



THE FOUNDATION

“[A] wise and frugal government ... shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government.”
--Thomas Jefferson

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

The Leftist Vision for Government

As we noted last week, Barack Obama is now paying lip service to fiscal conservatism by calling for a “freeze” on federal spending in the face of huge deficits. Yet the freeze would apply to only a small fraction of spending and save a measly \$15 billion -- and not until 2011. With Monday’s budget release, in which outlays will reach \$3.72 trillion for fiscal 2010 and \$3.83 trillion in 2011, this political posturing becomes all the more disingenuous.

While the projected deficit will hit a record \$1.56 trillion this year and a cumulative \$5.08 trillion over the next five years, spending will reach 25.4 percent of GDP this year, a post-World War II record. The phony freeze simply sets a new floor for government largesse -- a floor that’s nearly 30 percent higher than in 2008.

The Wall Street Journal reports, “Despite talk of ‘tough choices’ in [Monday’s] document, the Administration wants \$25 billion in new spending for states for Medicaid, \$100 billion for yet another jobs ‘stimulus,’ big boosts in spending for low-income family programs, for health research, heating assistance and education.” Additionally, the budget moves Pell Grants out of the “discretionary” spending column and into the permanent entitlement one at a cost of \$307 billion over 10 years.

To finance this growth in government, including the assumption that ObamaCare and cap-n-tax become law, the budget includes nearly \$2 trillion in tax increases over the next decade. Yet Obama had the gall in his SOTU to declare, “Now, let me repeat: We cut taxes.” Characteristically, the budget drops one of these cuts after 2012 -- the \$400 payroll tax credit.

When Congress repeals the Bush tax cuts and returns the

top rate from 35 percent to 39.6 percent, Obama’s budget will increase taxes by \$1 trillion for individuals earning more than \$200,000 a year and couples earning \$250,000. The 33 percent rate would also rise to 36 percent. Capital gains and dividends would be taxed at 20 percent, up from 15 percent now. Some deductions for higher wage earners would also be reduced. Yet the Obama budget would extend the Bush tax cuts for singles and couples under the \$200,000/\$250,000 threshold. With this, we suppose, would come a grudging admission that the Bush tax cuts benefited *everyone*.

Obama’s class warfare and targeted tax increases are outrageous, to say the least. Many of those so-called “wealthy” people who he thinks can spare a dime are small business owners and entrepreneurs who will now be unable to hire that additional employee because of higher taxes.

These are just a few examples of the appalling items in the new budget. Our primary objections, however, are rooted not in numbers but in the nation’s founding ideals. Most of the present federal budget is extraconstitutional. Provisions for Medicaid, jobs, family programs, health research, heating assistance and education -- all items mentioned above -- are nowhere to be found in the Constitution.

For someone like Obama, for whom everything begins and ends with government, the Constitution is little more than parchment under glass. He repeatedly asserts “that Washington is the answer to everything,” writes columnist and former Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan. In his SOTU, she adds, “The people are good but need guidance -- from Washington. The middle class is anxious, and its fears can be soothed -- by Washington. Washington can ‘make sure consumers ... have the information they need to make financial decisions.’ Washington must ‘make investments,’ ‘create’ jobs, increase ‘production’ and ‘efficiency.’”

While he was California Governor, Ronald Reagan said, “This is the issue [at hand]: Whether we believe in our capacity for self-government or whether we abandon the American revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capitol can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves.”

The budget is further proof that Obama and the Democrats think that they can spend your money and plan your life better than you can. That's the antithesis of liberty.

Hope 'n' Change: Obama Crashes GOP Retreat

On the campaign trail, Barack Obama promised to change the culture in Washington. But this "change" has been little more than trying to force people to support his socialist views, then labeling them as obstructionist when they don't. That plan was on full display as Obama paid a visit to the House GOP conference retreat. He spent a lot of camera time explaining what the Democrats were trying to do with health care, and he hammered Republicans for being "obstructionist."

At the same time, he slyly confessed that he hasn't kept those campaign promises, one of which is that people could keep the health insurance they have after ObamaCare mauls the market. "There's some stray cats and dogs that got in there that we were eliminating, we were in the process of eliminating," the president said of various White House pets, such as bribing Sens. Ben Nelson and Mary Landrieu, that made it into the health care bill. Furthermore, the "we" symbolizes the fact that the Democrats completely rejected any input from Republicans in crafting health care legislation -- and they have no one to blame but themselves for the public's rejection of their plan.

Speaking of public backlash, Republican Scott Brown of Massachusetts was finally sworn in Thursday, meaning Senate Democrats no longer enjoy a 60-seat super majority in the upper chamber. Losing what the media continue to call "Ted Kennedy's seat" in last month's special election was a severe blow to Democrats and is, we think, a harbinger of things to come in November.

Obama isn't deterred, however. He told Senate Democrats, "All that's changed in the last two weeks is that our party has gone from having the largest Senate majority in a generation to the second largest Senate majority in a generation." Doesn't sound like he's learned anything.

Meanwhile, lawmakers in 34 states have expressed their concern over the potential for federal meddling in health care by filing or proposing amendments to their state constitutions that would reject broad health insurance mandates by Washington. The plan, which is widespread but not necessarily coordinated across state lines, calls for creating a legal barrier that would prevent the federal government from forcing people to purchase health insurance and prevent businesses from being compelled to provide certain coverage standards.

This Week's 'Alpha Jackass' Award

"A little bit of time and quiet could help. Maybe over time, people will have a chance to understand what is in the legislation." --Sen. Mark Pryor (D-AR), whom the LA Times describes as a "conservative Democrat," but who received a 4 out of 100 rating from the American Conservative Union last year

Memo to Mark: Maybe people already do understand what's in the legislation, and maybe that's precisely why it's dead in the minds of most Americans. Leave it that way.

New & Notable Legislation

The House voted 217-212 Thursday to raise the federal debt limit by \$1.9 trillion to a mind-numbing total of \$14.3 trillion. Democrats provided every "yes" vote, as they did when the Senate passed the same legislation last week. Lest we think \$14.3 trillion is "enough," however, the Treasury announced Wednesday that the nation could hit that level by the end of February. That's right, *this month*.

Speaking of deficits, Social Security has reached that long predicted moment when it will take in less in taxes than it spends on benefits. Fortune magazine reports, "Instead of helping to finance the rest of the government, as it has done for decades, our nation's biggest social program needs help from the Treasury to keep benefit checks from bouncing -- in other words, a taxpayer bailout." Since the 1960s, Social Security has indeed not been a retirement plan, but rather just another spending item. Revenues have been spent, not saved. Now, Congress can't kick the can down the road any longer -- the deficits are here today. Expect another tax increase as the "solution."

Senate Democrats unveiled their latest "jobs agenda" Thursday with a vote to come next week. Another 20,000 jobs were lost in January (though the unemployment rate fell to 9.7 percent) on top of 150,000 in December (revised downward from 85,000), so Democrats feel the need to do something -- anything -- to "create" jobs. Their plan includes tax breaks for small businesses, money for construction projects by state and local governments, health care subsidies and benefits for the unemployed, money for state and local governments to save education jobs, and, last but not least, incentives to weatherize buildings. We were skeptical until we got to that part, but weatherizing should fix everything.

The Senate Committee on Rules and Administration took up initial proposals this week in a possible legislative response to the Supreme Court's decision on campaign

finance restrictions. Two weeks ago, the Court struck down portions of McCain-Feingold that unconstitutionally restricted free speech for corporations. Undeterred by a thing so malleable as the Constitution, however, congressional leftists vow to press forward. Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) admitted that the Constitution would have to be changed in order to restrict free speech, saying, "I think we need a constitutional amendment to make clear that corporations do not have the same free speech rights as individuals." *That's* the spirit of 1787.

From the Left: Nice Work, if You Can Get It

Ah, the joys of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's life: air travel and junkets paid for by those peons, the taxpayers. While her status as second in line to presidential succession mandates that her travel be more secure than simply flying coach next to some guy with exploding underwear, documents obtained by the watchdog group Judicial Watch reveal that San Fran Nan wasn't exactly frugal in her manner of flying. In just two years, she has led 103 congressional delegations to far-flung corners of the nation and world -- about one per week -- racking up a bill of \$2.1 million. Members of her family tagged along on 31 of these trips.

It wasn't just the air travel, either. We the People paid for luxury hotel rooms, bar tabs and fine dining at numerous stops on Pelosi's world tour. It wouldn't do for members of Congress and their staff to eat at Denny's and stay at the Holiday Inn, would it? One three-day trip to the Gulf Coast, supposedly to check out Katrina damage, included 22 Democrat members of Congress and associated staffers and cost more than \$65,000. The tab at Galatoire's five-star restaurant in New Orleans alone was more than \$10,000.

The Pelosi revelations are neither as shocking nor surprising as they may have been a few years ago when she was disingenuously decrying the Republican "culture of corruption," but given the \$3.8 trillion Barack Obama wants to blow in the coming fiscal year, our spendthrift "representatives" are at least leading by example.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Department of Military Readiness:

The Definition of Insanity

Responding to The One's latest budget proposal, Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN) commented from the House floor, "[W]hen I look at the president's budget for fiscal year 2011 [FY11], I think about what Albert Einstein said one time. He said that 'doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result' is the very defini-

tion of insanity." Congressman Pence went on to note how Obama's budget fits squarely within that definition, including the defense portion of that budget.

While Department of Defense (DoD) and administration staff juggle numbers at the fringes -- witness the ongoing discussions over canceling the C17 Globemaster III production line and killing an alternative engine for the F-35 Lightning II -- the reality is that both DoD and the administration are happy to continue the status quo.

The evidence? Despite the rhetoric-du-jour, the rubber meets the road with dollars, and notwithstanding pervasive hope 'n' change speechifying, virtually nothing has changed with respect to the U.S. defense budget. In this budget submission, for example, military outlays remain virtually unchanged, save a slight increase (less than two percent) over inflation.

Also, the president apparently has included supplemental budget items as an integral part of his FY11 proposal. Translation: The commercial sector's interfacing with DoD might actually be able to depend on the budget for once rather than having to wait for end-of-year fallout money or congressional plus-ups to end the year in the black. That predictability should mean lower overall costs, rendering savings for national defense.

On the down side, however, we note that neither a new National Security Strategy (NSS) nor National Military Strategy (NMS) -- the key "vision" pieces to national security -- has been published since 2006. This demonstrates that despite all the hype about "change," at least with respect to defense, not much is different -- save, perhaps, a burning (dare we say, "flaming") desire to appease the far left by eliminating DoD's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Therein lies the rub: We have no real vision for tomorrow's defense, but we face very real military budget tradeoffs today.

Budgets involve choices. What should we buy? What programs should we kill? What should we merely sustain? But these types of questions can't be answered cogently without an overarching set of objectives. For national defense, those objectives should be articulated in both the NSS and the NMS.

The real issue for the president is determining our focus with respect to national security. Is it fighting a peer/near-peer nation? Is it conducting so-called "overseas contingency operations"? Is it some combination of both? Or is

it something else? Unfortunately, the vehicle that should have answered these questions -- the Quadrennial Defense Review -- has become little more than a political football and/or shill for the service-of-the-hour. What is needed is an objective, disinterested look at the nation's true national security requirements from an outsider's perspective. Ultimately, this will lead to rational decision-making when it comes time to draft a viable national defense budget.

Fortunately, the president isn't cutting the military to the bone, but this fact stands in contrast to the Left's objectives, so expect considerable push-back on this portion when the budget arrives on House and Senate floors for review.

Department of Military Correctness: Don't Bother Asking

Under pressure from the Obama regime, Defense Secretary Robert Gates told Congress this week that the Pentagon will scale back enforcement of the Clinton era "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy that bans open homosexuality in the U.S. military. Gates also said the Pentagon has launched a yearlong review on how to repeal the policy completely -- a goal of the Left for years.

According to Gates and Joint Chiefs Chairman Mike Mullen, the review will examine attitudes within the military and what legal, social and infrastructure changes would be needed prior to the policy's repeal. Since both Gates and Admiral Mullen supported the policy under President George W. Bush, it's apparent that both men have been forced to give up their principles and convictions under pressure from Obama.

Fortunately, the review will likely complicate efforts to change the policy during an election year, as Republicans and some Democrats are wary of any possible backlash. Naturally, the many pro-homosexual groups that supported Obama during the presidential campaign have been disappointed by his delay in lifting the ban, saying the issue is one of fairness. However, current and former military members oppose lifting the ban, saying that the military should not be a laboratory for social engineering and warning that open homosexuality will result in damage to unit cohesion and, therefore, battlefield effectiveness. Wartime is a particularly bad time to run such risks.

As we have pointed out before, the military's only reason for being is to bring controlled, sustained violence on the enemy until he is defeated. Nothing more, nothing less. This issue is not about fairness, it is about survival.

From the 'Non Compos Mentis' File

Last Friday in London, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton really ratcheted up the tough talk. "Iran has provided a continuous stream of threats to intensify its violation of international nuclear norms," Clinton said. "Iran's approach leaves us with little choice than to work with our partners to apply greater pressure in the hope that it will cause Iran to reconsider its rejection of diplomatic efforts."

Translation: We're going to use diplomats to force Iran to listen to our diplomats.

This nonsense was not lost on the Iranians. Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki replied -- and we're not making this up -- "We advise Mrs. Clinton not to use repetitive and fruitless rhetoric in her tone." Good luck with that, Manuchehr. We've been telling her that for years.

Profiles of Valor: U.S. Army Major Brent Clemmer

On Jan. 28, 2007, while commanding the Charger Company of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, United States Army Major Brent Clemmer received notice that a helicopter had been shot down near Najaf, Iraq. Responding coalition forces were under heavy gun and mortar fire. Clemmer moved his company approximately 60 miles to connect with a Special Forces team to establish a perimeter between the downed chopper and the enemy. From there, he directed the recovery of the wreckage and the bodies of the two pilots killed in the crash. Clemmer's unit fought off numerous enemy attacks and prepared for a full assault on the town where the insurgents were entrenched.

At dawn the following morning, however, wounded women and children began coming from the town, signaling the jihadis' surrender and turning the would-be assault into a humanitarian mission. All told, Clemmer and his soldiers killed about 250 insurgents and captured more than 400. In addition, they recovered stockpiles of ammunition and weapons. Upon receiving the Silver Star for his actions, Clemmer said the award was a reflection on the performance of the nearly 170 soldiers in his company.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Liars Figure and Figures Lie

Last week, the Obama administration trumpeted a 5.7 percent growth in the fourth quarter gross domestic product as evidence that its economic plan has resuscitated the economy, all thanks to the massive government stimulus program. But as Mark Twain famously quipped, "There

are lies, there are damned lies, and then there are statistics.” When the bigger the lie is the more believable it is, why stop short of using statistics?

Due to the inventory reductions brought on by corporate bloodletting, fully 3.5 percent of that 5.7 percent is only a one-shot depletion of inventory that won't be replaced until demand resumes. Alarming, the remaining 2.2 percent growth rate is 0.8 percent below the neutral minimum job creation threshold. This continuing negative growth condition explains why businesses shed 735,000 jobs over the last six months of 2009. Other indicators reveal a 0.1 percent year-to-year growth rate, a 14.6 percent drop in businesses future output investments, and stagnant or shrinking wages from a year ago.

Most revealing is the fact that since Democrats seized control of Congress in 2006, the private sector has lost almost eight million jobs while the unemployment rate soared past 10 percent. Democrat policies have helped created some jobs, though -- those in the federal government, which will hit 2.15 million employees this year, the highest since Bill Clinton declared that “the era of big government is over.”

Income Redistribution: The TARP Slush Fund

Apparently Barack Obama found a Chuck E. Cheese game token in his pocket. What else can explain his “Whac-A-Mole” economic policy? Obama called for Congress to provide \$30 billion in Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds allocated for small business loan funding via community banks with \$10 billion or less in assets. Obviously, he thinks (or “feels,” since it's obvious that he hasn't engaged in cognition) that banks are just hoarding the money instead of lending to cash-strapped businesses.

Banks lend money on the basis of ability and willingness to repay. At present, small businesses are finding it difficult to determine what they can repay. In fact, Obama's 2008 presidential campaign has also found it hard to repay things, reportedly still owing Springfield, Illinois, a chunk of change.

Furthermore, businesses create jobs to capitalize on economic growth. Public policy can increase or decrease the cost of job creation, but without the base element of economic growth, most jobs will be simply transferred as older workers retire and younger workers enter the workforce.

Another reason we take issue with Obama's plan is that, as we and others warned in 2008, TARP has become a political slush fund. Larger banks were forced to take

the money, and they have now repaid it with interest. Of course, this doesn't include Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, or GM or Chrysler -- that money is simply lost. Now, instead of returning these repaid taxpayer dollars to their rightful place, Obama plans to pass out more unconstitutional goodies.

As the Heritage Foundation's Andrew Grossman points out, “The administration lacks legal authority” to use TARP fund for anything outside the bill's specific intent. “If the authority is as broad as the administration and some lawmakers say, then it is unconstitutional. Congress cannot pass the buck and give unlimited power to the executive.” Investor's Business Daily concludes, “The administration seems to have discovered a new universal law of perpetual motion -- that money once extracted from the taxpayers or borrowed from others can never be returned whence it came. As for the Constitution, we don't need no stinking Constitution.”

CULTURE & POLICY

Climate Change This Week: Bin Laden Goes Green

In his latest audiotape message, Osama bin Laden deviated from his typical holy-war rant to offer a different reason to join his jihad: global warming. Yes, the chief terrorist-in-hiding is trying a big-tent approach to destroy the West -- i.e., you may not want to blow yourself up for 72 virgins, but killing the American economy to prevent climate change could be an appealing alternative.

“All of the industrialized countries, and especially the large ones, bear the responsibility for the crisis of the greenhouse effect,” bin Laden declared. “Most of them, though, rallied around the Kyoto accords, and agreed to limits on emissions of harmful gases. However, Bush Jr., and Congress before him, rejected this accord in order to please the large corporations.” Isn't it amazing how closely bin Laden continues to echo Democrat talking points? Maybe he's a closet member of the DNC.

Calling the U.S. and its policies the “true terrorists,” bin Laden urged the “[p]eople of the world” to “[b]oycott them [the United States] to save yourselves and your possessions and your children from climate change and to live proud and free.” Great advice coming from a guy living in a cave.

In other news, hackers in Europe succeeded in stealing some 250,000 carbon credit permits worth more than \$4 million from six companies in an e-mail phishing scheme. The wheels just keep coming off the Global Warming Express.

Judicial Benchmarks: Hate Crimes Law Challenged

The Michigan-based Thomas More Law Center is challenging the constitutionality of the federal Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, which was attached to defense authorization legislation last fall. The bill adds gender disorientation or identity to the list of protected minorities, which in turn means stiffer penalties for crimes committed against these “special” classes of victims. The plaintiffs are three pastors and the president of the American Family Association of Michigan, who “take a strong public stand against the homosexual agenda, which seeks to normalize disordered sexual behavior that is contrary to Biblical teaching,” the Law Center said in a news release.

According to CNS News, “The lawsuit alleges that the new law violates the plaintiffs’ rights to freedom of speech, expressive association, and free exercise of religion protected by the First Amendment, and it violates the equal protection guarantee of the Fifth Amendment. The lawsuit also alleges that Congress lacked authority to enact the legislation under the Tenth Amendment and the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution.”

Village Academic Curriculum: ‘No Child Left Behind’ Overhaul

The Obama administration is planning a major revamping of the No Child Left Behind education policy. The New York Times article that attacked NCLB, which became law under President George W. Bush, neglected to mention that the author of this law was the late Sen. Ted Kennedy. That’s natural because, while this law, which lays out the interaction between the federal government and the states concerning education, was championed by congressional Republicans and Democrats alike, the blame for its failure is being laid firmly and exclusively at the former president’s feet.

The proposed changes are aimed at several aspects of the law which have been criticized by “educators” for years. They begin with the elimination of the 2014 deadline, at which time all children would have been “academically proficient,” replacing it with a goal of all children being “college or career ready” at high school graduation. In addition, the doling of federal funds will be based not on student population size, as is the case now, but on academic progress. This is designed to address the perceived lack of motivation for failing schools to improve. In this way, it’s similar to the administration’s “Race to the Top” program, in which states compete for \$4 billion in education monies pulled from the stimulus bill.

The merits of the new program, which will be created with input from Congress, have yet to be determined. One thing is certain, however: It will cost yet more money. Obama is calling for a 9 percent increase in educational spending in his new budget.

Faith and Family: Say, Abstinence Does Work

A new study has many people eating their words, including a few journalists. Just days after The Washington Post’s Rob Stein wrote a derogatory article about abstinence-only programs, a new study published in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine shows that such programs can in fact delay the onset of sexual activity in teens. Stein then scrambled to write a second article stating that these programs “may work.”

The University of Pennsylvania studied 662 students from four public middle schools between 2001 and 2004. Students were randomly selected to attend one of the following eight-hour classes: a) abstinence only; b) safe-sex; c) a combination of the two, or d) a class with a concentration in general healthy living. The results were shocking to the liberal elites who had long disparaged abstinence. Only 33 percent of the students who had taken the abstinence-only class had engaged in sexual activity within the next two years, as opposed to the 52 percent who had attended the safe-sex class.

For its part, the Obama administration cut \$170 million in abstinence education funding, while spending \$114 million on other forms of pregnancy prevention education; he wants to increase that amount to \$183 million. Of course, if the point is to prevent either pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, abstinence works every time it’s tried.

To Keep and Bear Arms

A homeowner in Brevard County, Florida, took on four intruders last Sunday in a shootout at his home. He may have been prepared for it, however, as his house was burglarized the night before. After seeing the four men jump over the fence, the homeowner began shooting. Barbara Matthews of the Cocoa Police Department said, “He challenged them. He told them to get off his property. They continued toward him and shots were fired.” All five victims of the incident were reportedly taken to a hospital listed in serious condition. The homeowner also suffered a gunshot wound. According to police, the two cases do appear to be related.

And Last...

Researcher Lorianne Updike Toler stumbled on a surprise

while working at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania: a draft of the U.S. Constitution scribbled by Founder James Wilson in 1787. “This was the kind of moment historians dream about,” said Toler, a lawyer and founding president of the Constitutional Sources Project, a Washington-based nonprofit organization that promotes an understanding of and access to U.S. Constitution documents. Toler actually paid tribute to our founding document, saying, “This was national scripture, a piece of our Constitution’s history.” But given the current penchant for a “living constitution” in Washington, she might fare better by putting the dead-white-guy relic up for sale on eBay.

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for *The Patriot Post*’s editors and staff. Read online at <http://patriotpost.us>

(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.)