

A "Humanitarian" Boondoggle

Alton Heywood

The trouble with conservatives is their belief that 1984 must come, as Mao promised, out of the barrel of a gun. It seldom occurs to them that it is far more likely to creep in, like Sandburg's fog, on little cat feet. They're all going to wake up one morning to discover that Big Brother moved in during the night, bag, baggage, and relatives, and that there's absolutely nothing that anyone, anywhere can do about it. They will have armed themselves to the teeth and kept guarded watch from the battlements only to discover, when the crunch comes, that someone's gone and poisoned the water supply.

A case in point is S. 2007, a catch-all social welfare bill that, but for the grace of God and an already scheduled summer recess, might have breezed through the Senate without so much as a whimper from the Right. And as things stand now, it may do so yet.

S. 2007 started out as a simple two-year extension of the Office of Economic Opportunity. Experience would suggest, however, that nothing proximately or remotely connected with OEO could ever be simple. OEO is by common agreement the most notorious boondoggle in the long and jaded history of governmental boondoggles. It has enemies even on the Left, and its extension by Congress is by no means a sure bet.

Those wonderful folks who gave us the War on Poverty, however, never want for new frontiers. They have undertaken to save OEO by adding onto the extension bill a number of items calculated to secure a self-interested majority for the whole works — the theory being that no one will vote against an entire package even if he dislikes parts of it so long as there's at least one major part that can be worked to his constituency's advantage. In the matter of bridges, dams, and highways, this is known as the old porkbarrel. In the matter of social welfare legislation, it's called humanitarian progress and statesmanlike compromise.

And so it was that as S. 2007 wended its way from subcommittee through parent committee to Senate floor, all manner of goodies got themselves tacked onto the

OEO extension bill, including, but not limited to: (a) comprehensive child care; (b) a new and distinct legal services corporation for the poor; (c) a new employment and job-training program for young men and women; and (d) a new community economic development package.

The item that is, or should be, of gravest concern is Title V, which deals with "Comprehensive Child Development." For those of you who haven't been "developing" your children very well lately, or who yourselves may have been "underdeveloped" children, it should be pointed out that Title V would put the federal government fully and finally into the business of caring for children — for the children of the "disadvantaged" at first, to be sure; but, most assuredly, one day, for your children, my children, everyone's children. Title V is, without the slightest exaggeration, the greatest Trojan Horse Caper ever attempted by the Liberals. It would provide them with the only important tool they need for the Final Solution to the Individual Freedom Problem. In more precise terms, Title V would authorize the federal government to provide (quoting from the Report of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare): "comprehensive physical and mental health, social and cognitive developmental services; food and nutritional services (including family consultation); special programs for minority groups, Indians, and bilingual children; specially designed programs (including after school, summer, weekend, and overnight programs); identification and treatment of physical, mental, and emotional problems, including problems of emotionally disturbed children; prenatal services to reduce malnutrition, infant, and maternal mortality, and the incidence of mental retardation; special activities for physically, mentally, and emotionally handicapped children and children with special learning disabilities; training in the fundamentals of child development for family members and prospective parents; use of child advocates to assist children

and parents in securing full access to other services; and other activities."

Now, it can hardly be said that this proposed undertaking takes knowledgeable men by surprise. On the basis of what the federal government has already undertaken in the past twenty years, this massive new venture is as inevitable as the rising sun and as inexorable as its setting. Right before our very eyes, the federal government is about to acquire potential jurisdiction over each and every aspect of each and every life that's born into the United States of America. It is only a matter of time, surely, before that potential jurisdiction becomes actual.

The "poverty-education complex" (as Congresswoman Edith Green likes to call it) has been working toward this goal for years, and now that they are on the verge of success they can hardly contain themselves. For they realize that "child development" is about to become for the '70's what "progressive education" was to the '20's and '30's: books will be written, symposia conducted, foundations funded, courses taught, whole departments — perhaps colleges — created virtually overnight. The talk shows will be brimful of child development "experts"; *Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, and *Look* will all discover a "crisis" in child development programs, thus necessitating newer and bigger (and less voluntary) federal programs; and at least seven corporations whose business is chiefly concerned with child development books, services, machinery and the like will join Fortune's 500.

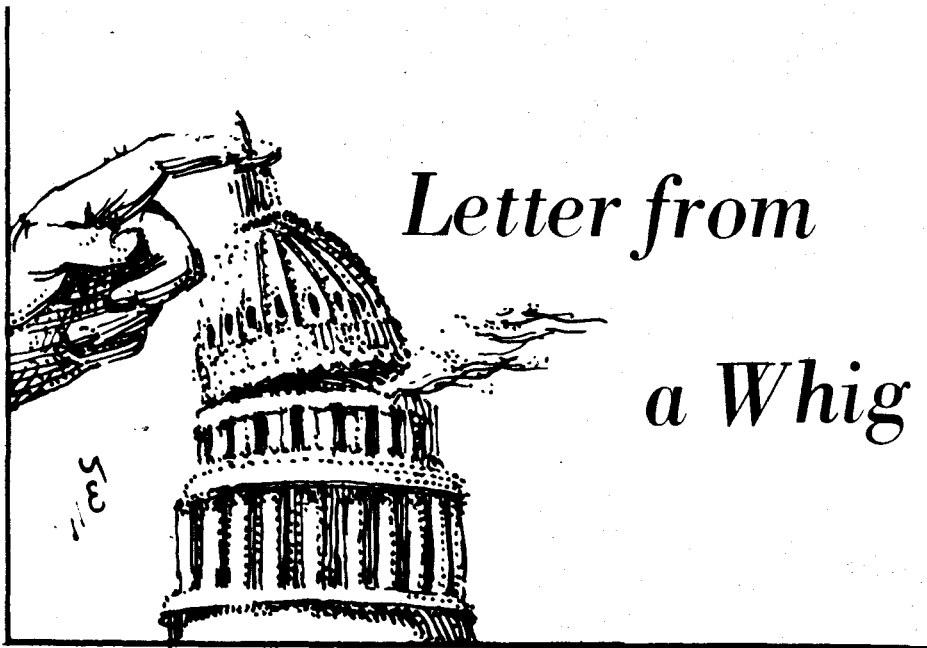
All this will be done with the approval of the Executive Branch and with the advice and consent of Congress. And with the slightest of plugs by the media, who knows but what it won't acquire the applause of a working majority of the public? All of it will be done, course, with the very best of intentions. It will all begin on a voluntary basis. It will be done on the professional recommendation of experts who will claim to have proved beyond the peradventure of a doubt that the laws of nature and of nature's God are no longer operative in these United States. And they will not rest content until they have each and every one of us declared mentally incompetent from the moment of our conception.

And it will all begin with the passage of Title V of S. 2007. Anyone giving odds to the contrary? ☐

Problem Perspiration

*In case you haven't noticed, Ted
Is closing in on Frantic Ed.
Though Teddy says he will not file,
He won't say no in Sherman style.
I know few memories are firm
As feedback from a pachyderm,
But I remember all the stops
He made before he called the cops.
That's why I tend to sweat a lot
When pollsters-jinger Camelot.*

W. H. von Dreele



Letter from a Whig

The Power of Incumbency

George F. Will

When the 92nd Congress re-convened on 8 September it was operating in a political atmosphere very different from that which prevailed two months earlier.

Earlier in the summer the President was on the run, and the pack of Democratic Presidential aspirants was nipping at his heels. In foreign policy, the Communists' seven-point peace proposal had breathed fresh life into the Senate's peace agitators. And on the home front there was vast dismay at the condition of the economy and the President's stated determination to stand pat with an unconvincing "game plan."

Then in the course of one month, the President gave the Nation a dose of Presidential leadership — and he gave the Democratic pretenders a dramatic lesson in the powers of incumbency.

On 15 July he announced his trip to Peking. On 15 August he announced sweeping and generally sensible modifications of his economic policy. These two actions, planned with commendable secrecy and executed with unusual elan, cut the opposition off at the knees.

The announcement of the China trip eclipsed the Communists' seven-point proposal which threatened to be the instrument by which American opinion was finally stampeded into demanding a "date certain" for the U.S. pull-out.

Whatever one thinks of the China trip, it is impossible to deny that it has served a splendid domestic purpose: it has made the peace movement seem and feel irrelevant.

While the Senate doves had been striking their poses, and rallying around feckless resolutions and amendments, the President had been revamping world diplomacy.

While the liberal press and like-minded legislators had been decrying secrecy, the President had been using secrecy as a clearly indispensable instrument for affecting goals which that press and those legislators approve.

Honorable men of good will can and do disagree about the wisdom of the President's new China policy. I believe the

trip is politically useful to the President — and that Chou En-lai is smart enough to understand that. Therefore the President has given a hostage — not to fortune, which is capricious, but to a hostile Government, which is calculating.

Nevertheless, on balance I think the risks are an acceptable price to pay for silencing and demoralizing the President's homefront opposition. This opposition had coalesced around the war issue and at long last had found a dangerous weapon in the Communists' seven-point proposal.

As de Tocqueville noted, democracies are not graceful in their conduct of foreign affairs. But given the exigencies of democratic politics, the President has made the most of a graceless situation.

Ironically, the President's China "thunderbolt" did the Democrats a great favor — and forced the President to do what he did on 15 August. The President's China announcement cut the ground from under the antiwar agitation. And it forced the Democrats to seize upon another issue. That issue — the economy — was ready at hand.

American elections are almost never determined by foreign policy questions. Americans vote on pocketbook issues. The President drove the Democrats onto a promising political path.

But on 15 August he did what only a President can do. He preempted the path, roared through in a shiny new car (minus excise tax), and forced the Democrats into the ditch.

While his rivals spoke, he acted. While they proposed, he disposed.

Again, as in the China gambit, he caught the givers of gratuitous advice in mid-sentence. He left critics looking futile, and more than a little bit feckless.

In imposing a wage-price freeze, cutting spending, cutting taxes, floating the dollar, and altering his legislative priorities the President was acting like a President. In comparison, his rivals looked irrelevant.

The President's economic plan should give pause to those conservatives who were in a slough of despond following the President's announcement about China.

On 16 July conservatives were wondering what difference it made having a Republican rather than a Democrat in the White House. On 16 August they got a kind of answer.

The President wants to stimulate the economy by stimulating private spending rather than by increasing spending in the public sector. He has pledged to cut spending by \$4.7 billion. That is not enough, given the swollen state of the budget (and the deficits), but it shows that his heart is in the right place. He is planning a five percent reduction in the Federal work force. That is not enough, considering the relentless expansion of that force in recent years. But it is a nice symbol.

Sure as God made little green apples, if any of the Democratic contenders were in the White House they would be opting for different stimulants. They would favor using the Federal Government as "the employer of last resort" — and we would be in for another avalanche of public works projects, maybe even including more murals and leaf-raking.

The wage and price freezing is the most spectacular part of the new policy.

But in terms of lasting impact, the most significant item was the floating of the dollar. This will cause a fundamental rearrangement of the international monetary system; and it will cause a substantial shift in trade advantages. Those who chose to look upon the President's policy package as a repudiation of Prof. Milton Friedman should note that Prof. Friedman has long advocated floating the dollar.

Some of the 15 August announcements were political froth. The President has asked Congress "to postpone the implementation of revenue sharing for three months and welfare reform for one year." In fact, revenue sharing is going nowhere in Congress. Furthermore, if any welfare reform does pass, it may not look much like FAP, and the President will not get the credit. Should it pass in the form the President wants, he will get the blame.

The most disagreeable aspect of the economic policy shift was the obfuscating demagoguery about "speculators." Both the President and Secretary Connally voiced a lot of pious nonsense about the "international money speculators" who allegedly had done wicked things to our virtuous dollar.

Denunciations of the "gnomes of Zurich" are to be expected from nations whose economic chickens are coming home to roost. Thus it was neither surprising nor alarming when our Government waffled on about "speculators." But for the record, the "speculators" are being libeled and mislabeled.

A speculator is someone whose expectations are embarrassing.

In this case, "speculators" were persons who expected (correctly) that the obvious weakness of the dollar would lead to a decrease in its value relative to the other major currencies.

These speculators — these sensible persons — included a large number of executives of American-based international corporations. These executives were doing what they are paid to do — and what we should thank them for doing: they were getting their respective companies' assets out of weak currencies and into strong currencies.