



“No man in his senses can hesitate in choosing to be free, rather than a slave.” --Alexander Hamilton

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

The Copenhagen Power Grab

As a massive winter storm buried a large swath of the central United States under as much as four feet of snow this week, thousands of bureaucrats and assorted global warming scaremongers gathered in Copenhagen to decide how best to handicap the world’s industrial economies in order to solve a phantom problem. And it took only 1,200 limos and 140 private planes to get them there.

These fashionable leftists from around the world gathered for a power grab also undaunted by recent revelations that government and UN scientists were using what Dan Rather might call “fake but accurate” data to support the theory of global warming.

Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), told the conference, “The recent incident of stealing the emails of scientists at the University of East Anglia shows that some would go to the extent of carrying out illegal acts, perhaps in an attempt to discredit the IPCC.” Predictably for a Leftist, he focused on the whistleblowers, rather than the subject matter of the e-mails.

Meanwhile, Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen stressed the importance of the conference, saying, “For the next two weeks, Copenhagen will be Hopenhagen. By the end, we must be able to deliver back to the world what was granted us here today: hope for a better future.” Hopenhagen? More like Hoaxenhagen.

The goal at Copenhagen is to upgrade last decade’s Kyoto Protocols and further regulate carbon emissions, particularly for wealthy nations such as the United States, since such gases are allegedly warming the planet. (Water vapor, the most abundant greenhouse gas, can’t be far behind.) On top of that, there are growing calls for population control measures such as China’s one-child policy.

Given that climate data has been undeniably fudged or

destroyed, however, we’re a bit skeptical of the very basis for the conference. As with Kyoto, China and India are skeptical, too, and neither nation is willing to promise cuts that would harm their economies.

In an effort to impress the rest of the world, Barack Obama and congressional Democrats are working on so-called “cap and trade” legislation to effect many of the same regulations Copenhagen hopes to adopt. Sens. John Kerry (D-MA), Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Joe Lieberman (I-CT) introduced a new cap-n-tax bill Thursday. And the Environmental Protection Agency announced new regulations this week, as well (more on that later).

Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg called climate change “the most pressing challenge of our time” and insisted, “We need a strong political agreement in Copenhagen.” He then cut to the chase, saying, “Developed countries must provide more funding for climate action in the developing world. We need money both for the short term and the long term, and we need funding both from the public and from the private sector.”

Translation: “Give me your wallet, this is a stick up.”

Still, it remains to be seen what agreement will be reached or how much it will cost. Even with the “consensus” on the problem, there are 192 nations represented at the conference with several times that many ideas on “solutions.” Almost everyone agrees on one thing, though: Someone else should pay for it.

The BIG Lie

“To paraphrase Shakespeare, it’s sound and fury signifying nothing. I haven’t read all the [CRU] e-mails, but the most recent one is more than 10 years old. These private exchanges between these scientists do not in any way cause any question about the scientific consensus. ... [W]here the scientific consensus is concerned, it’s completely unchanged. What we’re seeing is a set of changes worldwide that just make this discussion over 10-year-old e-mails kind of silly.” --Al Gore on the disclosure of e-mails from the Climate Research Unit at East Anglia University

Memo to Al: The most recent e-mail was sent Nov. 12 -- just a month ago.

Obama Accepts Peace Prize

Barack Obama jetted from Copenhagen to Oslo Thursday to accept his Nobel Peace Prize. We have duly noted how little Obama has done to deserve the Prize, but, to his credit, he followed suit in his acceptance speech. We would give Obama credit for what seemed like humility -- "Compared to some of the giants of history who have received this prize ... my accomplishments are slight" -- but then again, the Prize has been given to Jimmy Carter, Al Gore and terrorist Yasser Arafat. Are these the "giants of history" Obama was referring to? Besides, we hope his accomplishments *remain* slight.

Then there was the small matter of the 38 I's in the speech:

I receive this honor ... I cannot argue ... I am the commander in chief ... I come here ... I do not bring with me ... I make this statement ... I am living testimony ... I face the world as it is ... I -- like any head of state -- reserve the right to act unilaterally ... I prohibited torture ... I ordered the prison at Guantanamo Bay closed ... I have reaffirmed...

Nothing humble about that.

Obama might get half a cheer for defending U.S. military action, though he could do little else on the heels of his recent ordering of 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan. Still, his words were surprisingly strong -- and no doubt caused a bit of uncomfortable seat shuffling among the Nobel Committee. "There will be times," Obama said, "when nations -- acting individually or in concert -- will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified." He continued, "A nonviolent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies. Negotiations cannot convince al-Qa'ida's leaders to lay down their arms. To say that force is sometimes necessary is not a call to cynicism, it is a recognition of history." He concluded, "The belief that peace is desirable is rarely enough to achieve it." No doubt Obama's words offended the peaceniks in Oslo.

Yet he couldn't resist a little historical revision, citing "Ronald Reagan's efforts on arms control and embrace of perestroika." Reagan *defeated* the Soviet Union, he didn't embrace perestroika, a term Mikhail Gorbachev used in a book of the same title. "The essence of perestroika," Gorbachev wrote, "lies in the fact that it unites socialism with democracy and revives the Leninist concept of socialist construction, both in theory and in practice."

Nothing Reaganesque about that.

Meanwhile, Obama's protocol upset the Norwegians as well -- and not because he bowed to another ruler. In fact, he turned down a lunch invitation with the King of Norway. He also canceled a dinner with the Norwegian Nobel Committee, called off the traditional press conference and didn't visit the Nobel headquarters. White House aides apparently determined that such photo ops would not help the president's plummeting poll numbers. His time in Oslo was so short, political analyst Rich Galen quipped, Obama spent "just a few hours less in Norway than he had spent in the Oval office before being chosen for the award."

News From the Swamp: The Not-So-Public Public Option

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) conceded this week that the public option would be dropped from the Senate health care bill, a.k.a. HarryCare (somewhat akin to the Japanese word for ritual suicide, "harakiri.") The public option decision was made after what supposedly were intense closed-door negotiations between moderate and liberal Democrats to clear a significant hurdle standing in the way of the bill's passage. Not much leeway seems to have been given, though, because what emerged was merely a government-run public option by another name.

Under the new plan, private insurance companies will be "encouraged" by the government to develop "non-profit" national insurance policies that would be negotiated by the Office of Personnel Management, the agency that currently oversees insurance policies for federal workers. If at some point these private firms are unable to deliver the type of coverage the government prefers, then a government public option would be invoked. There are no details as to just what exactly the government would deem "acceptable policies," but it is likely that the bar will be kept just high enough to allow the government to step in with its own plan no matter what happens. In reality, it's a Hobson's Choice between the former government-run "public option" and the newer government-run "national health plan."

To add insult to injury, a deluge of new regulations await private insurers, including a preposterous rule that will require them to spend at least 90 cents of every dollar they collect in premiums on medical services for their customers. By comparison, Medicare and Medicaid don't come close to even *half* that target.

So, for the feigned indignation of Senate liberals who bemoan the death of the public option, this new plan will give them exactly what they want -- government control over how private insurers develop policies and over how

they spend the money they make, if any.

Additionally, Democrats are also proposing to push millions of uninsured onto Medicare rolls, which Republicans accurately describe as forcing more people onto a sinking ship -- the program is already fiscally irredeemable. If this multi-trillion dollar legislative Titanic becomes law, we hope that voters will remember the party who recklessly steered our health care ship into this fiscal iceberg.

This Week's 'Alpha Jackass' Award

On the topic of health care, Harry Reid offered an interesting comparison on the Senate floor. He likened opponents of the Democrats' proposed takeover of one-sixth of the U.S. economy to those who defended slavery and opposed women's suffrage.

"Instead of joining us on the right side of history, all the Republicans can come up with is, 'slow down, stop everything, let's start over,'" Reid said. "If you think you've heard these same excuses before, you're right. When this country belatedly recognized the wrongs of slavery, there were those who dug in their heels and said 'slow down, it's too early, things aren't bad enough.'" Slavery is not exactly a favorable issue for Democrats.

But he didn't stop there. "When women spoke up for the right to speak up, they wanted to vote, some insisted they simply, slow down, there will be a better day to do that, today isn't quite right. When this body was on the verge of guaranteeing equal civil rights to everyone regardless of the color of their skin, some senators resorted to the same filibuster threats that we hear today."

Wall Street Journal columnist John Fund notes one of the historical omissions in Reid's claim: "Among those voting to block the civil rights bill was West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, who personally filibustered the bill for 14 hours. The next year he also opposed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Mr. Byrd still sits in the Senate, and indeed preceded Mr. Reid as his party's majority leader until he stepped down from that role in 1989."

This Week's 'Braying Jenny' Award

"Is it morally correct [to force taxpayer funding of abortion]? Yes, I believe it is. Abortion is legal, and there are certain very tragic circumstances that a woman finds herself in. Married, with an unborn baby that's unable to survive outside of the womb, her doctor tells her it's a threat to her health. I think she ought to have a policy available to her. ... We pay for a lot of things that we may or may

not agree with, and taxpayers pay for it, for those things, as well." --Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Death Valley)

Don't miss [more on the abortion issue](#), including Sen. Ben Nelson's rejected amendment to the health care bill barring federal funding for abortions, as well as Sen. Barbara Boxer's comparison of abortion to a certain blue pill.

New & Notable Legislation

The House voted 221-202 Thursday to pass a 1,088-page, \$1.1 trillion domestic spending bill. It gives many domestic programs their third significant boost this year. According to the Associated Press, "The measure provides spending increases averaging about 10 percent to programs under immediate control of Congress. It comes on top of an infusion of cash to domestic agencies in February's economic stimulus bill and a \$410 billion measure in March that also bestowed budget increases well above inflation." Next up is raising the debt ceiling by \$1.8 trillion.

President Obama promised Tuesday that "we're proposing a complete elimination of capital gains taxes on small business investment" for one year. House Democrats must have misheard him, because they voted Wednesday -- without a hearing or committee vote -- to *raise* those taxes. The rate will more than double from 15 percent to 35 percent by reclassifying such capital gains as ordinary income. As The Wall Street Journal notes, "Private equity fund managers and managers of real-estate and oil-and-gas partnerships would also get socked with this 133% tax-rate increase. Now there's a way to encourage economic growth and new jobs."

Also, addressing another national emergency along the lines of steroid usage in professional baseball, "A House subcommittee approved legislation Wednesday aimed at forcing college football to switch to a playoff system to determine its national champion, over the objections of some lawmakers who said Congress has meatier targets to tackle," reports the Associated Press. "The bill, which faces steep odds, would ban the promotion of a post-season NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision game as a national championship unless it results from a playoff." The bill was sponsored by Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX), who said that the current Bowl Championship Series (BCS) system is unfair and won't change unless made illegal by Congress. On this issue, Barton (American Conservative Union lifetime rating: 94) seems to be missing his copy of the Constitution. Regulating sports does *not* fall under the enumerated powers given to Congress.

Judicial Benchmarks: A Tale of Two Cases

The U.S. Supreme Court this term has taken up two cases that are important to religious freedom and property rights, respectively. On Dec. 7, the Court granted a hearing in *Christian Legal Society v. Martinez*, in which the University of California Hastings College of Law denied recognition to the local CLS chapter because it required each prospective member to sign a statement of faith that tracked traditional, orthodox Christian theology and morality. Unless the CLS chapter opened its membership to everyone, including non-Christians and practicing homosexuals, UC would deny access to any benefits and facilities provided to other student organizations.

The district court decision, which was summarily affirmed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, lightly glossed over the obvious and oppressive burden placed on the CLS members by UC's actions. Arguing that the CLS chapter could avoid the restrictions by simply accepting everyone as members, the court completely missed the point: If it accepted everyone as members, the CLS chapter would no longer be a Christian organization. The CLS chapter was unfairly burdened precisely because it is Christian. Or maybe that *was* the point.

The Court also heard arguments on Dec. 1 in *Stop the Beach Renourishment v. Florida Dep't of Environmental Protection*. In this case, Florida trucked in sand to "renourish" critically eroded beaches and then promptly took ownership of this "new dry land." Owners of what had previously been waterfront properties now had a strip of state land between themselves and the ocean.

Tossing out well-settled principles of common law in its attempt to "balance" the rights of the property owners and the state, the Florida Supreme Court ruled that this was not an unconstitutional taking in violation of the Fifth Amendment Takings Clause. In an unusually strident dissent, Justice Charles T. Wells pointed out that Florida expropriated valuable property rights clearly established by Florida law: the right to have their property in contact with the water. While Florida was free to do so, it should pay the owners compensation for the taking.

Both of these cases will be important tests of whether the Court will uphold constitutional religious, association and property rights against government encroachment.

Friends in High Places

Some people work their whole life to achieve a position of prominence, but others take a shorter path, i.e., they

sleep their way to the top. That's the perception of Melodee Hayes, who recently withdrew her candidacy for U.S. Attorney in Montana. She is also the girlfriend of Montana Democrat Senator Max Baucus.

Hayes, who was director of Baucus's Montana office when their relationship started in 2008, indeed had some qualifications for the U.S. Attorney post as she had served as a local prosecutor prior to working under the senator. But their deepening relationship (as Baucus was divorcing his wife of 25 years) led to the speculation that he was pushing his girlfriend for the job. He also gave her a \$14,000 raise at the time. She withdrew from consideration and took a job at the Justice Department -- partly so she could shack up with Baucus.

Of course, had this been a Republican senator, the story might have competed with other sordid domestic tales for airtime on the network news shows. Since Baucus has a "D" after his name, however, this will blow over quickly and will be a distant memory when he's up for re-election in 2014.

Speaking of Republicans, South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford dodged a bullet this week when state lawmakers rejected an impeachment resolution, choosing instead to consider a formal rebuke of the governor. Sanford had traveled to Argentina in June, where he ended an extramarital affair. He was accused of misusing state resources but repaid the expenses, thus making the charges moot.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Warfront With Jihadistan: McChrystal Testifies

This week, General Stanley McChrystal, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, and Karl Eikenberry, the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, played the part of good soldiers and told Congress that they fully supported Obama's new "Surge & Surrender" strategy in Afghanistan, even though Obama's plan doesn't reflect either man's recommendations. General McChrystal, who originally requested at least 40,000 additional troops, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that he believes the Taliban can be defeated with just 30,000 troops, although his first priority is just stopping the Taliban's recent gains. While he endorsed Obama's troop surge, the general said he doesn't recommend the 18-month deadline for starting a troop pullout, i.e., surrender.

Ambassador Eikenberry, who had expressed doubts about sending more troops, stressed the importance of anti-Taliban efforts and the need for more civilian programs

to help stabilize and enhance the credibility of Afghanistan's central government. With Obama's plan catching flak from the Left for not surrendering sooner and from the Right for not settling on victory as the only acceptable outcome, McChrystal and company are walking a tight-rope.

Meanwhile, conflicting statements on Osama bin Laden's whereabouts also emerged from the Obama regime this week, perhaps indicating that there are internal cracks among Obama's "war council." Last Sunday, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said that "it has been years" since the U.S. has had good intelligence on bin Laden. But that same day, National Security Adviser James Jones said bin Laden may be slipping in and out of Pakistan and Afghanistan, although Jones did not comment on the intelligence, if any, behind that statement.

From the 'Non Compos Mentis' File

As if Americans didn't love the Transportation Security Agency enough already, a major TSA blunder was revealed this week. ABC News reports that the TSA "inadvertently posted online its airport screening procedures manual, including some of the most closely guarded secrets regarding special rules for diplomats and CIA and law enforcement officers." Its 93-page Standard Operating Procedures manual was posted with sensitive parts electronically redacted in such a way that computer savvy individuals could, and did, overcome. Furthermore, ABC notes, "The document shows sample CIA, Congressional and law enforcement credentials which experts say would make it easy for terrorists to duplicate."

No doubt al-Qa'ida operatives are among those computer savvy folks that now know much better how to get around airport security measures. The TSA's defense was laughable -- a spokesperson said the manual is an outdated version. However, as Robert MacLean, a former Federal Air Marshal who was fired for revealing holes in TSA's security after the 9/11 attacks, asked, "How much in screening procedure changes in 17 months?" Regardless, the damage has now been done.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Regulatory Commissars: Carbon Dioxide Ruling

Just in time for the Copenhagen climate summit, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ruled Monday that carbon dioxide -- the gas we exhale and plants inhale -- and other greenhouse gases "threaten the public health and welfare of the American people," and the pollutants should therefore be regulated under the Clean Air Act.

CO2 makes up only 0.0384 percent of the atmosphere, and humans are estimated to contribute about 3 percent of that miniscule number. The EPA's actions are based in part on the fraudulent data of Britain's East Anglia Climate Research Unit. Yet EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson completely ignored this and crowed, "These long-overdue findings cement 2009's place in history as the year when the United States government began addressing the challenge of greenhouse-gas pollution."

As for the timing, Investor's Business Daily observed, "The EPA's finding that carbon dioxide is a dangerous pollutant explains why the administration wasn't too concerned over possible failure at Copenhagen. This was their Plan B."

In fact, as Mark Alexander argued Thursday, "The CO2 regulations ... have everything to do with centralizing economic control and nothing to do with climate change, and Obama should be more concerned about the U.S. economic climate than bogus global climate change predictions."

The new EPA regulations will have far-reaching consequences for American businesses and consumers -- and not just at the gas pump. It will cost more to heat and cool your home, buy groceries, and purchase all manner of goods and services. These arbitrary regulations will also cost jobs. Convenient then that the regulations serve, in part, as an end-run around Congress -- better to blame faceless bureaucrats than your elected representatives.

TARP and Stimulus Slush Funds

The White House arbitrarily cut the projected long-term cost of the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) by \$200 billion, but rather than leave that money unspent, the administration wants to use it for a jobs bill. "TARP has turned out to be much cheaper than we had expected, although not cheap," Obama said. "It means that some of that money can be devoted to deficit reduction. And the question is: Are there selective approaches that are consistent with the original goals of TARP -- for example, making sure that small businesses are still getting lending -- that would be appropriate in accelerating job growth?" Rep. Barney Frank (D-Fannie Mae), on the other hand, wants TARP cash for more mortgage aid. Either proposal would likely require legislation changing the purpose of TARP.

In rebuttal, Rep. Tom Price (R-GA) argued, "TARP is not the Democrats' personal bank account and was never intended to be a \$700 billion perpetual slush fund. This is

a perfect example of the hazards of taxpayer-funded bail-outs.” Actually, Democrats had that in mind all along.

Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton still owed \$6 million to her pollster Mark Penn after her 2008 presidential fizzled out. Fortunately for Clinton and Penn, there was the Recovery Act. According to The Hill, “Federal records show that a contract worth \$5.97 million, part of the \$787 billion stimulus Congress passed this year, helped preserve three jobs at Burson-Marsteller, the global public-relations and communications firm headed by Penn.” Naturally, Penn’s firm denied the report, calling it “fundamentally inaccurate.”

Belly Laugh of the Week

“One of the central goals of this administration is restoring fiscal responsibility.” --Barack Obama

We Don’t Take Stimulus Cash

The Patriot Post doesn’t aid and abet Leftists by any stretch -- rather, we work hard every week to defeat their socialist agenda. Proudly, we don’t qualify for government handouts from TARP, the so-called stimulus, or Cash-for-Clunkers. (In fact, here in our humble shop, we each drive clunkers made in the previous century.) But we do need *your* help.

Please, if you’re able, make a secure online donation today to *The Patriot’s* [2009 Annual Fund](#). If you prefer to support us by mail, please use our [printable donor form](#). We still must raise **\$178,690** by year’s end.

Thank you and God bless!

Nate Jackson
Managing Editor

Income Redistribution: Pelosi’s Global Tax

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) this week called for a global tax on financial transactions, claiming that the revenue raised could be used for -- drum roll please -- more stimulus spending. H.R. 4191, which is currently before the House, calls for a quarter percent tax on the sale and purchase of all financial instruments, including stocks, bonds, options, futures, you name it. The idea, according to Pelosi, is to get Wall Street to pitch in with the government to help grow the economy -- er, government.

A sentiment like that should clearly define just how dangerous Pelosi is when it comes to economics. If she truly believes that Wall Street has never helped grow

the economy, then she doesn’t deserve the role of town dogcatcher, let alone that of Speaker. On the contrary, it has been the government’s actions that have hindered the recovery and growth of our economy.

Since Pelosi seems aware that this tax will drive investment out of the United States, she proposes that all the major international players -- including Asia, the EU and the UK -- impose a similar tax just so that no one can escape from their righteous duty to pay more taxes.

Pelosi made no indication of what would become of the tax once the stimulus spending was no longer needed. In her mind, there will always be a need for government involvement in the economy, so there will always be a need for more income redistribution.

CULTURE & POLICY

Village Academic Curriculum: Unsafe at Any Speed (or Grade)

How do you spell “pervert?” Evidently, the Obama administration spells it with a “K” and a “J,” as in “Kevin Jennings.” Who is Kevin Jennings? He’s the administration’s “Safe Schools Czar.” Setting aside our repulsion for the term “czar” and the constitutional end-run that term implies -- namely, the ability to craft and execute law independent of Congress -- this “czar” isn’t “safe” to be left with our nation’s school kids.

Jennings founded the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), an advocacy group for homosexual youth in public schools. Actually it’s not just an advocacy group, it also actively promotes the sexualization of children, regardless of their orientation. But who cares, right? We’re talking safe schools, here -- what could that possibly have to do with GLSEN?

Well, among other stomach-churning revelations, it turns out that Jennings was selected to be America’s “Safe Schools” Czar specifically *because* he founded and directed GLSEN, as a review of his [official bio](#) indicates. So how is Mr. Safe Schools making our schools safe? Well, from a cursory browsing of his organization’s Web site we can’t really answer that question.

For example, GLSEN’s “recommended reading list” for grades 7-12 (roughly 12- to 18-yr-olds) includes such titles as “Queer 13,” “In Your Face,” “Hard Love,” “Love & Sex: Ten Stories of Truth” and “The Necessary Hunger.” Necessary? Really? How about disgusting, perverted, twisted or sick? All of these terms fit much better,

at least that was our take after assessing selections from GLSEN's list of over 100 such texts.

Common decency, *Patriot* publication standards and e-mail spam filters prohibit an exposé of any of these "works," but more information can be found [here](#) and [here](#). For this space, let's just say that the graphic depictions and discussions within them are definitely not what most parents would associate with a "Safe Schools" program for their 12-yr-olds, let alone with the program's "czar."

Around the Nation: Swine Flu Emer... Never Mind

This just in: According to a new study by researchers at Harvard University, the Center for Disease Control and the UK Medical Research Council, when all is said and done, the swine flu "pandemic" will be no deadlier than the regular flu season.

In fact, Harvard's Marc Lipsitch, whose findings have been posted on WebMD, has stated that while the H1N1 has important distinctions from the common strains of the flu -- most notably a younger victim pool -- the death toll actually may be lower than normal. Before the arrival of H1N1, the medical community was preparing for a death rate of 0.1 percent (or one death for every thousand people who fall ill) during the flu season. But Lipsitch is predicting a swine flu death rate of 0.048 percent or less, a significantly lower figure and certainly not worthy of the hysteria stirred up by the government.

For months fearmongers throughout the world have tried to convince us that the swine flu was the latest installment of Armageddon (second only to global warming). The most common tactic was to compare H1N1 to the influenza epidemic of 1918, which killed tens of millions of people. It's certainly serious for those who catch it, but it sure didn't live up to government hype. But let's turn health care over to them anyway.

Time's 'Decade from Hell'

Time Magazine -- the rag with impeccable journalistic credentials that include announcing children are bad for the environment and philosophizing that objective journalism is a "fantasy" -- has labeled the 2000s as the "Decade from Hell." Citing factors including the "fiasco in Iraq," the "Wall Street scandals," the "rise of all manner of new media" (blast those upstart conservatives), and Hurricane Katrina, whose devastation was, naturally, the Bush administration's fault, Andy Serwer writes, "We're still weeks away from the end of '09, but it's not too early

to pass judgment. Call it the Decade from Hell, or the Reckoning, or the Decade of Broken Dreams, or the Lost Decade. Call it whatever you want -- just give thanks that it is nearly over."

As bright spots, Serwer highlights not the eviction of the Taliban or the toppling of Saddam Hussein's terrorist regime -- but the "stunning rise of China" and the nation's "rallying" around Obama. And among "hopeful signs" for the future is the "chance" that socialized health care may become law.

Time Magazine itself has good reason to "give thanks" for the decade's close. From 2006 to 2007 alone the magazine's circulation plunged 17 percent, though, of course, Serwer left out that tidbit. After all, it would be tough to pin *that* on Bush. Maybe it was global warming.

Knoxville Murder Update

On Tuesday, a Knoxville jury found George Thomas guilty of 38 counts, including first-degree murder, felony murder, robbery, kidnapping and rape. Thomas was one of the gang of violent criminals who car-jacked, raped and murdered Channon Christian and Christopher Newsom in January 2007. The Knoxville Sentinel-News reports, "Thomas is the third of four defendants convicted in the case. Ringleader Lemaricus Davidson was sentenced to death after his October trial. Davidson's brother, Letalvis Cobbins, escaped death after his August trial and instead was sentenced to life without parole." Thomas, too, will face only life in prison without parole. Tennessee taxpayers will pick up the tab.

To Keep and Bear Arms

Bradley Harvell was at home when he was shocked by a stun gun used by an intruder dressed like a ninja. The suspect, dressed in black with a blue bandana covering his face, repeatedly shocked Harvell after demanding money to no avail. After collapsing onto his bed, the military veteran remembers thinking "I'm 82 years old. I've made it this far, and I want to keep on living." He then used all the strength he could gather to get his Smith & Wesson .357 magnum revolver that was under his bed, shooting and killing the suspect. Police later arrested three other people who were allegedly connected to the crime.

And Last...

Some sad news to wrap up the week -- CBS announced Tuesday that it will be cancelling the soap opera "As the World Turns" in September. The soap launched in 1956 and will finish with more than 13,000 episodes, but is los-

ing viewership and money. Why soap operas *ever* make money is beyond us, but that's another story.

Because we're in the Christmas spirit, however, we have an idea for a way to save "World." Cast Al Gore, Phil Jones, Michael Mann and other global warmists in major roles and rebrand it as a soap *box* called "As the World Burns."

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.)