

liberals feel good while upsetting conservatives. So why should anyone not a committed liberal buy the paper? (especially with the Internet handily available to provide *all* the information anyone could want, including even left-wing propaganda, often much more literately and entertainingly written than it is in the *Times*)?

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Rosa Brooks, who began her *Los Angeles Times* column in 2005, has left the paper for a position in the Obama administration at the Pentagon. From the *Times* to the Obama administration probably won't be a difficult transition for her.

Before Brooks left, she squeezed out one more inane column, calling for a Soviet-style government bailout for the paper so that "top journalists" can remain employed. The newspaper industry is in a "death spiral," she wrote in her final column, and its only savior now is big government.

"Years of foolish policies have left us with a choice: We can bail out journalism, using tax dollars and granting licenses in ways that encourage robust and independent reporting and commentary, or we can watch, wringing our hands, as more and more top journalists are laid off or bail out, leaving us with nothing in our newspapers but ads, entertainment features, and

crossword puzzles." Very troubling indeed. Imagine the perilous condition into which California would have fallen without Tim Rutten's columns, the paper's week-long front page series on female boxers, and George Skelton's sage advice to the GOP.

And isn't it reassuring to know that the nation's safety is now in Rosa Brooks' able hands? As the United Kingdom's *Telegraph* noted, she comes to her high-ranking Pentagon job (she is an "adviser" to the Under Secretary of Defense) with impeccable qualifications. Among her other national security credentials, she has worked at George Soros's Open Society Institute in New York. She has also produced a steady stream of well-considered columns in which she called George Bush "our torturer-in-chief," compared life in America under Bush to "being a passenger in a car driven by a drunk driver," and said members of the previous administration embraced the "values normally exemplified by military *juntas*."

The daughter of *Nation* contributor Barbara Ehrenreich, Brooks says she is "not taking a government job only because I feel lucky to parachute out before some cost-cutter eliminates every last column. At this moment in history, I can't imagine anything more rewarding than being part of the new team that's shaping U.S. policy." She calls this her "personal government bailout."

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The Fusionist

Obamanomics, like all socialism, is a preordained failure

But what Rush merely hopes for the 'never waste a crisis' Democrats are counting on.

GREGORY SANFORD

ATEMPEST AROSE among Republicans (also among top Democrats, but about them, I suggest only that readers continue to ignore their usual staged anguish) over Rush Limbaugh saying during his speech to the Na-

tional Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) that he hopes "President Obama fails." Republican National Committee Chairman Michael

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The original 'crisis is a terrible thing to waste' Democrat

Steele reportedly called the remark "incendiary" and "ugly." A less agitated Bill Bennett merely characterized Limbaugh's comments as "not what you say the first week the man's been inaugurated ... the rhetoric could be improved." *National Review Online* contributor David Frum broadened his attack to include Limbaugh's whole speech, lamenting that Rush is "a man who is aggressive and bombastic, cutting and sarcastic" Reputedly conservative writer David Brooks (a regular *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist since 2003, who, formerly, served *The Weekly Standard* as senior editor and *Newsweek* and *The Atlantic Monthly* as contributing editor — I leave it to readers to make the call whether or not this resume likely belongs to a "conservative") said "the idea that we shouldn't be rooting" for Obama is "just stupid."

THESE LIMBAUGH critics seemed to take issue less with what the popular national talk host said than with how he said it, as if to suggest that they might actually agree with his expressed hope but believed it bad tactics to have said it out loud — at least in *those* words. (The exception is David Brooks who, to give him the most charitable reading possible, seemed to think Limbaugh was calling for some sort of failure of the *presidency* or of the nation, as if Rush meant some disaster should befall the country angering the people enough to convince them to rebel against Obama. And he wants to lecture *us* on stupid ideas)

Not all conservative reaction was negative. Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal said the anti-Limbaugh

uproar represented "political correctness run amok." He quite reasonably said his "answer to the question is very simple: 'Do you want the president to fail?' It depends on what he is trying to do." Just so, and one of the things I dare say *Limbaugh* was trying to do was combat the sometimes latent, but never far from the surface, Republican bad habit of appeasing sworn enemies, smilingly acquiescing in what they like to call "political reality." A more accurate description would be pre-emptive surrender or, simply, cave-in. The left can bring formidable pressure and enticements to bear, particularly on GOP office holders, to convince them to cave. As Stan Evans joked about the young Turk Reaganites who invaded the nation's capital in 1981 after RR's presidential election, "they came thinking Washington a cesspool, but many soon decided it was more like a hot tub." Reagan himself, not once but twice, was hoodwinked into supporting *higher* taxes, as was (once) George H. W. "Read My Lips" Bush, who lost his re-election bid after helping soldier-through a Democrat tax hike. That, Mr. Brooks, really *was* stupid. (W. seldom backed down once he had taken a stand, particularly on Iraqi liberation, which was one reason the left hated him so much. Hell hath no fury like a lefty confronting a designated sucker he finds he can't buy.)

The worst fall-out from these cave-ins usually comes not in the disastrous policy they bring the state or nation, although that's bad enough. They often also result in the collapse of whatever coalitions have formed or are forming to oppose Democrat misrule. Reagan's domestic agenda never recovered from his 1982 adventure in tax hiking, leaving America and the world able only to imagine what stunning victories in down-sizing abusive government might have been achieved (to match his solid historic triumphs in foreign and defense policy and his stupendous first year supply-side tax *cuts*). Sacramento Republicans who recently backed tax increases are feeling significant heat. The national Republican Party sacrificed its standing with the American people, W. lost his base of voter support, and congressional Republicans lost their majority (some even going to jail) — all for heeding the siren's song temptation to spend like Democrats.

Under the circumstances, I would say Limbaugh was quite right to criticize the unfortunate habit of GOP leaders, not to mention of many conservative commentators, to preface every criticism — no matter how scalding — of the latest Obama outrage by say-

ing, in effect, “I really do want this administration to succeed but ...” It’s like the nonsensical convention of complimenting our left-wing major news operations by calling them the “Mainstream Media” just before dissecting their latest all-out assault on America’s actual mainstream. Did anyone ever hear a prominent Democrat political leader say he wished that W.’s or H. W.’s or any Republican administration *ever* would succeed? Try to visualize, say, Michael Moore or Harry Reid uttering such words and the impossibility of such a scene ever happening should be easy to understand. (I will concede that smooth talkers like Bill Clinton or Obama himself might be found expressing some such sentiments, but no one would be fooled by them, any more than anyone would be fooled by Stalin or Saddam Hussein assuring people their one true aim was world peace. Republicans, given their reputation as always-ready-to-make-a-deal, enjoy no such immunity against being believed when they seem to wish their opponents well.)

DEMOCRAT POLICIES are always terrible, but their tactics often work and, to the extent they are not immoral, often pay emulation. At least we need not send quite so many signals quite so clearly hinting that we may be ready to hear the next bribe offer or to cave before the next Democrat threat. Republicans sometimes seem positively blind — particularly those quickest to chide conservatives for “not wanting to win” and for “preferring purity to victory” — to the self-inflicted catastrophes they work on their own political fortunes through these defeatist collapses in the face of enemy operations. For a short list: they dispirit our rank and file foot soldiers (already betrayed, and feeling so, too many times to count); they signal a real or at least seeming weariness to continue the fight (giving comfort to the enemy); they indicate an unsteady grasp of principle, and, even worse, of the *importance* of principle, which is important especially to the conservative cause. Liberalism and all leftism consists in fleeing true responsibility and principled self-discipline; our cause is to uphold what Douglas MacArthur called “a great moral code — the code of conduct and chivalry of those who guard this beloved land of culture and ancient descent” against slavery to emotion and appetite, *viz.*: liberalism. It is also worth noting, for those concerned at all costs to avoid “incendiary, ugly,” not to mention “aggressive and bombastic, cutting and sarcastic,” rhetoric, that what we

say to and about ourselves we often come to believe.

Here’s a news flash: Obama’s preferred policies have *already failed*, ten thousand times, wherever and whenever they have been tried. They *will* greatly damage the economy and our political and social culture. It is inevitable; count on it. Just how destructive they turn out to be depends largely on the built-in and residual vitality of the American people and their free institutions. But the only outcome possible for Obama’s announced efforts — from tax hikes to nationalized health care and banking to blame-America-first foreign policy to renegade judges and the dismantling of our defenses against aggression — is failure, if by that you mean catastrophe for the American people and the American nation, as we must assume at least David Brooks means when he counsels us to “root for Obama.” Perhaps ironically, it is, of course, the “you never want a serious crisis to go to waste” Democrats of this administration who wish ardently for just such disasters as some seem to worry Rush Limbaugh hopes for. They look back at history and see what devastating opportunities for tyranny were wrought by World Wars I and II and, between them, by the Great Depression; they see that Franklin Roosevelt, who utterly failed to end that depression, did not lose by that failure, but actually built on it a thoroughly dishonest reputation as a national savior. And seeing all this they seek to reproduce it today.



FDR built repeated New Deal failures into a dishonest reputation as a national savior.

These people *like* terrorists, and cringe to hear them referred to as such. They hate America and traverse the globe saying everywhere that, yes, we Americans are the scourge of the planet and the cause of every peoples' misery, but we promise to do better, begging forgiveness in the meantime. From left-wing "muck-rakers" like Lincoln Steffens in the 19-teens and '20s to the Clintons, Gores, and Obamas of today, these are the people who championed, first, communism in its Stalinist, Maoist, Vietnamese, and Cuban forms and then jumped horses, without missing a (hoof) beat, to support Middle East Nazism and ter-

rorism. They, not Rush Limbaugh, want America to fail, and are willing to ally themselves with any troglodyte ghoulish if only he is willing to say he too hates America. By constructing possibly the most concentratedly-destructive policy agenda in history, they are doing everything they can to make America fail. In this, they — that is, Obama — will succeed to the extent the American people permit them to succeed. If Republicans stand for anything, they can scarcely do other than to hope, pray, and work ceaselessly for Obama to fail in what, as Bobby Jindal says, he, devotedly, "is trying to do."

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Those in power over us

Starting to Shrug

As government grows, the most productive members of society begin to change their behavior.

TED ARCHER

IN 1957, with the United States fresh off its victory over fascism, Ayn Rand finished her opus, *Atlas Shrugged*. Not even she could have foreseen the prescience of the publication date until the Soviet Union launched the *Sputnik* satellite only days before its release.

Fitting, perhaps, that a novel espousing the virtues of capitalism, individualism, and reason would become available just as the nation's collective fear would erupt into a decades-long stalemate with the Soviet Union.

Rand was indeed prescient: she wrote about a national government that becomes increasingly involved in the private sector. In her novel, officials, tapping the crises of the day, use friends in the press

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to spread fear and suggest that only the central government can deliver the solutions the people so desperately desire. In a creative twist, the government refuses outright nationalizations of various industries — railroads, steel mills, copper mines — and in fact reacts with horror at the notion it would engage in outright socialist policies. And yet, despite outward claims that private industry is valued and that it will be allowed to prosper, the government enacts a series of laws that restrict and control private enterprise. Sound familiar?

But, although Rand's novel rails against an overreaching government, the book is not about the proper system of governance. Rather, it's about individuals — and how they react to incentives.

As Rand's government grows, as more people are on the public dole, and as more businesses rely on national legislation for their survival, the most productive members of society begin to change their behavior. The heads of industry and the most individu-

