

Lord Protect Us From The Stimulators

—WASHINGTON—

For months the claim running through Washington and inspiring even hardened cynics is that the Democrats really learned a lot during the 1990s. They are no longer the smug statist, the prodigal Keynesians. They now believe in the private sector and in markets. Unfortunately our present impasses over airport security and economic stimulus suggest that what was learned in the 1990s has been forgotten.

The airport security bill is being held up by the Democrats' and some Republicans' insistence that security will be best ensured by a federalized security force, not by private security forces competing to uphold security standards set by the federal government. As security-conscious as the Israelis are, they rely on private security forces. The pols would have us think that a federalized airport security force would be designed to the standards of the Green Berets. Yet storming an enemy citadel is vastly different from standing vigilantly at commercial airports eyeing thousands of peaceful citizens for eight or more hours a day. Most Americans correctly see government services as slow, unresponsive, and incompetent. Why would a federalized airport security force be any different?

The debate over an economic stimulus package also suggests that the Democrats and even many House Republicans have learned very little from recent experience. The recently-passed House bill would attempt to stimulate the economy by returning money to people and corporations, in the hope that they would spend it and "get the economy going again." Yet economic experience proves this fond hope to be unwarranted. As Bruce Bartlett writes in the *Wall Street Journal*, rebates on the state and federal level since the 1970s have repeatedly failed to raise consumer spending significantly or to jolt a sleeping economy to action. People put the windfall in the bank or use it to pay off debt.

Economic experience does offer one proven policy for economic stimulus, tax cuts on the margin. The Reagan tax cuts in the 1980s, the Kennedy cuts in the early 1960s, and the Coolidge cuts in the 1920s took the tax burden off economic activity. Workers eager for more long-lasting income worked

harder and invested more. The economy grew more prosperous.

Taxes impede economic activity. Tax cuts stimulate economic activity. That is not something that has always been known by policymakers. In reading historian David Kennedy's superb history of the United States from 1929 to 1945, *Freedom From Fear*, I was again reminded that both Republicans and Democrats in the 1930s actually believed that they could overcome the Depression by raising taxes. President Franklin Roosevelt's first budget raised taxes and cut government. Doing so only slowed the economy more.

There is one stimulus effort underway on Capitol Hill that reveals that at least some politicians have learned from experience—the package put together by Iowa's Senator Charles Grassley and his colleagues on the Finance committee. It would advance the implementation of lower marginal income tax rates that were passed this summer but are not to take effect until 2004 and 2006. Grassley's plan would put them into effect this January. The economy has slowed. GDP fell by 0.4% in the third quarter. With the hits the economy has taken since September 11 the fourth quarter will be slower still.

The federal government took in a surplus of \$127 billion this past fiscal year. At a time of economic slow-down, that is not what we need. Experience has shown that cutting marginal taxes rates is the policy that leads to growth. Until the stimulus debate began on Capitol Hill, I thought most Democrats had learned that.

Committing High Deeds In The Lowest Places

—WASHINGTON—

We read about the tough measures that the President and Congress are taking to finish off the barbarians and bring others to justice. Rescinding provisions that limit our military and intelligence from doing their unpleasant work is admirable and exigent. Yet among the many thoughts that rush in during this time of national emergency are those provoked by a small headline appearing recently at the bottom of the *Washington Post's* front page. It stated: "Nixon Officials Named in Suit."

The "Nixon officials" were Henry Kissinger and Richard Helms. You might

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remember them. They are being sued by the relatives of a Chilean military commander who was killed in a "covert operation" allegedly ordered by Kissinger, Helms and others thirty-one years ago. The episode was but one of many in the late Cold War.

The Chilean's death is the kind of shadowy tale that enflames those of a left-wing inclination. Hollywood and the media churn out such stories for the entertainment of general audiences, combining fiction with fact while smearing members of government and the military. The consequence is the kind of frivolous lawsuit that these distinguished elderly citizens now face. But, at the moment, the lawsuit and the tendentious stories of alleged misdeeds committed by American officials pursuing national security have a more pressing importance. Most Americans want their government to go after Osama bin Laden and his fellow murderers as well as the regimes that harbor them. Will the Americans today vested with the heavy responsibility of protecting us face the prospect of appearing on some faraway tomorrow in a minor newspaper headline stating, "Bush Officials Named in Suit"?

For three decades some American politicians and their supposedly liberal constituents have been passing legislation and regulations that hamper the ability of government to maintain American security against the kind of atrocities committed last week. Senator Frank Church got the ball rolling with Congressional hearings in 1975 that betrayed CIA agents and operations. He was applauded. *Counter-Spy* magazine listed the identities of American agents around the world. Church's florid description of the CIA

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reveals the mood of the era. He called it a “rogue elephant on the rampage.”

The morally-acute continued their work. The Carter Administration all but eliminated agents on the ground in intelligence gathering, relying on technology despite the protests of intelligence experts. Spy satellites cannot be sued for misbehavior. Nor do they engage in rough stuff. Executive orders in 1976, 1978, and 1981 ended the American government’s ability to engage in the use of assassination for national security purposes. They even curtailed our agents from contact with foreign agents who might engage in such projects on behalf of their own countries. More recently Senator Robert Torricelli has authored legislation limiting our authority to work with individuals or intelligence agencies accused of human rights violations. Senator Patrick Leahy has authored similar legislation limiting our government from working with or supporting foreign military forces that may be accused of human rights violations. The evidence of human rights violations need not be especially probative. State Department bureaucrats can decide.

All of this high-mindedness has limited our security forces from doing their jobs, jobs that would have prevented last week’s vile acts. Some of this “high-mindedness” was surely well-intended. Some of it was political exploitation of others’ good intentions. At any rate now we are going ahead and either rescinding executive orders against assassination or at least fashioning means to bypass them. Doubtless the niceties of Senator Torricelli and of Senator Leahy will be put aside as our military and intelligence operatives spread out into the

lairs inhabited by terrorists and by the clansmen and intelligence agencies that might conspire in their arrest or death. But how effective will our forces be knowing that on some faraway day they might make headlines as an aggrieved relative or simple crank takes advantage of high-minded laws?

That is why the United States has been right in giving the cold shoulder to the movement behind the International Criminal Court. It is also why Congress ought to pass Congressman Bob Barr’s declaration of war against international terrorists and against those who assist them. The President would be granted maximum flexibility and have all restraints removed in pursuing this war. American resolve would be affirmed. Congressional opportunists would be denied chances to interfere with the pursuit of these barbarians. Finally, our security forces would know that America is with them today and will be with them all days... with gratitude and protection from frivolous lawsuits and the whims of an ever-changing political climate.

Is He A Fire Breathing Terrorist Or A CIA Plant?

—WASHINGTON—

Since the Korean War in the early 1950s, limited American military engagements such as the one we are now in usually follow the same course. First there is the patriotic effulgence. Then the star spangled national façade suffers fissures, usually created by the extreme left, later widened by the pained scrupling of *bien pensant* liberals. The process could take place even in this conflict where we are facing not such a plausible foe as the avuncular Ho Chi Minh or good old Mao Tse-tung but a villainous crank who would send sneaks into civilian airplanes to commandeer them from the defenseless and slam them into buildings that, for all he knew, contained many of his co-religionists.

Actually the process is already beginning. Know-it-all such as Susan Sontag, the literary egotist, and Professor Noam Chomsky, a linguist, have explained that the atrocities in New York and Washington are perfectly understandable given America’s controversial history (All this could have been avoided had Henry Wallace won the Democratic presidential nomination back in 1948!) Then *New*

York Times columnists Bill Keller and Frank Rich came forward to depict any criticism of the likes of Sontag-Chomsky as alarming signs of America’s totalitarian impulse.

And then comes the growing controversy within the media over the government’s efforts to persuade the TV networks not to broadcast the Rev. Osama bin Laden’s dirges from the rock pile he calls home or the cave or the ant castle. Both President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair have supposedly importuned their respective networks to keep the clever terrorists’ performances from unsuspecting viewers. The press perceives government attempts at “censorship.”

Here I would counsel the networks to employ the utmost circumspection. My guess is that giving airtime to the alleged bin Laden is precisely what the White House and 10 Downing Street want. There are leaders whose presence inspired their followers to great feats. Supposedly Napoleon’s presence on a battlefield was worth tens of thousands of seasoned troops; certainly Roosevelt’s reassuring presence in the White House inspired the nation. On the other hand there are leaders who inspire revulsion or derision.

Have you noticed the peculiarly blank look in the eyes of this fellow whom our leaders insist is the fire-breathing terrorist, Osama bin Laden? Have you noticed that he is wearing a Timex Ironman Triathlon wrist watch and camouflage clothes that are either Army surplus or right out of the National Rifle Association catalogue? And does anyone doubt that the beard is a fake? It looks like horsehair to me. I have no doubt that he is a CIA plant, dreamed up to induce snickers throughout Islam and embarrassment among the angry galoots who have been trained to bomb Westerners’ skyscrapers, old peoples’ homes, and perhaps put anthrax on the seats of merry-go-rounds.

Some of us have actually studied the great military feats of the Islamic world. We remember Saladin who swept up from Egypt and captured Jerusalem in the Twelfth Century, the Turk forces of yore, and more recently T. E. Lawrence’s colleagues in the Desert Wars. This pathetic film in his dressing gown is no Saladin. It is obvious propaganda from Western intelligence. Once Western audiences get hooked on him he will be feeding the world disinformation and shaming terrorists everywhere. ↘

HIJACKERS SURPRISED TO FIND SELVES IN HELL

'We Expected Eternal Paradise' Say Suicide Terrorists

JAHANNEM, OUTER DARKNESS—The hijackers who carried out the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon expressed confusion and surprise Monday to find themselves in the lowest plane of Na'ar, Islam's Hell.

"I was promised I would spend eternity in Paradise, being fed honeyed cakes by 67 virgins in a tree-lined garden, if only I would fly the airplane into one of the Twin Towers," said Mohammed Atta, one of the hijackers of American Airlines Flight 11, between attempts to vomit up the wasps, hornets, and live coals infesting his stomach. "But instead, I am fed the boiling feces of traitors by malicious, laughing Iffrit. Is this to be my reward for destroying the enemies of my faith?"

The rest of Atta's words turned to raw-throated shrieks, as a tusked, asp-tongued demon burst his eyeballs and drank the fluid that ran down his face.

According to Hell sources, the 19 eternally damned terrorists have struggled to understand why they have been subjected to soul-withering, infernal torture ever since their Sept. 11 arrival.

"There was a tumultuous conflagration of burning steel and fuel at our gates, and from it stepped forth these hijackers, the blessed name of the Lord already turning to molten brass on their accursed lips," said Iblis The Thrice-Damned, the cacodemon charged with conscripting new

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arrivals into the ranks of the forgotten. "Indeed, I do not know what they were expecting, but they certainly didn't seem prepared to be skewered from eye socket to bung-hole and then placed on a spit so that their flesh could be roasted by the searing gale of flatus which issues forth from the haunches of Asmoday."

"Which is strange when you consider the evil with which they ended their lives and those of so many others," added Iblis, absently twisting the limbs of hijacker Abdul Aziz Alomari into unspeakably obscene shapes.

"I was told that these Americans were enemies of the one true religion, and that Heaven would be my reward for my noble sacrifice," said Alomari, moments before his jaw was sheared away by faceless homunculi. "But now I am forced to suckle from the 16 poisoned leathern teats of Gophahmet, Whore of Betrayal, until I

burst from an unwholesome engorgement of curdled bile. This must be some sort of terrible mistake."

Exacerbating the terrorists' tortures, which include being hollowed out and used as prophylactics by thorn-cocked Gulbuth The Rampant, is the fact that they will be forced to endure such suffering in sight of the Paradise they were expecting.

"It might actually be the most painful thing we can do, to show these murderers the untold pleasures that would have awaited them in Paradise, if only they had lived pious lives," said Praxitas, Duke of Those Willingly Led Astray. "I mean, it's tough enough being forced through a wire screen by the callused palms of Halcorym and then having your entrails wound onto a stick and fed to the toothless, foul-breathed swine of Gehenna. But to endure that while watching the righteous drink from a river of wine? That can't be fun."

Underworld officials said they have not yet decided on a permanent punishment for the terrorists.

"Eventually, we'll settle on an eternal and unending task for them," said Lord Androalphus, High Praetor of Excruciations. "But for now, everyone down here wants a crack at them. The legions of fang-wombed hags will take their pleasure on their shattered carcasses for most of this afternoon. Tomorrow, their flesh will be melted from their bones like wax in the burning embrace of the Mother of Cowards. The day after that, they'll be sodomized by the Fallen and their bowels shredded by a demonic ejaculate of burning sand. Then, on Sunday, Satan gets them all day. I can't even imagine what he's got cooked up for them." 



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