

HILLARY'S SECRET LOVE ■ McCain's MELTDOWN ■ HAGEE'S ARMY

AUGUST 27, 2007

# The American Conservative

## Sending Your **One Child** To **War?**

The Geopolitics of  
Declining Birth Rates



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## FRED HEAD

Michael Dougherty uses a fig-leaf argument to contend that Fred Thompson is all personality, devoid of ideas, and merely trying to assume the “brand” of Ronald Reagan (July 16).

First, Thompson’s weaknesses pale in comparison to the competition’s. The complaint about his background as a lobbyist is “inside baseball” and won’t register with 99 percent of the public.

Second, Dougherty has no basis for claiming that Thompson lacks ideas. He has a consistent conservative voting record, has acknowledged his mistake on McCain-Feingold, and has addressed the issues *du jour*—immigration and the fight against Islamofascism—with the right responses.

Third, Dougherty couldn’t be more wrong in claiming that the bedrock principles for which President Reagan and the conservative movement stand are “obsolete.” Since when are low taxes, limited government, a strong defense, and the promotion of American culture and sovereignty obsolete? Contrary to Dougherty’s assertion that the Right faces an “entirely new set of questions,” we face the same old issues along with a few new ones, many of which are old issues packaged differently. Instead of the Soviet Union, we now face Islamofascism, which one could acknowledge regardless of his position on Iraq. Thompson is not living in the past, but seeks to deal with the present through traditional values and principles enunciated by, yes, Reagan and many others.

Finally, Dougherty fails to recognize that one can’t create a candidate; the conservative movement has to dance with the ones that are available. Comparing Thompson to the ghost of Reagan or to some perfect non-candidate is not an argument.

We are not substituting “nostalgia for judgment,” but merely seeking the best all-around candidate to carry the torch in the battle against the forces of evil and

ignorance as represented by the ultimate Democrat standard-bearer. Conservative critics must quit looking for perfection and coalesce behind a candidate who is sufficiently principled to energize the base and who possesses the requisite persona to attract the general voting public. Fred Thompson is that man.

ROBERT BRANTLEY  
*Alexandria, Va.*

## RATIONED CHOICE

Thank you *TAC* and Professor Payne for the cogent essay on the sensibility of self-disciplined, responsible non-insurance (July 16). This is, perhaps, the first substantial, certainly the best, essay I’ve ever seen on the fundamental hang-up of almost all health-insurance regimes.

Payne takes a realistic position on a subject the Right has not sensitively argued and the Left seems unwilling to consider, namely the insatiability of health-care demands. I would support a publicly funded medical care system—if there were a reasonable way to do the inevitable rationing. When one considers the chicanery rife in virtually all insurance systems, on the one hand, and the predictably unlimited appetite for “free” medical services, on the other, one sees the nature of the impasse.

At age 58, I think that I have a fair shot at another decade of reasonably healthy, productive life. But so many of us have been spoiled by the notion that “medicine” entitles us to any and all attempts to live forever. Science and technology have allowed human greed one more avenue for expression, and that immaturity shows in the way we have come to think about medical care.

My hat is off to you, Dr. Payne, for your candid view on this confounding subject, and thanks again, *TAC*, for continuing to surprise me with the cast and haul of your net.

DAN TREECRAFT  
*Spokane, Wash.*

## CREDITING NIXON

With regard to William Lind’s essay (July 30), it is increasingly clear to me that the still-despised Richard Nixon was a far better man and president than he has ever received credit for being. While living through the Watergate scandal, I thought that he deserved all that he brought upon himself. But in the light of history, his misdeeds seem trifling in light of the actions of his immediate predecessors (and some of his successors). The “scandal” seems but a bootstrapping party staged by the media to abet Democrats who could not possibly let Nixon get credit for successfully ending the Kennedy/Johnson catastrophe of intervening in a populist uprising against the colonial power of France.

So many of the points Lind now raises about Iraq ring true to me. We destabilized a territory that was never a nation in the first place. We were unable to establish or maintain order from the beginning or fight the inevitable insurgency effectively. And worst of all, we childishly bought into the con game that the Chalabi-led Iraqi National Congress was going to waft magically into power, erasing overnight centuries of sectarian chaos and bringing Camelot II to a place that has progressed little beyond the Age of Nebuchadnezzar. Ah, hindsight. But were there not supposed to be abler, smarter people who get paid more than I do who might have figured this out before it all happened?

Thanks for your well-thought, focused, and probably ignored-by-all-politicians essay,  
GENE WRIGHT

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*In keeping with our usual publishing schedule, TAC’s editorial offices will be closed for the next two weeks—a well-earned break notably shorter than the Iraqi Parliament’s. We will reopen Aug. 13 and return to print Aug. 23.*