



THE FOUNDATION

"[T]he government of the United States is a definite government, confined to specified objects. It is not like the state governments, whose powers are more general. Charity is no part of the legislative duty of the government." --James Madison

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Red October Looms for ObamaCare

Americans can breathe a sigh of relief, however briefly, because Congress will not pass health care legislation before lawmakers depart for recess on August 7. "This bill, even in the best-case scenario, will not be signed -- we won't even vote on it probably until the end of September or the middle of October," said President Barack Obama.

In a sense, Obama is admitting the unpopularity of the major proposals being bantered about in Congress. "This has been the most difficult test for me so far in public life," he complained, "trying to describe in clear, simple terms how important it is that we reform this system. The case is so clear to me." And the case is equally clear to us that Barack Obama and the U.S. Congress are acting unconstitutionally. Look it up -- health care ain't there. Economist Walter E. Williams points to the Founders' own words on the lack of constitutional authority for such actions, adding, "What we're witnessing today is nothing less than a massive escalation in White House and congressional thuggery."

That said, Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) asked rhetorically, "Is health care a constitutional right?" He answered, "Well, we believe that people do and we're introducing a constitutional amendment just to make it real clear so that you don't have to infer or assume that that's a given and all that."

What Conyers and other Democrats don't understand is that, as columnist Rich Hrebic explains, "A right is not a guarantee that the government (i.e., other people) will provide you something for free. We have the right to engage in religious expression, but that doesn't mean that the government pays for the construction of the church. We have the right to peacefully assemble, but the government doesn't promise to supply your transportation. You have the

right to keep and bear arms, but don't expect the government to provide you with a free firearm and bullets. You have the right to free speech, but the government won't grant you free radio or TV air time. What makes something a right is not whether the government can force somebody else to pay for it."

But back to the proposal. House and Senate negotiators are working to cut the cost of the bill by \$100 billion -- cuts that have suddenly allayed the concerns of so-called fiscally conservative "Blue Dog" Democrats. The compromise still includes major tax increases and a public option health entitlement, which were supposed to be deal killers for these "principled" Blue Dogs.

The Senate Finance Committee claims that its package now comes with a price tag of \$900 billion over 10 years. Such projections are laughable for several reasons: The unpredictability of how many will switch to the "public option," how that plan will affect other plans on the market, and the cost of actual medical care in general. Beyond that, the Congressional Budget Office said that Obama's plan to cut medical costs by shortchanging providers in order to offset the cost of the bill is a hoax. "In CBO's judgment, the probability is high that no savings would be realized." No savings. So what's the point, Mr. President?

Democrats have proposed one way to raise money for the bill -- tax payroll. The Wall Street Journal writes that the tax could reach 10 percent. So much for "no tax increases for those making less than \$250,000 a year."

Democrats have also proposed yet another creative way to raise money for the bill -- tax soda (known simply as Coke down here in the South). The CBO estimates that a three-cent tax on soda, including

Gatorade and other sugary or energy drinks, would generate \$24 billion in the next four years, all while fighting obesity. We have been through this before. If Congress taxes something expecting people to stop using that something for their health, the revenue source dries up. Brilliant. We say, "No taxation on carbonation!"

All in all, if the public option is so good, why don't Democrats in Congress want it to be *their* health plan? Amendments requiring them to be covered by the plan have been defeated in both the House and Senate. One reason for the defeat might be the example of Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA), who, if his case went before a review board, could be denied his current level of cancer treatment. One might say he'd be left to sink or swim.

The BIG Lie

"We spend about \$6,000 per person more than any other industrialized nation on earth -- \$6,000 more than the people do in Denmark, or France, or Germany, or -- every one of these other countries spend at least 50 percent less than we do, and you know what, they're just as healthy." --Barack Obama

The American Spectator's Philip Klein explains why this is a lie: "Obama is correct that all of those countries spend less per person on health care, but it isn't anywhere near \$6,000 less. The widest gap among the countries mentioned, between the U.S. and Denmark, is \$3,778 per person. Of course, other systems don't keep costs down with magic wands, but with rationing care to the sick -- something Obama denies he wants to do in the U.S." Indeed, there's no question that our system needs some treatment, but ObamaCare is not the right prescription.

This Week's 'Alpha Jackass' Award

"I love these members, they get up and say, 'Read the bill.' What good is reading the bill if it's a thousand pages and you don't have two days and two lawyers to find out what it means after you read the bill?" --Rep. John Conyers

The Wall Street Journal's John Fund responds, "Perhaps Mr. Conyers has a point. A bill that seeks to reorder one-seventh of the nation's economy is probably too complex and convoluted for any single human being to fully comprehend and can't possibly capture all the unintended consequences of such sweeping changes. Maybe Mr. Conyers has latched

on to the main reason why big government can't work and why less sweeping health care reform is in order."

Rangel Supports Higher Taxes, Just Not Paying Them

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles Rangel (D-NY) is one of the drivers of a 5.4 percent income tax surcharge in order to help pay for the Democrats' nationalization of health care. Taking a look back at Rangel's personal tax history, however, it's easy to see why he's so keen on the proposal -- he isn't likely to pay any of it himself. The Wall Street Journal published a refresher course in Rangel's tax history this week, reminding us all of the scams that he's put forth in order to dodge taxes on his now famous Dominican villa.

Rangel failed to report \$75,000 in real estate income from the villa, which commands \$1,100 per night during the peak season and is rarely -- if ever -- vacant. He has blamed his wife for not keeping the books properly (bet *that* went over well), and he has blamed the locals for speaking Spanish, but he has never come completely clean about how such a large mistake could be made on his returns year after year. Rangel has promised to rectify the situation but he still has not filed the corrected paperwork. Nor has he paid the overdue taxes. Nor is the IRS knocking on his door.

There have also been issues surrounding rent-controlled apartments that Rangel occupies in Harlem. It turns out that he has played fast and loose with the income-reporting rules so that he can still be eligible for rent-control status, which allows him a steep discount below market value.

We could go on about the other four issues about which the House Ethics Committee is investigating Rangel, but the picture is already clear. He's in deep for years of tax evasion and questionable real estate ventures, but Charles Rangel is still perfectly comfortable telling us that a 5.4 percent tax surcharge is "the moral thing to do."

Speaking of housing corruption, a Countrywide official testified before the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee and the Senate Ethics Committee that Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT) did in fact know he was the recipient of a sweetheart deal on two mortgages as part of the unofficial "Friends of Angelo" program. Angelo Mozilo, the founder

and former CEO of Countrywide, was able to snag fixed rates of 4.25 percent and 4.5 percent on mortgages for the Senate Banking Committee chairman. Suddenly, Dodd's re-election chances just got slimmer.

New & Notable Legislation

House Democrats have been busy patting themselves on the back after approving legislation this week that would purportedly lead to fiscal discipline. The so-called pay-as-you-go plan would require all new spending increases to be offset by either cuts in other spending measures or tax hikes that would keep the deficit from rising. We've seen this movie before. The same scheme was put in place during the Clinton years, and it didn't curtail either Democrat or Republican spending. As we have noted in the past, pay-go rules are riddled with exceptions and loopholes that allow Congress to ignore the cuts that are supposed to offset the increased spending. Also, Democrats have no problem whatsoever with raising taxes to fund new initiatives, making tax hikes their usual escape hatch for pay-go proposals of no consequence. The only way the government is going to reduce the deficit is by -- wait for it -- spending less. No other magic formula or miracle legislation to it.

Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Kay Hagan (D-NC) introduced legislation to impose a federal ban on using a cell phone to send text messages while driving. "This legislation addresses a growing problem on our nation's highways: distracted drivers," Landrieu said. "Studies show that texting while driving increases the chances of a high-speed collision and has been found to be even more dangerous than driving drunk." People who text while driving are indeed, to coin a phrase, acting stupidly, but a federal law is over the top. Fourteen states already ban it, but these senators want to strip highway funds from those who don't.

The Washington Post reports, "The House approved a \$636 billion defense spending bill Thursday after voting to strip money for the controversial F-22 fighter. However, it left funding in place for several other military programs that the Obama administration said it does not want. The defense measure, which passed 400 to 30, was the last of 12 appropriations bills for 2010 to clear the House."

Sotomayor Clears Judiciary Committee

In a 13-6 vote that saw only South Carolina Republican Lindsey Graham cross party lines, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved Judge Sonia Sotomayor for a floor vote to confirm her as the first Hispanic justice to the U.S. Supreme Court. Many Republicans have voiced opposition to Sotomayor because they simply do not believe that she will put the law above personal prejudices and ethnic identity. Years of speeches and articles by the judge have indicated an unswerving belief in the politics of racial identity and victimhood. She made a number of excuses for these comments when pressed during her confirmation hearings, but her vague and misleading answers did not sway skeptics. If anything, her performance during the hearings should only make people more worried about what direction she will take on the bench.

Sotomayor is expected to be confirmed by the full Senate, even if largely by party-line vote. The upside is that since she is replacing David Souter, she won't sway the ideological balance of the Court. The downside, of course, is that she will be a Justice on the United States Supreme Court, most likely for a long time.

Palin Steps Down

On Sunday, Sarah Palin's term as governor of Alaska came to a self-induced end as she resigned to save herself and the state from being paralyzed by the scurrilous ethics investigations that continue to dog her. As arguably the most popular Republican on the current scene and easily the conservative woman most reviled by liberals and Beltway elites, the question now being raised is what's next for Palin.

Speculation has her writing a book about her part of the 2008 campaign, but her stated plans are to campaign for right-of-center candidates around the country and increase Twitter's popularity as a news source by frequently updating her status there. Palin could also concentrate on how to best spend the funds in SarahPAC, her political action committee that has raised more than \$1 million since its formation in February.

In her farewell address the former governor also expressed her differences with the mainstream media, chiding them, "How about, in honor of the American soldier, you quit makin' things up?" Chances are the media will be doing a lot of "makin' things up" about Palin between now and 2012.

Barack Obama's Birthday

Tuesday, August 4, is the 48th anniversary of President Obama's birth -- at least so says the state of Hawaii. With the continuing speculation surrounding Obama's *original* birth certificate, the Aloha State steadfastly claims Obama as a native son, while we are treated to repeated exasperated attempts by the administration to address the "10,000 more important issues" our country faces and not those who question Obama's citizenship, citizens derided as "birthers" by the president's spokesman and the media.

That said, The Wall Street Journal's James Taranto argues convincingly that the issue is settled. "Hawaiian birth certificates have changed in form since Obama was born. Back then, the official record was a paper document with the title 'certificate of live birth' (rather than 'certification'), and it included 'more information, such as the name of hospital, certifier's name and title; attendant's name and title, etc.' Hawaii no longer issues those old-style birth certificates," having switched to electronic copies in 2001 to ensure uniformity, according to the Honolulu Star Bulletin. Hawaii Health Department spokeswoman Janice Okubo says that Obama's original certificate still exists and she has seen it.

We have long found the questions surrounding the circumstances of Obama's birth worth pursuing, but we also don't have sufficient reason to doubt that the Hawaiian officials who claim to have seen the actual original birth certificate are telling the truth or that the president was born in Hawaii just as he says. But the controversy continues because the public has not seen the certificate. It seems like no difficult matter for the state of Hawaii to allow an exception to state law requiring birth certificates be kept private for past and present residents who are running for elected office. That could end the debate once and for all. Then again, Obama has nothing to lose by letting the hullabaloo continue. It ends up marginalizing the opponents who won't settle for less.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Warfront With Jihadistan: The Meaning of Victory

If ever there was any doubt that the U.S. elected a president raised on late 20th-century psychobabble, Barack Obama removed all traces of that doubt last week. In an interview on July 23, ABC's Terry Mo-

ran asked Obama to give his definition of victory in Afghanistan. Sounding like the misinformed and spineless jellyfish he is, the Milquetoast Messiah responded by saying, "I'm always worried about using the word 'victory' because, you know, it invokes this notion of Emperor Hirohito coming down and signing a surrender to MacArthur." Leaving aside the fact that Hirohito did not even attend Japan's surrender ceremony, let alone sign the surrender documents, the U.S. victory in WWII is not a thing to avoid repeating, as The One strangely seems to imply. More disturbingly, these were not the words of a commander in chief whose responsibility is the safety of the nation. These were the words of a community organizer, imbued with today's spirit-killing self esteem snake oil, telling all the local youth soccer teams, "Hey, it's OK if you lose, 'cause you're still winners in my book!"

The U.S. has only two choices in the Long War -- victory or defeat -- and a defeat is too terrible to contemplate. While there is no doubt that victory in this asymmetrical war will look different from that of other wars, any U.S. commander in chief must make it clear to the world that victory is what will be achieved. Obama may still be able to send a tingle up the legs of his glassy-eyed followers, but he is most definitely not sending chills down the spines of our country's enemies. We think, for once, Obama should Give Victory a Chance.

AG Holder Worried About 'Radicalization' at Home

Attorney General Eric Holder has made no secret of his disdain for right-wing "radicals" during his brief tenure. An interview with ABC News this week was no exception. "I mean, that's one of the things that's particularly troubling: This whole notion of radicalization of Americans," Holder said during the interview in his SUV as his motorcade brought him from home to work. (He needs a motorcade to commute home from work?) "Leaving this country and going to different parts of the world and then coming back, all, again, in aim of doing harm to the American people, is a great concern."

We were initially inclined to think he meant that those "leaving this country" and "then coming back ... in aim of doing harm" were veterans who are part of the right-wing threat outlined in the recent report by the Department of Homeland Security. But ABC clarifies, "Recent events, such as the arrests of alleged members of a home-grown terror cell in North

Carolina, the return of several Somali-American men to their home country under questionable circumstances and the filing of charges against a New York man who allegedly received al Qaeda training in Pakistan and took part in a rocket attack against U.S. forces, bring the threats to national security into sharp focus." At least he's concerned about the real enemy.

And lest we think that Holder's priorities are out of order, he told ABC he is considering investigations into Bush administration officials over national security polices such as waterboarding terrorists. Oh, and closing the terrorist prison at Guantanamo is a priority.

Israel Prepared to Take on Iran

Israel this week reiterated its stance on dealing with the Iranian nuclear program, with Defense Minister Ehud Barak stating, "We clearly believe that no option should be removed from the table. This is our policy. We mean it." Barak's comments came as U.S. officials, including Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and National Security Advisor James Jones, traveled to Israel to discuss Iran. The Obama administration, for its part, continued to hold out for diplomacy, with Gates commenting, "The timetable the president laid out [for negotiating] still seems to be viable and does not significantly raise the risks to anybody." We suppose it depends on the definition of "risk."

We have been reporting on Iran's nuclear program for nearly five years now. We have taken note each time Iran rebuffed diplomatic overtures from the EU-3 (England, France, Germany), the P5+1 (U.S., UK, France, China, Russia + Germany), the G-8, the European Union, and now the Obama administration. The words of the Iranian regime could not be any clearer: "You can pass all the resolutions you like and dream on. But you cannot stop the Iranian nation's [nuclear] progress." At some point, Israel will decide that it can no longer watch and wait as Iran speeds toward obtaining nuclear weapons. When that day comes, we hope that Secretary Gates and President Obama have prepared for what will follow.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Chinese Warn U.S. About Debt

In a revealing discourse between the Chinese and U.S. governments, one government was urging the other to adopt sound monetary policies coupled with fiscal restraint to protect investments in treasury

debt of the other. Unfortunately, the government rolling the dice and living without regard to paying its future bills is the U.S. government, while the Chinese government counsels restraint and sanity.

The Chinese have good reason to be concerned about the integrity of the U.S. treasury debt they hold. As long as the U.S. keeps printing "cheap" money and flooding the markets with it, inflationary pressure continues to build. Inflation reduces the actual value of treasury debt held by investors and also brings a host of other problems, such as inverse salary values and high interest rates on loans. With \$801 billion in U.S. treasury debt owned by the Chinese, 3 percent inflation could reduce the debt's value by \$24 billion per year.

The Obama administration tried to save face by suggesting there are questions Obama wants answered regarding China's long reliance on massive trade surpluses with the United States to bolster its domestic economy. Ultimately, however, this posturing by the administration is meaningless and merely resembles the local alcoholic questioning the bartender's reliance upon liquor sales to bolster his income. Until the U.S. decides to balance its own budgets and live within its means, all we and other investors have as assurances regarding sound monetary policy are statements by the Obama administration that it has some sort of vague, secret plan to deal with it. And if the Chinese aren't worth listening to, it wasn't long ago that "Saturday Night Live" had some good advice for big spenders: "Don't buy stuff you cannot afford."

Regulatory Commissars:

Minimum Wage Increased

The federal minimum wage was raised from \$6.55 to \$7.25 last Friday. For affected workers, this means employers are about to decide, on an individual basis, whether to grant the raise or eliminate the job. Those on the "wrong" side of that decision will now have the opportunity to see, up close and personal, what it means when unemployment rises. The Associated Press reports, "More than 90 percent of the nation's largest metropolitan areas saw their unemployment rates climb in June from the previous month." Raising the minimum wage won't help.

The Department of Labor says a full-time minimum-wage earner (one who manages to stay employed, we might add) can expect an extra \$120 a month. What might a full-time minimum-wage

earner do with all that extra money? The Department of Labor has the answer: extra groceries, more gas or (no kidding) replace every light bulb in the house with compact fluorescent light bulbs, "which would save the family money in the long term and be an important step toward a greener country." Because what American home doesn't need more compact fluorescent light bulbs? And what was that about buying extra gas, then?

No instructions yet on what those who lose their jobs due to the higher minimum wage should do with their sudden summer vacation. Based on the DoL advice we have seen, maybe that's a good thing.

Frank Threatens Banks

Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), affectionately known around our humble shop as Bonnie Fwank, threatened banks this week that if they don't voluntarily help more homeowners avoid foreclosure, Congress will force them to. Legislation was defeated earlier this year that would have allowed people to keep their homes by filing for bankruptcy. Frank, chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, promised to revive that bill, however, if banks don't sacrifice. "People in the servicing industry and in the broader financial industry must understand that if this last effort to produce significant modifications fails, the argument for reviving the bankruptcy option will be extremely strong, and I think there is a substantial chance that the outcome will be different," he said. The congressman further betrayed his anti-capitalist bent when he said, "I've had people come to us and complain, 'Well, if you do that, I can't make any money.' The answer is that's not my job. We're not here to help you make money. We are here to help have a system in which you will make money as an incident of your providing funds to those who will use it productively."

Frank's threat coincides with the Obama administration's push to speed help to borrowers through the foreclosure prevention effort started earlier this year. Treasury Department officials want lenders to modify 500,000 mortgages by November. Since March, the Making Home Affordable program has logged 200,000 loan modifications.

And Now for the Feature Presentation, CARS

We would say step right up and slip behind the wheel of a brand new car courtesy of \$1 billion in

taxpayer money the federal government allocated to subsidize the retail auto industry, but Washington's Car Allowance Rebate System, or CARS (a name that's too clever by half), is out of money after just one week. More commonly known as "Cash for clunkers," the offer was set to run through Nov. 1.

The plan aimed to lure buyers back to the showroom floors while repopulating the roadways with more fuel-efficient vehicles by giving qualifying dealers up to a \$4,500 rebate for each trade-in. Apparently, it worked, even with all the stipulations that applied. First, the trade-in car or light truck must be a gas-guzzler, defined as getting 18 miles or less per gallon; second, the vehicle must be less than 25 years old; third, the new (not pre-owned) set of wheels must get at least 22 miles per gallon and have a manufacturer's suggested retail price not over \$45,000; and fourth, the dealer must be registered with the program. Oh, and no recycling allowed. CARS mandates that traded-in vehicles be "crushed or shredded." Congress and the White House are working to keep the program running -- after all, we can't have a government program with an actual terminus.

CULTURE & POLICY

Can't We All Just Get Along?

The furor over the arrest of Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates continued this week, with Barack Obama and Gates digging in and insisting that Sgt. James Crowley of the Cambridge police was in the wrong. Yet Obama invited both men to the White House Thursday evening to resolve their differences over a beer. We presume the Secret Service asked to see Gates' ID before letting him in.

For those beer connoisseurs out there, Sgt. Crowley had a Blue Moon, a Belgian-style wheat beer made by Coors Brewing Company, which is owned by a conservative family; Gates opted for Sam Adams Light, a nod to his home town; Vice President Joe Biden joined the trio and had low-alcohol Bucklers (his lips are loose enough as it is); and Obama took the politically safe route by drinking a Bud Light, a one-time American brew now owned by the Belgian InBev company. He *is* supposed to be a man of the people, after all, and his usual chardonnay wouldn't have suited the photo op. For our money, Stone Brewing Company, out in Escondido, California, has a much more fitting beer for the former community organizer. It's called "Arrogant Bastard Ale," and its motto is, "You're not worthy."

As for the wisdom of sitting down for a beer before discussing a contentious issue, blogger Doug Powers joked, "Traditionally, adding alcohol to any already tense situation doesn't work out very well, but I'm sure things will be different just as soon as Crowley settles in for a mandatory viewing of the Rodney King video."

Meanwhile, CNN reports, "The federal government will give \$1 billion in grants to law enforcement agencies in every state to pay for the hiring and re-hiring of law enforcement officers, Vice President Joe Biden and Attorney General Eric Holder announced Tuesday." We're sure it's just a coincidence.

Faith and Family: Chinese Block Christian Organization

In a truly disturbing move, the United Nations has denied official status to the Dynamic Christian World Mission Foundation after its refusal to give the names and addresses of its members in China. Dynamic, an L.A.-based, non-governmental organization (NGO), submitted the information on its members in other countries, but feared for the safety of those in China, a country known for its religious persecution.

The Economic and Social Council, which is composed of 54 UN members, decides whether to admit NGOs to attend meetings and submit arguments. When a subset of the Council met last May, China argued that the group's application was not in compliance with 1996/31, a resolution adopted in 1996 calling for NGOs to submit certain member information. It was decided at that time, by a 12-4 vote, not to admit, with the U.S., England, Israel and Romania voting in favor of the group, and religious persecutors China, Cuba, Egypt, Sudan and Pakistan voting to exclude (no surprises there). Since then, the U.S. has been lobbying for Dynamic, but to no avail. When the Council met on Monday for the final vote, it sided with China.

In that meeting, U.S. delegate John Sammis asked not for the Commission to automatically grant status but for it to simply look at the application again to gauge whether in fact it complies with the resolution. China's representative, Wang Qun, argued that to revisit the issue would undermine the Commission's "credibility." Cuba seconded the objection, saying Dynamic is employing "evasive tactics."

The decision has been decried by UN Watch, a Geneva-based watchdog. "Today's vote is a setback

for religious freedom," said executive director Hillel Neuer, "and could set a dangerous precedent at the UN for repressive regimes to launch frivolous objections, or demand sensitive information, in order to obstruct the important work of civil society organizations in the areas of religion, education and human rights." Amen.

Climate Change This Week: Perception vs. Reality

"This is probably just a perception, but I just have the feeling that the glaciers are melting, the snow capping the mountains is less than it was 12 years ago when I saw it last time." This brilliant example of the scientific method was uttered by none other than Canadian astronaut Bob Thirsk, a supposed man of science, from his vantage point at the International Space Station. Well, perhaps Thirsk's oxygen supply is running low, but his statement should not be ignored. For all its ridiculousness, it is highly indicative of those flying in the face of science to perpetuate the myth of global warming.

A study recently published by a group of scientists in the *Journal of Geophysical Research* has documented that any climate change that has occurred in the past several decades is a result of Mother Nature, not your neighbor's carbon footprint. "The surge in global temperatures since 1977," says the study's co-author Chris de Freitas, "can be attributed to a 1976 climate shift in the Pacific Ocean that made warming El Nino conditions more likely than they were over the previous 30 years and cooling La Nina conditions less likely."

Yet Al Gore and his cronies continue to vilify all of us "deniers" as they try to push their cap-and-trade programs and the rest of their socialist agenda. It brings to mind another quote, one from the late writer H.L. Mencken: "The urge to save humanity is always a false front for the urge to rule it." Whether it applies to global warming, health care or a host of other issues on today's political table, it appears Mencken is right on the money.

And Last...

Hundreds of homes near the French city of Marseille were evacuated this week because of forest fires. The flames quickly spread over an area five miles wide and nearly 200 firemen were called out to fight the blaze. These sorts of fires do happen in the summer, particularly in areas ravaged by envi-

ronmentalists who refuse to allow responsible conservation (cf. California). But in this case, it was just people acting stupidly. Specifically, and perhaps unsurprisingly, it was the French military, which Marseille council members, with typical French politeness, called "imbeciles." The elite Foreign Legion was conducting an exercise involving tracer rounds, which contain a flammable substance to make them visible in flight. As one might expect, tracer rounds in a dry forest plus 90 degree temperatures and a strong wind equals a forest fire. The UK Mail Online concluded its report by deadpanning, "The French Army has had one of the worst military reputations in the world since capitulating to the Germans at the start of World War II." That's putting it mildly. Apparently, though, the French military

learned an important lesson: Setting fire to a French city is a sure way to achieve victory. Still one question remains: In a battle between the French and the French, does anyone really win?

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for The Patriot's editors and staff.

(Please pray for our Armed Forces standing in harm's way around the world, and for their families -- especially families of those fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, who granted their lives in defense of American liberty.)