

man, including personal freedom. The sole justification for freedom, in Bozell's view, is that freedom permits human beings to act virtuously in the sight of God, to do God's will, not theirs. In those early days of the renaissance of the conservative movement, when all allies were precious—and a precious few—this reasoning put him at odds with libertarian conservatives and was thus, for its divisiveness, respectfully read though not pursued. But the argument has been vindicated by the solipsistic permissiveness of the sexual revolution of the New Left under the aegis of libertarianism.)

I wonder—I am nagged by the doubt—has the disheartening failure of the conservative movement on the domestic front, dating from the second Reagan administration, been anywhere sufficiently acknowledged or analyzed by our great conservative institutions of scholarly learning? Has sodomy become the groovy kinkiness in our society? Is prayer ever to be restored to our schools? Are the unborn in America never to be safeguarded? And our infirm or derelict elderly—are they now to be at the mercy of the avariciousness of their heirs or the parsimony of the state? Will ever an amendment to the Constitution win through defining the Republic now and forever as Christian bred and born and deliberately affirmed at the founding, putting the quietus to secularists, who seek to desecralize society as well as life?

Recall heroic General Armistead pinning his hat on the tip of his sword and—thrusting the blade high, yelling to his brave men to follow—charging through the Union line on Cemetery Ridge, at once to fall mortally wounded. That's been called the high-water mark of the Confederacy. Did the high-water mark of the 20th-century conservative movement of the United States take place back in December 1995/January 1996 when—in what might as well have been a railroad car's tobacco-sodden

Intelligence analysts are concerned that blowback from the fighting in Gaza could weaken the governments of key allies in the Arab world,

including Jordan, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia and lead to greater regional instability. U.S. communications monitors have noted increased dialogue and even collaboration between Sunni radicals throughout the region and Hamas and Hezbollah, both of whom are supported by Iran. Egypt, since it is a frontline state in the conflict by virtue of its control of Gaza's southern border crossings into Sinai, has been most affected. Popular sentiment strongly supports the Palestinians, but the Cairo government is hostile to Hamas and Hezbollah because of their links with Tehran. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit condemned Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah's call for mass demonstrations in Egypt in very undiplomatic language, warning that "Egyptian armed forces are tasked with defending Egypt. If need be, they will also protect Egypt against people like you." Nasrallah had urged Egyptians to take to the streets "in millions" to force the government to open the Rafah crossing, a border with Gaza, noting that security forces could not stop so many protesters. The appeal sent shivers up a number of spines in Cairo, where fear of a revival of a populist militant movement similar to the Muslim Brotherhood of the 1990s is the number-one concern.



Secret French government reports predict that the current economic meltdown could bring about a revival of Europe-wide extreme left-wing terrorism,

including the sabotage of vital infrastructure, kidnappings of government officials and top businessmen, and random bomb attacks. The government commissioned the reports in the wake of recent riots in Athens, which were spearheaded by anarchist and extreme leftist groups. Analysis by the French domestic intelligence service indicates considerable radicalization among well-educated young people who have been unable to find work in Europe's flagging economy but who have adequate resources to travel throughout the continent and network. The environment is similar to that of the 1970s and 1980s when Action Directe carried out more than 50 attacks in France. At that time, the Baader-Meinhof gang also bombed, kidnapped, and assassinated in Germany, and Italy's Red Brigades abducted and killed a former prime minister. European intelligence agencies have identified operational links among activists in France, Italy, Greece, Germany, and the UK, including detailed planning on the Internet. The violence in Athens demonstrated how a small group of activists could exploit legitimate grievances among young people and bring a city of 4 million to its knees. Flyers passed out on Paris streets in the wake of Athens called on students to follow the example of their Greek counterparts. The intelligence concludes that the alienation of young people in France is largely due to changes in labor laws in 2006 to ease restrictions on hiring and firing employees, making it more difficult for recent graduates to obtain secure positions in the workforce.

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men's room, among the cuspidors—squat, puffy Newt Gingrich stonewalled smooth, sleazy Bill Clinton?

Judging from the political deportment of the Republican Congresses and the White House in domestic matters since that time, has anyone had the audacity, courage, and honesty to tell the bald truth—which is that the Republican Party has failed the cause to which my brother Bill and so many other brilliant souls—Frank Meyer, Jim Burnham, John Chamberlain, to mention just a few—gave unstintingly of their lives? Is any establishment conservative organ today declaring unequivocally that conservatives who have any respect at all for the political philosophy they profess must forswear the Republican Party and on many major issues break ranks with government-trusting (and agnostic) neo-cons? Or is that fresh young mind this minute deciding that whatever the right wing says about anything is tired polemics from which candor and the imagination have long since leaked out?

When I ponder the future of American culture, I wonder, first, whether in the future there will ever again be respect for truth in this Republic or whether we conservatives, like the vainglorious Greeks 2,500 years ago, are so tainted intellectually and corrupted philosophically that we have lost the capacity for critical thinking about ourselves, relying on euphemisms in place of truth.

Today we are trespassing on vital conservative and libertarian tenets without compunction. Here are three.

1. We Americans have turned our backs on the founding ideal of small government. The polecat is out of the bag: charming neocon Fred Barnes published a book candidly calling George W. Bush a “big government” conservative. With the president's blessing, Republicans in the hallowed halls of Congress fattened a monster state and empowered it at every

turn without pausing to consider whither we are going, what we are doing, or what the consequences may be to the Republic down the road. Democrats have now succeeded on a platform that leans ever more toward the corporate state. Must we not ask ourselves: is small government out of date? Is that battle lost to the tides of historical forces and to the rampant march of technology?

2. Though reluctant, Republicans have submitted to the takeover of the economy by the federal government, a foray into the corporate state from which we may never recover. Yet to my knowledge no conservative voice has articulated the ringing indictment that such highhanded action merits, and the American people have submitted meekly. As I write, events on this front are raging more quickly than inflation can destroy an economy.

3. Putative conservatives in the White House and in the Republican Congress plunged the country further into debt through legislation such as the farm bill and the new Medicare entitlement paying for prescription drugs, in the meantime bowing to the perpetuation of established entitlements. Yet no conservative voice was raised to bring up first principles by showing why Social Security *et al.* are inimical to the rationale for republican government and must be phased out or subjected to radical reform. Many conservative voices have written scathingly about the financial woes of the present Social Security administration—which are apocalyptic—but to my knowledge none has yet proposed that Republicans abandon the New Deal-era concept all together.

In my opinion, such candor is necessary. It may be understandable—no less disgusting—that our politicians do not have the stomach for it. But independent conservative intellectuals are keepers of the flame or they are burnt cartridges. It

is insufficient that our conservative organs and think tanks denounce the fiscal lunacies of Social Security while never explicitly grounding themselves in political science, never declaring that we must abolish Social Security as it is currently conceived. *Tant pis*. One has to suppose they are afraid of sounding anachronistic, of talking themselves into irrelevance, of being disparaged as freaks from the lunatic fringe. But that prudence, that tactical wisdom, seductive as it may be perceived, submits without a fight to the accommodationist politics of the Nelson Rockefeller/Dwight Eisenhower GOP of the 1950s and '60s. Those politics are every bit as craven, mistaken, defeatist, and unworthy today as they were back then. My brother's *National Review* was born to stand athwart history, not to tickle the teats of the belly of the beast Leviathan as it strides over us.

On the political level, then, what will be the future of American civilization as far as we conservatives are concerned? Why, of knaves and charlatans on both sides of the aisle driving the Republic headlong into a metastatic colossus of a state in which the citizen has been reduced to a hapless serf; in which blunt, honest language has been euphemized out of existence; and in which a bland and servile acceptance of the inevitability of Big Brother is the received wisdom.

Where are our Friedrich Hayeks of *The Road to Serfdom*, our Eric Voegelins of *The New Science of Politics*, our Russell Kirks of *The Conservative Mind*? Where is our philosopher? Meantime, on the practical front, what can conservatives do? The very first thing is to dissociate from the Republican Party, which has become an albatross around the neck of integrity. ■

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Blue Dogs Bite

Can Bush Democrats and progressives get along?

By Jordan Michael Smith

DESPITE A BRUISING primary, Democrats swiftly resolved their differences. On the eve of the Denver convention, *Time* magazine called the party “more united than perhaps at any other point in the last 30 years.” After Barack Obama’s election and the party’s decisive wins in House and Senate, which followed 2006 midterm victories, the Democrats appear to have overcome the internecine battles that so bedeviled them in the past.

But multiple divisions lurk below the surface. Far from being a model of partisan single-mindedness, the party of Obama suffers deep differences. It is only a matter of time before a contentious issue or antagonistic caucus member punctures the superficial harmony. The economic stimulus package, unions’ mandatory card checks, Iraq withdrawal—these matters could reveal the fissures that divide Democrat from Democrat.

No split is more striking than the one between Blue Dogs and liberals. The former are the offspring of the “Yellow Dog Democrats,” conservative Southern Democrats in the first half of the 20th century who were so devoted to the party, it was said, they would sooner vote for a yellow dog than for a Republican.

As the party gradually embraced civil rights following World War II, however, many of these conservative Democrats became Republicans. By the 1994 midterm elections, said former Texas Democratic Rep. Pete Geren, the remaining yellow dogs had been “choked blue” by the left wing of the party, gradually abandoning their moderation. Conservative

Democrats seized on Geren’s quip and formed the Congressional Blue Dog Caucus in 1995.

The group forms the moderate to conservative wing of the party, often voting with Republicans. (Liberals deride them as “Bush Dogs” for this reason.) Members often come from swing districts where being classified as a liberal is electoral suicide. Blue Dogs frequently defy Democratic orthodoxy on abortion, stem-cell research, national security and gay marriage. The only policy the coalition is unanimously committed to is fiscal responsibility.

The year of the Blue Dogs’ formation, not coincidentally, was the year after the midterm election in which a stunning 54 seats swung from Democratic to Republican hands, giving the GOP a House majority for the first time in 40 years. Depending on whom you ask, the Blue Dog coalition was founded either opportunistically in opposition to an unpopular Democratic president or nobly in opposition to the party’s liberal wing, which had forced a centrist Clinton into unwise battles on gays in the military and universal health-care. In either case, the 1994 loss was the catalyst for centrist House Democrats to band together. As University of California political scientist Martin Wattenberg put it, “One of the great constraints on any president is the short political memory of members of the House of Representatives. Facing election every two years, their time perspective is necessarily different from the president’s. To them, each election result must be compared to that of just two years before.”

The Blue Dogs grew in influence, emerging after the Democratic victories in 2006 as arguably the most important faction in the House. And with many coalition members having campaigned explicitly against the party in November, they are not indebted to Barack Obama in traditional coattail-riding ways. Former co-chair Mike Ross (Ark.), sounded downright combative when he told *USA Today* that he hopes that Obama “recognizes the clout and the voting power of the Blue Dog coalition.”

Ross didn’t exaggerate his caucus’ influence. In the beginning of October, Obama phoned him personally, as well as his fellow Blue Dogs John Tanner (Tenn.) and Allen Boyd (Fla.). “He wanted to work with us,” Ross said. “He also recognized that we had the numbers to block or clear legislation.” Jason Furman, Obama’s economic policy adviser, held his own talks with the Blue Dogs and pledged that Obama would seek to establish “a government unified around the concept of fiscal discipline and centered around the pay-go rule. Insisting on paying for things will lead to better economic policy.” (The pay-as-you-go rule—which requires new mandatory spending and tax cuts to be fully offset in an effort not to increase the deficit—was adopted by the House and Senate in early 2007, though it can easily be waived, as it has been several times over the past two years.)

But the demands of the economic crisis will probably intrude on the Obama-Blue Dog love-in. Paul Krugman, who is in communication with the