roosevelt's make-work programs of the 1930s. Another hot idea is hundreds of billions in state aid for higher state and local spending. His alternative energy subsidies are reminiscent of Jimmy Carter's Synfuels Corporation. Does Obama have any new ideas at all?

His outdated, braindead, Keynesian approach is not going to work, just as it has failed over and over in the past, again because it does nothing to change the basic incentives governing the economy, and because just borrowing trillions from the economy to spend in the economy does nothing to expand the economy on net. It didn't work the last time it was tried, in the 1970s, when it disastrously produced instead worsening recessions throughout the decade, along with runaway inflation. And it didn't work in the 1930s, when it only extended the Great Depression for over a decade. Did those voting for change think Obama was going to take us backwards to the failed ideas of the 1970s, or even the 1930s?...

Much more: <http://spectator.org/archives/2009/01/14/obamas-race-to-the-past>

The Demons of Gaza

by Ralph Peters, 10 Jan 2009

...If Obama repeats the same "peace-process" folly as his predecessors, from Jimmy have-you-hugged-your-terrorist-today? Carter through Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, he'll be devoured before he knows he's been bitten.

How many administrations have to repeat the identical error of believing that, deep down inside, terrorists, gunmen and warlords really want peace every bit as much as we do? Israel's enemies aren't just looking to cut a sharp deal. They want to destroy Israel. Which part of what they shout in our faces is so hard to understand? Israel's foes have been preaching Jew-hatred for so long that even the "moderates" can't turn back now. And why does the global left hate Israel

so? Why would they pull out the stops to rescue Hamas?

Because Israel exposed the lie that a suffering people can't lift itself up through hard work, education and discipline. Israel didn't need the help of a hundred condescending NGOs and their misery junkies.

Because the Holocaust is a permanent embarrassment to Europeans. They need to believe that Israelis are kosher Nazis.

Because, from the safety of cafes and campuses, it's cool to call terrorists "freedom fighters." It makes you feel less guilty when you hit up daddy (or the state) for money. I mean, dude, it's not like you have to, like, live with them or anything, you know?

Because, above all, the most-destructive racists in the world today are mainstream leftists. Want the truth? The Left codes Israel as white and, therefore, inherently an oppressor. Israel is held to the highest standard of our civilization and our legal codes—and denied the right to self-defense.

But the Left tacitly believes that people with darker skins are inferior and can't be expected to behave at a civilized level. Leftists expect terrorist movements or African dictators to behave horribly. It's the post-modern, latte-sucking version of the "little brown brother" mentality.

The worst enemies of developing societies have been leftists who refuse to hold them to fundamental standards of governance and decency. But, then, the Left needs developing societies to fail to prove that the system's hopelessly stacked against them. A battered, impoverished, butchered people built a thriving Western democracy in an Eastern wasteland. Israel can never be forgiven for its success...

Whole column: http://www.nypost.com/seven/01102009/postopinion/opedcolumnists/the_demons_of_gaza_149549.htm?page=0

Guess Who Cares about Dead Palestinians? Jews!

by Dennis Prager, 13 Jan 2009

http://townhall.com/columnists/DennisPrager/2009/01/13/guess_who_cares_about_dead_palestinians_jews!?page=full

'Atlas Shrugged': From Fiction to Fact in 52 Years

by Stephen Moore, 9 Jan 2009

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123146363567166677.html#>

Is Time Rooting for Israel's Defeat?

by Stephen Green, 13 Jan 2009

...Notice again that McGirk hasn't quoted any actual Israelis, or anyone else for that matter. He's simply asserted that "many" Jews "may be wondering" if there's any "long-term viability." McGirk is making stuff up and reporting it as news. And his editors at *Time* seem to be fine with that. But don't be surprised — McGirk and *Time* have quite the history of making stuff up together.

McGirk was the "journalist" who "broke" the "story" of the "massacre" by U.S. Marines at Haditha, Iraq. In fact, he fought with his editors to get the word "massacre" in the lede of the story, calling it "**a battle I lost.**" A good thing, too, because the story of the Haditha Massacre has been proven to be a fake.

But, as Clarice Feldman noted in an [American Thinker article](#) asking if McGirk was "the new Mary Mapes," McGirk is no stranger to the moral equivalence game. Reporting from a Taliban hideout weeks after the 9/11 attacks, McGirk wrote that he left, "thinking that maybe this evening wasn't very different from the original Thanksgiving: people from two warring cultures sharing a meal together and realizing, briefly, that we're not so different after all." Surely, McGirk's access to the Taliban is no mystery....

...Karon proved himself almost as incapable of hiding his biases as McGirk. He can hardly go a paragraph without spouting Hamas propaganda...Context is everything, and Karon does his best to skew it to one side. Again, do not be surprised. If you [click over](#) to Karon's personal website, you'll find he thinks that "The fact of Israel's survival" is "a grim reality" for its Palestinian citizens. Does that mean that if Israel were to somehow just ... go away ... that life would become not-so-grim for the Palestinians? It seems that Karon has left the answer to that question as an exercise for the reader...

Read it all : <http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/is-time-rooting-for-israels-defeat/>

And please recall that Mr. Hitchens voted *Democrat* last November.

More Than a Good Feeling

Why are so many oligarchs, royal families, and special-interest groups giving money to the Clinton Foundation?

by *Christopher Hitchens*, 12 Jan 2009

...Why is Sen. Clinton, the spouse of the great influence-peddler, being nominated in the first place? In exchange for giving the painful impression that our State Department will be an attractive destination for lobbyists and donors, what exactly are we getting? George Marshall? Dean Acheson? Even Madeleine Albright? No, we are getting a notoriously ambitious woman who made a **fool of herself over Bosnia**, at the time and during the recent campaign, and who otherwise has no command of foreign affairs except what she's picked up second-hand from an impeached ex-president, a disbarred lawyer, and a renter of the Lincoln Bedroom. If the Senate waves this through, it will have reinforced its recent image as the rubber-stamp chamber of a bankrupt banana republic...

Read the whole thing: <http://www.slate.com/id/2208425/>

The Most Intense Period Of The Recession Is Behind Us

by *Brian S. Wesbury and Robert Stein* 13 Jan 2009

...hourly wages rose 0.3% in December and were up 3.7% from December 2007. With the Consumer Price Index (CPI) expected to decline by 1.2% in December (data released this Friday), real (or, inflation-adjusted) wages likely increased 1.5%. Moreover, those real wages are likely up 4.8% from a year-ago, the fastest increase since 1972...

...the real purchasing power of workers' cash earnings (total hours multiplied by real hourly earnings) actually increased by about 0.3% in December, putting it about 0.1% ahead of where it was a year ago...

...the decline in gasoline prices alone is saving consumers \$410 billion in annual expenditures. In size, on an annual basis, this is similar to the government "stimulus" measures now under consideration. And instead of the money being allocated along political lines, sometimes by cumbersome bureaucracies, the money immediately gets into consumers' pockets...

...Meanwhile, despite the fear (some of which is stoked by political salesmanship) that the U.S. faces the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, initial claims for unemployment insurance have fallen dramatically, from 589,000 the week before Christmas to 467,000 in New Year's week...

...These figures signal that the most intense period of the recession is behind us, not in front of us. Any "stimulus" applied by government has less to do with creating the recovery than letting politicians take credit when the recovery happens.

Full column: http://www.forbes.com/2009/01/12/recession-stimulus-unemployment-oped-cx_bw_0113wesburystein_print.html

The investigative reporting was actually done by Little Green Footballs, not the New York Slimes.

New York Times Claims Credit for LGF Story

by *Charles Johnson*, 12 Jan 2009

In his latest excuse for the New York Times' biased coverage, "public editor" Clark Hoyt casually claims that a Times reporter **unmasked a fake Iranian missile photo**...

More: http://littlegreenfootballs.com/article/32423_New_York_Times_Claims_Credit_for_LGF_Story

Obama's Unhealthy Choices

by *Robert J. Samuelson*, 12 Jan 2009 (*January 19 issue*)

...compared with other advanced societies, the United States spends about a third more on health care than high American incomes alone would predict...

...all administrative costs account for a mere 7 percent of total health costs... In 2006, all emergency-room care cost \$75 billion, about 3.5 percent of total health spending. That's too small to explain overall trends...

...On a population-adjusted basis, the number of CT scans in 2005 was 72 percent higher in the United States than in Germany; U.S. reimbursement rates were four times higher. Knee replacements were 90 percent more frequent than in the average wealthy country and are growing rapidly. In 2005, there were 750,000 knee and hip replacements, up 70 percent in

five years, reports the journal Health Affairs.

We have a health-care system that reflects our national values. It's highly individualistic, entrepreneurial and suspicious of centralized supervision. Despite gripes about limits imposed by private insurers and Medicare, there are few effective controls on doctors' and patients' choices. That's what most Americans want. Patients understandably desire the most advanced surgeries, diagnostic tests and drugs. Doctors want the freedom to prescribe and recommend...

...roughly half the real increase in per capita health spending from 1950 to 1990 reflected the spread of comprehensive health insurance. In 2006, consumers' out-of-pocket spending represented only 13 percent of total health spending, down from more than 50 percent in the 1950s...

...On paper, there are various ways to control health spending: impose stricter regulations on prices and the availability of care; adopt "market mechanisms" that push consumers toward more efficient, more effective or skimpier care. All have been tried and have failed, because they cannot be maintained long enough or toughened enough. The reason is politics. There is no major constituency for controlling spending...

The whole column: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/178872>

The Workshops Of Identity

by Bill Whittle, 8 Jan 2009

Step back with me for a minute. Back out of Hollywood, out of America, out of the Western Tradition. Sit in the middle of a darkened crater at the south pole of the Moon. Sit back, look down and back into time, and watch the rise and fall of Civilizations on the Big Blue Ball.

If you could see human activity and genius, if you could watch poetry and medicine as points of golden light in the darkness of fear and superstition, you would soon detect a rhythm: a pulse, a heartbeat—the Heartbeat of Civilization.

It would begin in the Land Between the Rivers—a place known only in the last instant by the inhabitants down there as "Iraq," but for almost the entire beating EKG before that it was called "Babylon" and then "Mesopotamia."

That culture grew brighter, flourished and then suddenly winked out. Then, a little to the west, the Nile delta slowly blossomed, peaked, and fell. Then Greece, a brief, brilliant burst like a strobe in a dark room, blinding you long after its sudden extinction. Rome. Constantinople. Arabia. Italy. Spain. France. Britain—and with Britain, that spark of medicine and architecture and government married to science and steam literally remade the world.

And from your perch on the frozen, bone-dry lunar sand you would see the same pattern, the same pulse, the same heartbeat: a slow, steady rise, followed by a precipitous, shockingly quick fall... and then centuries, or even millennia of darkness, fear, superstition, disease and ignorance before the spark took hold again elsewhere.

One thing in common these patterns bear: the rise slow, the fall seemingly precipitous, and in every case we find the loss of nerve and strength and will comes not from the bottom, not from the common people at all, but from the rulers, the philosophers, the most affluent and educated who, in their comfort and Narcissism, abandon duty for self-absorption and self-gratification and who in boredom or self-loathing decide to fling open the gates of the city to the barbarians beyond, while the common man still stands at the walls prepared to die for the people in his charge...

Read on. It's phenomenal: <http://bighollywood.breitbart.com/bwhittle/2009/01/08/the-workshops-of-identity/>

The Federal Department of Economic Recovery

by Robert Tracinski, 10 Jan 2009

...This new scheme for central planning is an attempt to revive the most discredited idea of the creaky Old Left—but Obama is dressing it up in conventional centrist bromides. I thought that this one was particularly rich:

"If we hope to end this crisis, we must end the culture of anything goes that helped create it—and this change must begin in Washington. It is time to trade old habits for a new spirit of responsibility. It is time to finally change the ways of Washington so that we can set a new and better course for America."

How is it "changing the ways of Washington" to propose expanding government power and an explosion in deficit spending? Those *are* the ways of Washington.

But that's not all. Comically, after proposing hundreds of billions of dollars in new spending and a trillion-dollar deficit, Obama tell us that "government at every level will have to tighten its belt." This "belt-tightening" takes the form of a federal bailout for state governments so that they can "avoid harmful budget cuts."...

...The biggest evasion of Obama's speech is that he is hiding what is essentially an ideological program—a resurrection of the ghost of socialism—as a *rejection* of ideology. He warns us that we must not "rely on the worn-out dogmas of the past" (by which he means free-market economics) and he calls on both parties (by which he means

Republicans) "to put good ideas ahead of the old ideological battles."

Yet it is not easy to guess Obama's own basic ideological commitment: that "only government can provide the short-term boost necessary to lift us from a recession this deep and severe. Only government can break the vicious cycles that are crippling our economy."

Obama's premise is that only government can guide and manage economic activity. Only a Federal Department of Economic Recovery can bring back prosperity. This is the most ideological of ideological positions, an "ism." The name for it is "statism," a belief in the central role of the state in controlling the economy...

There's lots more: http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/01/the_federal_department_of_econ.html

Israel's Just Goal: Reasonable Cease-Fire

Chicago Sun-Times editorial, 11 Jan 2009

...Every reasonable person wants a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip, but any cease-fire must be reasonable. That means an enforceable agreement to stop terrorists in Gaza from firing rockets daily into southern Israel and prevent Hamas from rearming and thus guaranteeing a repeat of the Gaza crisis months or years down the road.

The cease-fire resolution passed last week by the U.N. Security Council is not a serious document for a couple of reasons. First, it provides absolutely nothing to achieve the aims necessary for a realistic end to the fighting.

Second, and worse, the resolution mentions Israel several times but not once does it name Hamas, the instigator of all this bloodshed...

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/commentary/1370852,CST-EDT-edit11.article>

Rubber Stamp for Hillary

by Diana West, 10 Jan 2009

...So, what else is new with the Clintons? Actually, there is something—the long-awaited list of nations, organizations and people who have ponied up nearly \$500 million for the Bill fund, known officially, since our Bill now is all growed up, as The William J. Clinton Foundation.

It was from this donor list—released in the media black hole just before Christmas—that the Times, sorting through the Soros, the Bings and the Waltons, the Nigerians, the Ukrainians and the Canadians, made the Bill-donation Hill-legislation connection.

But such a story is nothing next to what else the list reveals: **deep and disturbing and disqualifying conflicts of interest for Mrs. Clinton due to her husband's monetary ties to some of the worst despots in the world...**

The shameful facts: http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2009/01/rubber_stamp_for_hillary.html

The genius of Father Neuhaus

Father Richard John Neuhaus, who **died** January 8, wrote scores of brilliant essays. Here are two more of his very best. They remain very relevant today. You'll be glad you read them.

A Strange New Regime: The Naked Public Square and the Passing of the American Constitutional Order

8 Oct 1996

The Unhappy Fate of Optional Orthodoxy (click link, then scroll down, or search "orthodoxy")

January 1997

Manufacturing a Crime

Pardon Scooter Libby.

by Thomas Sowell, 9 Jan 2009

In December, I was asked to file a second report on an automobile accident that took place back in September, during a visit to Los Angeles. A truck slammed into my car from behind while I was stopped at a traffic light.

As I sat down to write a new report, I tried to recall the details, beginning with where the accident took place, which I remembered as having been on Wilshire Boulevard. Fortunately, I had saved a copy of my first report on this same

accident, which showed that it took place on Santa Monica Boulevard, not Wilshire, which was the street up ahead.

What if I had not saved a copy of that first report, and had written down and signed a report saying that the accident took place on Wilshire Boulevard, when everyone else involved said it was on Santa Monica Boulevard? If this was a statement made under oath, I could have been prosecuted for perjury.

All this made me think back to a more important case where memories differed and a man's life was ruined because of a perjury conviction. Moreover, it was about something that was no more crucial than the name of the street where an accident took place...

Read it all: <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=MWFiNTMzMDZkNWlwNGY1OTE3MGU3ZDczOWZkYzFiZTg=>

Israel acts because the world won't defend it

The scenes from Gaza are heartbreaking. But the whole conflict could be avoided if the Palestinians said one small thing.
by *Daniel Finkelstein*, 7 Jan 2009

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/daniel_finkelstein/article5461544.ece

Mr. Luttwak corrects some widely-held (but mistaken) impressions about Lebanon '06 and Gaza '09.

Yes, Israel Can Win in Gaza

Israel is significantly weakening Hamas—with Palestinian help.

by *Edward Luttwak*, 9 Jan 2009

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123146309313766581.html>

Pelosi Turns Back the Clock on House Reform

Moderate Democrats will be frozen out.

by *John Fund*, 9 Jan 2009

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123146274483166511.html>

Video Exclusive: A Revealing Morning With Sarah Palin

by *John Ziegler*, 8 Jan 2009

<http://bigollywood.breitbart.com/jziegler/2009/01/07/my-interview-with-sarah-palin/>

Richard John Neuhaus, 1936–2009

by *Joseph Bottum*, 8 Jan 2009

<http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/?p=1280>

Biography

Photographs, audio, video

The Pro-Life Movement as the Politics of the 1960s (January 2009)

We Shall Not Weary, We Shall Not Rest (to the National Right to Life Committee, July 2008)

Born Toward Dying (February 2000)

"Thousands of ethicists and bioethicists, as they are called, professionally guide the unthinkable on its passage through the debatable on its way to becoming the justifiable, until it is finally established as the unexceptional."

—from Father Neuhaus' essay "The Return of Eugenics" (*Commentary*, April 1988)

"The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money."

—Margaret Thatcher

Tax Cut Mirage

by Peter Ferrara, 7 Jan 2009

...Tax cuts do not stimulate the economy by "putting money in people's pockets" which they can then spend, as even some Republicans, including George Bush, mistakenly say. That's an old-fashioned Keynesian strategy, and, if it worked, the same result could be achieved by sending out increased welfare checks, which also puts money in people's pockets, which they can spend. But it doesn't work, because it doesn't do anything to change the basic incentives governing the economy, and because just borrowing money and then sending it out to people, in "tax rebate" checks or welfare checks, doesn't add anything to the economy on net.

Tax cuts stimulate the economy when they involve reductions in tax rates. The reduction in rates improves incentives for savings, investment, business creation and expansion, job creation, entrepreneurship, and work, by allowing people to keep a greater percentage of the reward produced by these activities. This improves the economy not just by the dollar amount of the tax cut. The improved incentives affect every economic decision and every dollar in the entire economy. The astoundingly successful Reagan tax cuts in the 1980s, as well as the astoundingly successful Kennedy tax cuts of the 1960s, were both based on reducing tax rates, and were successful for these reasons. But the Obama tax cut package studiously avoids any reductions in tax rates anywhere...

...It is a Keynesian tax cut, not a supply-side tax cut, because it is a flat cash rebate, effectively the same as more government spending, not a reduction in rates. Keynesians think that the way to increase economic growth is to increase deficits and government spending. We tried that in the 1970s, and we got inflation along with ever worsening recessions. We tried it in the 1930s, and we got the Great Depression lasting for over 10 years. It doesn't work...

A remarkable essay: <http://spectator.org/archives/2009/01/07/tax-cut-mirage>

"Norm Coleman will never ever serve again in the Senate."

—Senator Harry Reid, 5 Jan 2009

"This war is lost, and this surge is not accomplishing anything."

—Senator Harry Reid, 19 Apr 2007

The presidency is the only political office in the United States that can be filled only by a natural born citizen. From time to time, some have proposed doing away with that provision, in order to enable America to employ the skills of such worthies as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jennifer Granholm, or Mark Steyn. Some would even like to draft a former prime minister like Tony Blair (Britain) or John Howard (Australia)—neither of whom has ever expressed a desire to occupy the White House. Nah. The best foreigner for the job would be Vaclav Klaus, president of the Czech Republic.

Do not tie the markets—free them

by Vaclav Klaus, 6 Jan 2009

...The economic crisis should be regarded as an unavoidable consequence and hence a "just" price we have to pay for immodest and over-confident politicians playing with the market. Their attempts to blame the market, instead of blaming themselves, are unacceptable and should be resolutely rejected. The Czech government will—hopefully—not push the world and Europe into more regulation, nationalisation, de-liberalisation and protectionism. Our historical experience gives us a very strong warning in this respect...

...A big increase in financial regulation, as is being proposed so often these days, will only prolong the recession...

...The best thing to do now would be temporarily to weaken, if not repeal, various labour, environmental, social, health and other "standards", because they block rational human activity more than anything else...

...Our historical experience gives us a clear instruction: we always need more of markets and less of government intervention. We also know that government failure is more costly than market failure...

...We can also count on the fact that the Czech government will hopefully not be the champion of global warming alarmism. The Czechs feel that freedom and prosperity are much more endangered than the climate. The uniqueness of current levels of global warming is not a proven phenomenon. The explanation of factors that are contributing to global warming is not very clear and persuasive. Moves to mitigate climate change by fighting carbon dioxide emissions are useless and, what is most important, human beings have proved themselves to be sufficiently adaptable to an incrementally changing climate. We should turn our attention to other, really daunting issues...

Complete column: http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c253e924-dc20-11dd-b07e-000077b07658.html?nclick_check=1

The empty case for even more regulation

by Steve Chapman, 8 Jan 2009

...The call for more federal control overlooks inconvenient facts. The first is that con artists will often outfox regulators, if only because they have far more to gain from carrying off a fraud than civil servants have to gain from stopping it. If the SEC couldn't catch the brazen Madoff in eight tries, what suggests we should place greater faith in the ability of other agencies trying to monitor a vast network of financial companies?

Banks have been decimated by their purchase of mortgage-backed debt that has gone bad. **But banks operate in one of the most heavily regulated sectors of the economy. The call for more intervention assumes that if one aspirin won't cure a case of pneumonia, two will.**

And if America's weird aversion to regulation is the problem, how come banks in government-addicted Europe are in the same hole? "By some measures, in fact, European banks exposed themselves to even higher levels of risky debt than American banks did," the International Herald Tribune reported in October.

Federally imposed rules are no match for a mass outbreak of reckless abandon, and they're no substitute for individual prudence...

The whole piece: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/chi-oped0108chapmanjan08,0,2653946.column>

President Bush Tried to Rein In Fan and Fred

Democrats and the media have the housing story wrong.

by Karl Rove, 8 Jan 2009

Mythmaking is in full swing as the Bush administration prepares to leave town. Among the more prominent is the assertion that the housing meltdown resulted from unbridled capitalism under a president opposed to all regulation.

Like most myths, this is entertaining but fictional. In reality, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were among the principal culprits of the housing crisis, and Mr. Bush wanted to rein them in before things got out of hand. Rather than a failure of capitalism, the housing meltdown shows what's likely to happen when government grants special privileges to favored private entities that facilitate bad actors and lousy practices...

You can read the rest of Mr. Rove's column [here](#). But even better, check out these stories from last fall:

Everybody Else Did It

Wall Street Journal editorial, 16 Oct 2008

...In February 2004, while Republican colleagues warned of the systemic risks posed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, Mr. Dodd pronounced the mortgage market "one of the great success stories of all time." A year later, the Connecticut Democrat voted against a reform that would have limited the size of Fan and Fred's mortgage portfolios. Now that Fan and Fred have collapsed at a cost to taxpayers that could run to \$200 billion or more, Mr. Dodd is also under fire for accepting sweetheart loans from Countrywide Financial, the subprime mortgage factory...

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122411797796038903.html#printMode>

Democrat fingerprints are all over the financial crisis

by Dominic Lawson, 3 October 2008

...when I see such senior Democrats as Barney Frank, Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, and Christopher Dodd, Chairman of the Senate's Banking Committee, play the part of avenging angels—well, I can only stand in silent awe at the sheer tight-bottomed nerve of it. These are men with sphincters of steel...

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/dominic-lawson/dominic-lawson-democrat-fingerprints-are-all-over-the-financial-crisis-949653.html>

[Gotta love Barney Frank's sphincter of steel!]

Frank's fingerprints are all over the financial fiasco

by Jeff Jacoby, 28 Sept 2008

...Now that the bubble has burst and the "systemic risk" is apparent to all, Frank blithely declares: "The private sector got us into this mess." Well, give the congressman points for gall. Wall Street and private lenders have plenty to answer for, but it was Washington and the political class that derailed this train. If Frank is looking for a culprit to blame, he can find one suspect in the nearest mirror.

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/09/28/franks_fingerprints_are_all_over_the_financial_fiasco/

Blame Fannie Mae and Congress For the Credit Mess

by *Charles W. Calomiris and Peter J. Wallison, 23 Sept 2008*

...If the Democrats had let the 2005 legislation come to a vote, the huge growth in the subprime and Alt-A loan portfolios of Fannie and Freddie could not have occurred, and the scale of the financial meltdown would have been substantially less. **The same politicians who today decry the lack of intervention to stop excess risk taking in 2005-2006 were the ones who blocked the only legislative effort that could have stopped it.**

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122212948811465427.html>

Whose policies led to the credit crisis?

by *Ed Morrissey, 16 Sept 2008*

The credit crisis and the lack of oversight over government-subsidized lenders like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac occurred on the watch of George Bush, and many blame his economic team for their lack of oversight in the collapse. Barack Obama has made this point one of his major campaign themes, arguing that John McCain would provide more of the same failures that Bush did. **However, what many do not recall is that Bush wanted to tighten oversight with a new regulatory board for Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and other government recipients for the express purpose of addressing bad loan practices — and Democrats blocked it...**

<http://hotair.com/archives/2008/09/16/whose-policies-led-to-the-credit-crisis/>

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac Invest in Lawmakers

by *Lindsay Renick Mayer, 11 Sept 2008*

...Current members of Congress have received a total of \$4.8 million from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, with Democrats collecting 57 percent of that. This week we also wrote about **how much money lawmakers had invested of their own money in the companies** last year—a total of up to \$1.7 million...

See the table of recipients: <http://www.opensecrets.org/news/2008/09/update-fannie-mae-and-freddie.html>

I'll save you the suspense:

Chris Dodd was #1, at \$165,400.

Barack Obama was #2, at \$126,349.

John Kerry was #3, at \$111,000.

John McCain was #72, at \$21,550.

A symposium in January's *New Criterion*:

The Dictatorship of Relativism: Who Will Stand Up for Western Values Now?

Three marvelous essays, available to subscribers and non-subscribers alike:

Introduction: The dictatorship of relativism by *Roger Kimball*

Guarding the boundaries The moral consequences of relativism. by *Anthony Daniels*

Relativism: paving the road to radicalism by *Andrew C. McCarthy*

Three more outstanding pieces, at \$3 each for non-subscribers:

Relativism as political absolutism by *James W. Ceaser*

Truth vs. equality The relativist threat to science. by *Christie Davies*

The temptation of Pope Benedict by *Daniel Johnson*

Militant Islam Threatens Us All

Hamas rockets have the same terror goal as Hitler's blitz.

by *Benjamin Netanyahu, 7 Jan 2009*

Imagine a siren that gives you 30 seconds to find shelter before a Kassam rocket falls from the sky and explodes, spraying its lethal shrapnel in all directions. Now imagine this happens day after day, month after month, year after year.

If you can imagine that, you can begin to understand the terror to which hundreds of thousands of Israelis have been subjected. Three years ago Israel withdrew from every square inch of Gaza. And since that withdrawal, our civilians have been targeted by more than 6,000 rockets and mortars fired from Gaza. In the face of this relentless bombardment, Israel has acted with a restraint that other countries, faced with a similar threat, would find hard to fathom. Israel's government

has finally decided to respond.

For this action to succeed, we must first have moral clarity. There is no moral equivalence between Israel, a democracy which seeks peace and targets the terrorists, and Hamas, an Iranian-backed terror organization that seeks Israel's destruction and targets the innocent...

Read on: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123128827234659279.html>

The Times's Crime Confusions Persist

Error and distortion at the paper, Heaven help us, of record.

by Heather MacDonald, 5 Jan 2009

...The *Times* responds to the report with the key strategies of liberal apologetics. Strategy Number One: strip moral agency from favored victim groups. Bad things happen to favored victim groups because of forces outside their control; good things also happen to favored victim groups because of outside forces—above all, wise government programs. Any expectation that members of a favored victim group can take responsibility for their lives must be expunged. Strategy Number Two: Never let the following controversial and dangerous word enter a discussion of the underclass—"marriage."

...there is not a single violence-plagued city that has not been administering "community-based counseling and social service programs" for decades, to virtually no effect...

...The claim that crime results from a bad economy has limited empirical backing in general, but it is particularly ludicrous applied to juvenile violence. It is not the collapse of consumer lending that induces a 16-year-old to shoot a rival who "disses" his girlfriend; it is a failure of self-control and a distorted understanding of self-worth. The pathologies of gang culture have persisted throughout economic booms and recessions...

...Never mind that you actually **have to commit a crime** before the criminal justice system "entangles" you...

...Freed of the social expectation that they will have to provide a stable home for their offspring, boys have little incentive to restrain their impulses and develop bourgeois habits...

...The disappearance of marriage from the black community is a social cataclysm...

Read the whole article: <http://city-journal.org/2009/eon0105hm.html>

Pro-Israel videos

6 Jan 2009

Watch all 5: http://cgis.jpost.com/Blogs/must/entry/israel_s_hasbara_efforts_posted

Slide-Show: IDF Troops in Gaza

6 Jan 2009

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1231167282462&pagename=JPost%2FPage%2FSlideShow>

IDF: UN school used by rocket cell

by Yaakov Katz, 7 Jan 2009

At least 30 Palestinians were killed and over 50 wounded in an IDF attack on a Hamas rocket squad based in a UN school in Jabalya on Tuesday, military sources said. Dr. Bassam Abu Warda, director of Kamal Radwan Hospital, said 34 people were killed by an Israeli strike outside the school. The UN confirmed that 30 were killed and 55 were wounded by tank shells.

The school grounds were being used by terrorists to fire mortar shells at troops stationed nearby, and the soldiers responded by firing mortars back, the army said. According to the IDF, the dead included members of the Hamas rocket cell, including senior operatives Imad Abu Askhar and Hassan Abu Askhar.

Defense officials told The Associated Press that booby-trapped bombs in the school had triggered secondary explosions that killed additional Palestinians there.

The army noted that Tuesday was not the first time Hamas had attacked Israel from within a school. The IDF released a video taken by an unmanned aerial vehicle in late 2007 showing terrorists firing mortars from right outside a school. "Hamas has in the past fired at Israel and at troops from inside schools, [exploiting] civilians, as is proven by UAV footage," the army said...

The rest is just a lot of moaning by UN weenies. Don't bother.

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1231167272256&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

Staged Photos Pouring Out of Gaza

by Charles Johnson, 5 Jan 2009

We should not forget that every television image and every news photograph coming out of Gaza right now is filtered through Hamas. The photographers filing pictures for Reuters, Associated Press, and Agence France Presse are all Palestinians, and all propagandists for Hamas—or they wouldn't be allowed to take pictures in Gaza...

Links to photos and other stories:

http://littlegreenfootballs.com/article/32360_Staged_Photos_Pouring_Out_of_Gaza

A fascinating analysis from one of the world's **leading Mideast experts**.

Mideast peace rests with Arabs, not U.S., Europe

by Bernard Lewis, 6 Jan 2009

...In several Arab countries at the present time, and in wider Arab circles, there is a growing perception that once again they face a danger more deadly and menacing than Israel at its worst: the threat of militant, radical Shiite Islam, directed from Iran.

This is seen as a double threat. Iran, a non-Arab state with a long and ancient imperial tradition, seeks to extend its rule across the Arab lands toward the Mediterranean. And it is an attempt to arouse and empower the Shiite populations in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf and other Arabian states, long subject to Sunni domination. Iranian tentacles are spreading westward into Iraq and beyond by the northern route into Syria and Lebanon and by the southern route to the Palestine territories, notably Gaza.

This double threat, of Iranian empire and Shiite revolution, is seen by many Arabs, and more particularly by their leaders, as constituting a greater threat than Israel could ever pose—a threat to their very societies, their very identity. And some Arab rulers are reacting the same way that Sadat did to the Soviet threat, by looking toward Israel for a possible accommodation.

During the war in Lebanon in 2006 between Israel and the Iranian-supported Shiite militia Hezbollah, the usual Arab support for the Arab side in a conflict was strikingly absent. It was clear that some Arab governments and Arab peoples were hoping for an Israeli victory, which did not materialize. Their disappointment was palpable...

Read it all! http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20670001&refer=columnist_lewis&sid=aJ3g7BjBD2Mk

Not Even the Clintons Would Have Tried This

by Jennifer Rubin, 5 Jan 2009

President-elect Obama has made his first completely incomprehensible appointment: **Leon Panetta** for CIA Director. No, I'm serious. Clinton OMB Director and Chief of Staff to head a key intelligence agency. One can refer to him as an "experienced bureaucrat" (to be kind) or a "Clinton crony" (to be blunt). Granted, he is not an ideologue nor is he ethically challenged, as some of the other appointees. But he does not *remotely* approach the stature of the other national security team members, nor does he bring any particular expertise to this key role...

More: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/blogs/index.php/rubin/49132>

War is terrible, but the alternative in Gaza was worse

by Melanie Phillips, Daily Mail, 5 January 2009

...This is a war that Israel spent more than seven years trying to avoid, while no fewer than 6,000 rockets and other missiles rained down from Gaza upon its southern towns. No other country in the world would have sat on its hands while its traumatised children were raised in bomb shelters.

The often-made comparison with IRA terrorism spectacularly misses the point. Hamas actually run Gaza. The equivalent would have been the Irish government firing 6,000 rockets at England. Does anyone seriously doubt that, in such a hypothetical situation, Britain would have been at war with Ireland long before that total had been reached?...

...The main complaint is that Israel's response is 'disproportionate,' since some 500 Palestinians have been killed compared with 'only' four Israelis since the war started nine days ago. This is absurd. In World War II, 20 times more civilians were killed in Germany than in Britain. Did that make the war against the Nazis 'disproportionate'? Of course not...

...Contrary to Arab propaganda, the Israelis are taking enormous pains to avoid civilian casualties in their attempt to curb these rocket attacks. The UN has confirmed that the vast majority (75 per cent) of the dead in Gaza have been Hamas terrorists. Given the huge number of bombing sorties that have been conducted, this proves that the Israelis are specifically targeting the Hamas infrastructure...

...Islamists such as Hamas are galvanised into battle by the perceived weakness of their victims, and are deterred only by implacable strength. That's why the ferocity of suicide bomb attacks actually rises after peace initiatives. Gaza's rocket barrage against Israel went up by 500 per cent after Israel ended its occupation...

...The Jews are the only people for whom 'Palestine' was ever their nation state, hundreds of years before Mohammed was even born.

It was in recognition of that inalienable right that in the 1920s the British undertook the legally binding international obligation — never rescinded — to settle Jews in every part of Mandatory Palestine. That included not just modern Israel but the West Bank and Gaza, too. Despite this, Israel is willing for the Palestinians to have their own state — as was first offered to them in 1937 — but not if its only purpose is to be a launching pad for the final destruction of its Israeli neighbour. No other country on the planet has ever been expected to make suicidal concessions to its enemies even while they continue to try to destroy it. Yet that is what the world expects of Israel...

...The Middle East conflict will not end until and unless the West comes to realise that Israel is in the frontline of the West's own fight for survival, and starts properly defending the country struggling to defend civilisation instead of siding with those waging holy war against it.

Full column: <http://www.melaniephillips.com/articles-new/?p=636>

Funny Business in Minnesota

In which every dubious ruling seems to help Al Franken.

Wall Street Journal, 5 Jan 2009

Strange things keep happening in Minnesota, where the disputed recount in the Senate race between Norm Coleman and Al Franken may be nearing a dubious outcome. Thanks to the machinations of Democratic Secretary of State Mark Ritchie and a meek state Canvassing Board, Mr. Franken may emerge as an illegitimate victor.

Mr. Franken started the recount 215 votes behind Senator Coleman, but he now claims a 225-vote lead and suddenly the man who was insisting on "counting every vote" wants to shut the process down. He's getting help from Mr. Ritchie and his four fellow Canvassing Board members, who have delivered inconsistent rulings and are ignoring glaring problems with the tallies...

...more than 25 precincts now have more ballots than voters who signed in to vote. By some estimates this double counting has yielded Mr. Franken an additional 80 to 100 votes...

...the Canvassing Board chose to go with the Election Night total, rather than the actual number of ballots in the recount. That decision gave Mr. Franken a gain of 46 votes...

...In that case, the board decided to go with the extra ballots, rather than the Election Night total, even though the county is now showing more ballots than voters in the precinct. This gave Mr. Franken a net gain of 37 votes, which means he's benefited both ways from the board's inconsistency...

...Mr. Ritchie's office nonetheless plowed through the incomplete pile of 1,350 absentees this weekend, padding Mr. Franken's edge by a further 176 votes...

Complete story: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123111967642552909.html>

The Limits of Pump Priming

by Robert Samuelson, 5 Jan 2009

...The stimulus remains a stopgap. The present crisis represents a fundamental break in the recent pattern of American economic growth. For the past quarter-century, the economy has advanced on an ever-rising tide of personal borrowing that supported expanding purchases of consumer goods—contributing to U.S. trade deficits—and a housing boom. But lending became reckless, and many households overborrowed. In its simplest terms, the "stimulus" substitutes the federal government's superior credit for damaged private credit.

But this cannot continue indefinitely. Rapid rises in the federal debt—much faster than in recent years—would threaten a further loss of confidence that might prolong today's financial crisis or, someday, trigger a new one. A growing federal debt burden would also compound the problem of paying the staggering retirements costs of aging baby boomers. So: neither rising household nor government debt provides a plausible foundation for future economic growth.

What the United States needs is export-led growth. The rub is that many other countries want that too. Just as large U.S. trade deficits signified American overspending, large trade surpluses in China, Japan and other Asian countries signified their oversaving...

Complete column: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/04/AR2009010401435.html>

Only the end of Hamas can bring peace to Gaza

by David Warren, 5 Jan 2009

...An organization that persistently declares Israel has no right to exist, and persistently acts upon this premise, cannot be negotiated with. The Israelis have the material means to destroy Hamas, and therefore the moral imperative to do so.

Israel also has the misfortune to be defending herself today in a world that is lost in moral fog. The predictable, asinine resolution from the United Nations ("both sides stop shooting right away") is, alas, representative of public opinion in many Western countries. We are nearly incapable of making hard decisions, let alone sticking to them. We did not cry, "Both sides stop shooting right away," on D-Day. The correct response was, "Onward to Berlin."

My particular fear is that, again, as in 2006 against Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Israelis will succumb to the pressure of international blathering...

...The Western doctrine of just war, echoed in the articles of international law, moreover demands that the Israelis finish what they've started. It doesn't say "never fight," as the ignorant suppose. On the contrary, it says if you must fight, be sure to win; that victory should be achieved as promptly and humanely as possible, while observing the various formal conventions. To those who refuse to observe the conventions, it offers no quarter. Those who, for instance, fire rockets at civilian targets while themselves masquerading as non-combatants are entitled to no consideration, as prisoners of war or otherwise. Those who use civilian "shields" are responsible for their fate.

These principles are humanitarian. You don't "atrit" a cancer, then await its regrowth: you root out every speck of it. In the long run, the Germans were better off for the destruction of Nazism; and the Palestinians would be, for the destruction of Hamas...

Whole essay: <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/Only+Hamas+bring+peace+Gaza/1140093/story.html>

In Gaza, the real enemy is Iran

Israeli attacks must not stop until Iran's proxy, Hamas, is defeated.

by Yossi Klein Halevi and Michael B. Oren, 4 Jan 2009

...All of which helps explain the public statements from moderate Arab leaders, such as Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian Authority head Mahmoud Abbas, who have blamed the end of the tenuous Israel-Hamas cease-fire on Hamas. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit has even called on the Arab world to stop using the U.N. as a forum for blaming Israel alone for the fighting, surely a first. Those leaders understand what many in the West have yet to grasp: The Middle East conflict is no longer just about creating a Palestinian state but about preventing the region's takeover by radical Islam. Indeed, Palestinian statehood is impossible without neutralizing the extremists who oppose any negotiated solution.

If Israel successfully overthrows Hamas in Gaza, it would strengthen anti-Iranian forces throughout the Mideast and signal the region that Iranian momentum can be reversed. The Israeli military operation could begin the process that topples a terrorist regime that seized power in the Gaza Strip in 2007 and has fired thousands of rockets and mortar shells into Israeli neighborhoods...

Read it all: <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-halevi4-2009jan04,0,1975444.story>

Israel: An Honorable Warrior

by Alan Dershowitz, 3 Jan 2009

Israel's actions in Gaza are justified under international law, and Israel should be commended for its self-defence against terrorism. Article 51 of the United Nations Charter reserves to every nation the right to engage in self-defence

against armed attacks...

...Israeli intelligence learned that a family's house in Gaza was being used to manufacture rockets. The Israeli military gave the residents 30 minutes to leave. Instead, the owner called Hamas, which sent mothers carrying babies to the house.

Hamas knew Israel would never fire at a home with civilians in it. They also knew that if Israeli authorities did not learn there were civilians in the house and fired on it, Hamas would win a public relations victory by displaying the dead. Israel held its fire. The Hamas rockets that were protected by the human shields were then used against Israeli civilians.

These despicable tactics—targeting Israeli civilians while hiding behind Palestinian civilians—can only work against moral democracies that care deeply about minimising civilian casualties. They never work against amoral nations such as Russia, whose military has few inhibitions against killing civilians among whom enemy combatants are hiding...

Read the rest: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24866318-7583,00.html>

Charity homes built by Hollywood start to crumble

by John Harlow in Los Angeles, 4 Jan 2008

Residents of a model housing estate bankrolled by Hollywood celebrities and **hand-built by Jimmy Carter, the former U.S. president**, are complaining that it is falling apart.

Fairway Oaks was built on northern Florida wasteland by 10,000 volunteers, including Carter, in a record 17-day "blitz" organised by the charity Habitat for Humanity. Eight years later it is better known for cockroaches, mildew and mysterious skin rashes...

Read on, and laugh—at the preening arrogance of the whole project:

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article5439388.ece

Big Brother/Backseat Driver

by Debra Saunders, 4 Jan 2009

For lo these many years, the Democratic motorcade class has scolded American workers for driving gas-guzzling cars. Now that Americans have begun driving more fuel-efficient cars and driving less, how have the finger-waggers reacted? No, they are not planning a parade—they already are working on a new tax on miles driven to make up for lost gasoline-tax revenue.

With the help of a six-year, \$2.1 million federal grant, Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski is moving forward with a proposal to tax Oregon drivers for the miles they drive...

...With oil trading below \$50 per barrel, there would be less incentive to buy a hybrid—yet the green trust is busy working on another reason to not buy a hybrid. Some critics have privacy issues with under-the-hood transponders that could track where a car travels. No worries, the 2007 paper asserts the Oregon plan "protects privacy. Places driven cannot be revealed nor are they stored."

Maybe the pilot program was set up that way. But Whitty told me the transponders are supposed to track out-of-state driving. And down here, where I get a regular bill with the dates and times for when I paid to cross the Bay Bridge, it's hard to imagine that after built-in transponders are standard in every new auto, nanny state governments won't come up with a menu of behaviors beyond driving too much—as in, driving in cities, driving during rush hour—to enable states to levy extra taxes...

...My fear is that that **enviro do-gooders will use this unnecessary road tax to devise new busybody regulations just to keep me out of my car...my tax dollars will be used to bankroll a scheme to punish me for using roads my tax dollars already paid for...**

Full column: <http://www.creators.com/opinion/debra-saunders/big-brother-backseat-driver.html>

Actions by the Supreme Court and Congress in 1971-72, which were intended to help minorities qualify for better jobs, have led to skyrocketing tuition costs—making life harder for everyone, especially minorities.

The Toll of a Rights 'Victory'

by George Will, 4 Jan 2009

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/02/AR2009010202098.html>

The hellish mindset of Cuba-enthusiasts

Anyone given to praising Cuba under Castro is a person of poor judgment.

by *Minette Marrin*, 4 Jan 2009

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/minette_marrin/article5439307.ece

Castro's One 'Hell' of an Achievement

by *Carlos Eire*, 3 Jan 2009

... We exiles are always asked: aren't the free medical care and education provided by the Revolution a great achievement? "No," we say, speaking from first-hand experience, as the only people on earth fully qualified to comment on this subject. Those programs are a sham, and their cost insufferably high. Fidel and Raul have always claimed that "the Cuban people" were incapable of achieving social justice by any means other than those dictated by them. Their legacy, like that of all despots, rests on violence: repression is the heart and soul of their Orwellian notion of social justice, which demands that free expression be stifled at every turn, and that everyone live in abject poverty, save the elites.

In the long run, it matters little that all sorts of false claims are made for Cuba's woefully inadequate health care and education programs. Within the island itself, the state constantly reminds Cubans that they owe everything to "the Revolution" and must therefore obey it unconditionally, like slaves on a plantation. In sum, the Revolution owns you, body and soul: no subservience, no benefits...

The whole column is terrific: http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2009/01/castros_one_hell_of_an_achieve.html

Attack begins amid diplomatic deadlock

by *Herb Keinon*, 4 Jan 2009

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1230733155661&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

EU presidency: Israel ground op in Gaza 'defensive not offensive'

by *Haaretz Service and Reuters*, 4 Jan 2009

<http://haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1052315.html>

Lawsuits Readied as Minnesota Senate Tally Winds Down

Associated Press, 3 Jan 2008, 11:39pm EST

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123102477166351591.html>

Moral Clarity in Gaza

by *Charles Krauthammer*, 2 Jan 2009

... Israel is so scrupulous about civilian life that, risking the element of surprise, it contacts *enemy* noncombatants in advance to warn them of approaching danger. Hamas, which started this conflict with unrelenting rocket and mortar attacks on unarmed Israelis—6,464 launched from Gaza in the last three years—deliberately places its weapons in and near the homes of its own people...

... For Hamas the only thing more prized than dead Jews are dead Palestinians. The religion of Jew-murder and self-martyrdom is ubiquitous...

... At war today in Gaza, one combatant is committed to causing the most civilian pain and suffering on both sides. The other combatant is committed to saving as many lives as possible—also on both sides. It's a recurring theme. Israel gave similar warnings to Southern Lebanese villagers before attacking Hezbollah in the Lebanon war of 2006. The Israelis did this knowing it would lose for them the element of surprise and cost the lives of their own soldiers...

... Doing something never done by the Turkish, British, Egyptian and Jordanian rulers of Palestine, the Israelis gave the Palestinians their first sovereign territory ever in Gaza.

What ensued? This is not ancient history. Did the Palestinians begin building the state that is supposedly their great national aim? No. No roads, no industry, no courts, no civil society at all. The flourishing greenhouses that Israel left

behind for the Palestinians were destroyed and abandoned. Instead, Gaza's Iranian-sponsored rulers have devoted all their resources to turning it into a terror base—importing weapons, training terrorists, building tunnels with which to kidnap Israelis on the other side. And of course firing rockets unceasingly.

The grievance? It cannot be occupation, military control or settlers. They were all removed in September 2005. There's only one grievance and Hamas is open about it. Israel's very existence...

Entire column: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/01/AR2009010101780_pf.html

The Gaza Rules

by Victor Davis Hanson, 1 Jan 2009

...according to the Gaza rules, both sides always deserve equal blame. Indeed, this weird war mimics the politically correct, zero-tolerance policies of our public schools, where both the bully and his victim are suspended once physical violence occurs. According to such morally equivalent reasoning, World War II was only a tragedy, not a result of German aggression. Once the dead mounted up, it mattered little what were the catalysts of the outbreak of fighting...

...victimization is crucial. Hamas daily sends barrages into Israel, as its hooded thugs thump their chests and brag of their radical Islamic militancy. But when the payback comes, suddenly warriors are transmogrified into weeping victims, posing teary-eyed for the news camera as they deplore "genocide" and "the Palestinian Holocaust." At least the Japanese militarists did not cry out to the League of Nations for help once mean Marines landed on Iwo Jima...

Read it all: <http://www.patriotpost.us/opinion/victor-davis-hanson/2009/01/01/the-gaza-rules.html>

Obama the Magic Negro-Gate

by Larry Elder, 1 Jan 2009

This is how the whole thing started. David Ehrenstein, a writer who happens to be black and liberal, wrote an opinion piece in March 2007 in the Los Angeles Times called "Obama the 'Magic Negro.'" ...

More: <http://www.creators.com/opinion/larry-elder/obama-the-magic-negro-gate.html>

One down, four to go.

Israel kills top Hamas figure

1 Jan 2009

...The airstrike targeted the eight-story apartment building that was home to Nizar Rayan, 52, ranked among Hamas' top five decision-makers in Gaza. The attack killed 12 other people including two of Rayan's four wives and four of his 12 children...

http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D95EDQL80&show_article=1&catnum=2

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