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"Regressives' Can't Handle The Truth

By BYRON BERGERON
Contributing Editor

I was recently blogging on a little known internet college sports site where the conversation turned to politics. Nothing ruins March Madness quicker than political madness. Thanks to John Ransom who is often published at Townhall.com. I had at my disposal a Newsweek article written in 1975 about climate change and the impending doom of modern civilization as we knew it. When presented with the article the regressive sports fans revolted in a hissy fit mired in anger and filled with insults.

When I pointed out I did not understand the tidal wave of anger directed at me a very astute blogger responded “You’ve never noticed that libs react angrily when challenged? It’s all based around the fact that politicians prey on their emotions to swindle their votes to forward agendas. Libs vote with emotion and conservatives vote based on reason.”

I could not have said it better myself. But I am no closer to understanding it. If someone is manipulating you for votes, playing on your emotions, and taking advantage of your good nature by misleading you, shouldn’t you be angry at them? But as I write this I have to concede it works so well it has swallowed the entire regressive platform. It is easily summed up. Just lie, my constituents are too dumb and lazy to look it up.

Brace yourself, remain calm, try not to shriek, I am going to use my 1957 Webster’s dictionary. I know it’s unusual but golly geez is it accurate. Liberal “implies tolerance of others views as well as open mindedness to ideas… specifically implies a being ahead of the times.” Progressive “moving forward or onward…..marked by progress, reform or a continuing improvement.”

If its starts with a lie, doesn’t it stand to reason that the lies will continue thereafter? Climate Change the lie that just keeps on giving. It garners a strong voting block, it is has no foreseeable solution, and it creates defiance in its believers. Who would not favor protecting Mother Earth? Forget that EPA regulations, and unions drive jobs out of this country by the thousands hurting the very constituents all regressives purport to help. Forget, that natural gas is Putin’s way of controlling the European Union.

The lies do not stop there. Conservatives universally stand as bigots. The 13th Amendment abolishing slavery was supported 100 percent by Republicans, 30 votes and only 8 votes from democrats. The 14th Amendment giving blacks citizenship was introduced and passed by republicans and only republicans. The 15th Amendment giving blacks the right to vote was introduced and passed with every republican vote and zero democrats voting positive.

It was Robert Byrd who founded a West Virginia chapter of Penny Wisdom.
Continued from page 3

the Klu Klux Klan and wrote in a letter to another segregationist democrat Theodore G. Bilbo “I shall never fight in the armed forces with a negro by my side ... Rather I should die a thousand times, and see Old Glory trampled in the dirt never to rise again, than to see this beloved land of ours become degraded by race mongrels, a throwback to the blackest specimen from the wilds.” And lest we forget the current leader of the regressive movement our own Harry Reid’s clearly racist comments concerning our president’s lack of a negro dialect and light skin.

But the lies don’t stop there. Conservatives universally stand against women. In point of fact they wage war on women. Ignoring the obvious smoky in the pokey debacle, history again reveals the truth.

On January 12th 1915 at a time when democrats held 255 congressional seats women’s suffrage was defeated with 85 democrats voting against the right for women to vote. Republicans voted 81-34 in favor of women voting. Just three years later women’s suffrage again failed by just two votes when the amendment was presented in the senate with republicans voting in favor by 27-10 margin and Democrats barely mustering a majority vote of just 26-21 in favor. The women’s vote was attempted a third time failing again in the Senate with Republicans voting in favor 30-12 and democrats again failing women with a 24-18 vote. Interestingly, on May 2, 1919 when republicans now held 219 congressional seats the 19th Amendment passed with Republicans voting 200-19 votes in the house and democrats voting 102-69. This time it passed the senate with republicans voting 36-8 and democrats 20-17. You see ladies, republicans want you to vote and want your vote. But to listen to regressives of today tell it, republicans wage war on women.

Let’s not forget immigration. Who can forget President Obama’s 2009 speech to a joint session where Obama clearly stated that Obama insurance would not insure illegal immigrants. Representative Joe Wilson exclaimed “you lie.” The liberal response was anger. This conservative wants more legal immigrations especially from Mexico. It is highly doubtful others feel differently.

It is a monumental task to list and argue the lies espoused by the regressives; I did not have sexual relations with that woman, you can keep your health insurance and your doctor, Benghazi was caused by a You-Tube video, not a smidgeon of corruption, etc., etc., etc. They are too many to list. The lies never stop. But the lies are easy to see. What is far more difficult to understand is a liberal’s response to the lie. I am no closer to grasping why so much anger is directed toward someone telling the truth. But what appears quite clear is that no self-respecting regressive would ever let the truth get in their way. Why should they? Lies work better.

Mr. Bergeron is a Reno-based defense attorney
Commentary: Ron Knecht

Apocalypse now: population bomb to global warming

“The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s, the world will undergo famines – hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death…”

So began The Population Bomb, a 1968 advocacy book by Dr. Paul Ehrlich. He indicted American affluence and uncontrolled procreation as key parts of the over-population apocalypse he foresaw and thus as pernicious problems to be solved by Draconian public-sector and even international action.

He was wrong, and not just about timing of the pop bomb. I raise his scare-mongering because many people still embrace it and its derivative narratives today: resource depletion, limits to growth, and most environmental religion and green dogma.

Consider some parallels between the pop bomb and man-made global warming. Start with computer-based models and the inputs and assumptions that go into them.

For pop bomb theorists after Ehrlich, the quantitative tool was a cohort model; for global warming, complex, extensive climate and greenhouse gas simulations. The key erroneous inputs for the pop bomb were assumed fertility rates. For global warming, we have speculative assumptions and estimates of feedback effects, increasing cloud cover impacts, etc.

Turn the crank on the model and get – Voila! – projections for disaster: mass starvation, now joined by rising seas and desertification, etc. As one who has over four decades built and used many computer models, I know their value in science and policy – but also their limitations.

Computer model runs and other scientific tools cannot sustain claims of consensus that many true believers make. Moreover, science is not about consensus, but instead about hypotheses and investigations to disprove or refine them and generate new ones. Above all, claims that scientific consensus supports or requires public-sector actions, proposed reductions in human liberty, property rights and market freedom are false in their nature, because science cannot answer those issues.

Ehrlich said: “We must have population control at home … by compulsion if voluntary methods fail.” The unvarnished desires of green elites to dictate to the rest of us (via high energy and water prices, land use and other resource and property restrictions, and myriad other ways) is the key common thread from the 1960s through today.

Contra Ehrlich, today, we face not the population bomb, but instead population implosion from continuously and unexpectedly declining fertility rates around the world.

Russia and Japan already have experienced accelerating population decline, soon to be joined by Italy, Germany and others. Even India and Africa are seeing continuously and surprisingly declining population growth rates. But the biggest looming human and economic disaster is in China, whose one-child policy was the kind of thing Ehrlich advocated. Without either increasing fertility or greater immigration, the U.S. will also slide into the vortex of decline.

Ehrlich erroneously claimed that, even if his diagnosis erred, his prescriptions would do no harm. Warming advocates make similar false claims now. However, suppressing population and economic growth reduces productivity growth and thus human wellbeing. History around the world shows that statist central planning, command and control lead to decay and decline. The rule of law, individual freedom, private property and free markets lead to human flourishing.

I’m not saying man-made warming claims are true or false; instead, they reason for continued real scientific investigation. And scientists should bring their expertise to policy debates – while being modest about the contributions science can make to those matters and candid about their own biases. However, global warming advocacy is as much driven by the lust for power, prestige and resources as by wholesome and genuine concern.

RON KNECHT

Ron Knecht of Carson City is an economist, law school graduate and Nevada higher education regent.
There is a large part of me which is enjoying the absurd decision reached last week by a Chicago based National Labor Relations Board official which says that Northwestern University’s football players are school employees and should be able to form a union. After all, it is the ham handedness of the NCAA (this is the recovering sports writer in me) and most college athletic departments which got us to this point. And the Obama Administration’s absurd fixation with unions. (Here comes the political pundit.)

Still, after I’ve had a good laugh, it’s time to look at this through the lens of reality.

Are student athletes employees? Well, there is no doubt that they do get paid. An undergraduate degree at Northwestern is, by that university’s own numbers, something north of $250,000 assuming it is completed in four years. And, presumably, since most football or basketball players (particularly from Northwestern) do NOT make it to the NBA or the NFL, that degree does have a market value in the real world which far exceeds the cost of getting it.

So, the concept that a student who plays football or basketball to get through school is not getting fair compensation is crazy talk. The kind of crazy talk which the United Steelworkers—who are behind this—would need to go to college to learn just how crazy it is. They probably do still teach economics at Northwestern. Maybe the Steelworkers need a special course.

And the fact that these little twerps are getting a college education which stickers at a quarter of a million dollars for their athletic efforts and which is probably easily worth a million dollars more to them once they are in the job market is the precise reason this is mostly nonsense. (They do have a few points we’ll get to in a minute.)

Back in the days when I ran a radio network out of Tulsa, I also ran the Oral Roberts University basketball network. ORU was coached by the late Ken Trickey. Trick used to say about the NCAA that, “if it was good for the boy, it was against the rules.”

But he also used to say that the opportunity to get that college degree was the best deal out there. He was not wrong.

The concept of unionizing college football and basketball players is, in a word they used on a university campus in my day, ludicrous.

What are they going to do? Strike for more playing time? Fewer two-a-days? Use their new found power to get the coach to play a more NBA style run and gun so their professional prospects will be greater?

These are college kids. They are getting a free education in return for playing a game. Most of them—all of them for that matter—desperately need that education.

Now, if you want to talk about tweaking the contract, that’s one thing.

I would think that a player should have his scholarship vest after the freshman year and that it should be good through the highest degree offered by that institution for an unlimited period of time. Or, put another way, after they have exhausted their dreams of playing professionally, they ought to be able to go back to school and get the thing of value they earned in their college playing days. You know, an education.

Now there’s an argument made that the Universities are reaping millions from the football and basketball programs and that coaches are getting rich.

That’s true.

A mediocre football coach at a mediocre state university can make the best part of a million dollars a year while paying no attention to academics or graduation rate. (And you folks at UNLV know who I’m writing about.)

Perhaps the university presidents who allegedly run the NCAA could head off that criticism by passing a rule tying athletic department performance bonuses and base pay to things which are connected to the actual mission of a university. You know, things like education.

As far as those “millions”...

It seems to me that at most institutions, the money goes to pay for scholarships and sports which do not produce revenue.

I cannot get away from writing about sports a few times a year, but there is a political component to this as well.

The morons which our President keeps appointing to the Department of Labor and other areas of the Federal bureaucracy are so out of touch with reality that they can make a decision like this with a straight face.

And this will undoubtedly get some Congressional attention because dabbling in college sports is much more fun than, say, dealing with the budget deficit or Obamacare.

But the bottom line is that if our Federal Government would spend more time worrying about Vladimir Putin and less time worrying about the final four, we would be a lot better off.

And, Mr. President, feces rolls from the top down. 

FRED WEINBERG
Putin and Obama Play Chess

President Obama may have just turned the G8 into the G7 and dismissed Russia as a "regional power," but this is no Bobby Fischer vs. Boris Spassky. In this geopolitical chess match, the Russian is outmanoeuvring the American at every turn.

Putin’s antics are nothing new—he’s been quietly undermining the US for over a decade. Let’s examine some of his more successful gambits from the past, and see what they can tell us about the present.

Dropping Financial Bombs

In 1998, Russia defaulted on $40 billion of domestic debt, forcing the Federal Reserve to engineer a bailout of hedge fund Long Term Capital Management.

Three years later, Putin used the distraction of the Olympics to invade US ally Georgia. While the world was focused on the Beijing games, the Russian leader told George W. Bush, "War has started."

But the Georgia invasion was nothing compared to the bomb Russia was dropping on US markets. Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson was in Beijing for a family trip to see the games, but he worried about Fannie and Freddie the whole time, as he was told the Russians had approached the Chinese to work together to dump their Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac shares.

In his book On the Brink, Paulson wrote the motivation was "to force the US to use its emergency authorities to prop up these companies." He went on, "The report was deeply troubling—heavy selling could create a sudden loss of confidence in the GSEs and shake the capital markets. I waited till I was back home and in a secure environment to inform the president."

Of course, Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied the bear raid conspiracy. To this day, the former Treasury secretary claims the two countries never carried out the plan. However, Russia did unload all $65.6 billion of its Fannie and Freddie debt that year.

As for the Chinese, Aaron Back reported for the Wall Street Journal in 2011, "China’s sell-off of Fannie and Freddie securities in 2008 was widely credited with pushing up mortgage rates in the US at a time Washington was struggling to revive housing sales."

He cited US Treasury data, writing, “China has been steadily selling its holdings of agency securities since mid-2008. It sold a net $24.67 billion worth of agency securities in 2009, and $27.35 billion in the first 11 months of 2010, according to the data.”

In the end, less than a month after Paulson was given that information in Beijing, the US government took over Fannie and Freddie and placed them into conservatorship.

Putin the Loan Shark

How many of the world’s leaders would have the foresight to structure a loan as a private-sector eurobond? One sovereign-debt expert called the structure of Russia’s $3 billion loan to Ukraine “clever.”

Here’s why: instead of handing aid money directly to Ukraine, Russia had the Ukrainian government float $3 billion in bonds denominated in euros. Russia then bought the bonds. But that’s not all—the Russians had a provision written into the bond that if the Ukraine’s debt-to-GDP level reached 60%, Russia could call the bonds for immediate payment.

Such a qualification in government bonds is very unusual. Mitu Gulati, a sovereign-debt expert, says he has never seen a government bond with a similar debt-to-GDP provision. Most sovereign debt is “covenant-lite.”

Today, Ukraine has eurobonds outstanding to several countries, so stifling only Russia isn’t an option, because it would hurt the price of all their debt. America’s Beltway pundits agitating for a large aid package to Ukraine should realize that Putin’s foresight ensures that any US aid money will find its way to Moscow.

More Smart Than Lucky

After being out of office four years, Putin took over again in 2012. A year later, the Russian president didn’t just say the US was endangering the global economy with its dollar monopoly—he put Russia’s money where his mouth was. Putin made sure the world’s largest oil producer would become the biggest gold buyer as well, adding 570 tonnes in the last ten years, much of it on his watch.

"The more gold a country has, the more sovereignty it will have if there’s a cataclysm with the dollar, the euro, the pound, or any other reserve currency," Evgeny Fedorov, a lawmaker for Putin’s United Russia, said in a telephone interview with Bloomberg.

Putin had his central bank start loading up on the yellow metal when the price was just $495 an ounce. This makes him either smarter or luckier than, say, former UK finance minister Gordon Brown, who sold 400 tonnes of the metal when gold traded under $300.

It’s safe to say Putin is smarter than your average politician. For instance, Saudi Arabia’s influential intelligence chief, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, met with Putin last year and offered to buy $15 billion worth of arms from Russia in return for Putin abandoning his support of Syria. Bandar even assured Putin that the Saudis would never sign an agreement allowing a Gulf state to ship gas through Syria.

Putin just laughed. He knows a pipeline through Syria would mean Russia’s Gazprom would lose its European gas business to Qatar.

Zero Hedge pointed out last August, “What is shocking in all of this is that Saudi Arabia was so stupid and/or naïve to believe that Putin would voluntarily cede geopolitical control over the insolvent Eurozone, where he has more influence, according to some, than even the ECB or Bernanke. Especially in the winter.”

Saudi promises or not, Putin’s no dummy. Europe obtains 30% of its natural gas from Russia and half of that runs through Ukrainian pipelines. Putin’s energy stranglehold is strongest in Eastern Europe, where several individual countries are at Russia’s mercy. Slovakia relies on Russia for 93% of its gas; Poland (83%), Hungary (81%), the Czech Republic (66%), and Austria (61%) are captive customers of Russia, too.

Ukraine’s prime minister, Arse Yatsenyuk, says Russia could use energy as a “new nuclear weapon.” As it is, Ukraine is $1.89 billion behind in payments to Russian company Gazprom for gas.

Shunned by the West, Putin Looks East

Putin has been a laughingstock in the West after spending a reported $60 billion on the Sochi winter games. But while the world was focusing on curling and ice dancing, he was amassing troops at the Crimea border and managed to engineer a bloodless annexation of Crimea before the Paralympics were over.

In response, the most powerful country in the world sanctioned a few Russian oligarchs and individuals and a mid-size bank Putin does business with. This toothless action gave Putin another laugh, and he responded by imposing some sanctions of his own on John Boehner, Harry Reid, and others, as well as 13 Canadians.

While Obama and Angela Merkel make noisy noises in Russia’s direction, Reuters reports, “The Holy Grail for Moscow is a natural gas supply deal with China that is apparently now close after years of negotiations. If it can be signed when Putin visits China in May, he will be able to hold it up to show that global power has shifted eastwards and he does not need the West.”

“The worse Russia’s relations are with the West, the closer Russia will want to be to China. If China supports you, no one can say you’re isolated,” said Vasily Kashin, a China expert at the Analysis of Strategies and Technologies (CAST) think tank.

Russia is also looking to redirect the flow of its oil. “Russia is trying to diversify its energy flows away from its core European markets,” according to Reuters, “with Rosneft leading the race with plans to triple oil flows to China to over 1 million barrels per day in coming years.”

Rosneft is the top oil producer in the world and is run by Putin ally Igor Sechin. Sechin wrapped up a recent Asian trip by meeting with the folks at India’s state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corp ONGC, Reliance Industries, an Indian conglomerate, and India’s biggest refiner Indian Oil Corporation. China and India’s combined population is over 2.5 billion. That’s a lot of potential customers.

Experience Matters

Vladimir Putin worked as a KGB officer stationed in East Germany from 1975 to 1989. While the future Russian president worked the front lines of the Cold War, the future US president was going to high school in Hawaii, followed by college in Los Angeles and New York, before heading to Chicago to become a community organizer.

When Putin was instructing his central bank to buy gold, Barack Obama was learning to navigate Capitol Hill as a freshly minted US senator. Obama was on the presidential campaign trail spouting empty campaign slogans when Russia orchestrated the meltdown of Fannie and Freddie.

Today, Obama is waging multiple wars around the globe while gumming up the US economy with increased regulation and the highest corporate taxes in the world. Putin? He’s busy selling oil and gas and buying gold. It doesn’t seem like a fair fight.

Besides having gold, oil, natural gas, palladium, and any number of other critical natural assets, Russia has improved its government’s finances manyfold while the United States has been borrowing its way to insolvency. Russia’s current debt-to-GDP ratio is 8.4%, after being reported 57% when it defaulted on its debt. Uncle Sam is going in the opposite direction. US debt to GDP was 60% when Russia defaulted in 1998—now it is over 100%.

The bottom line is that Russia is anything but “regional.” Obama should realize Putin’s ground troops are the least of America’s worries. The Russian president’s financial moves are what affect us all. And he’s running circles around Obama in the places it counts—from forging relationships with China and India to his accumulation of gold.
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God's Not Dead The Movie

By JOHN J. KIRKWOOD
Special to the Penny Press

God’s Not Dead is an alarm for unconverted sinners and a wake-up call for slumbering Christians and that is why it is worth seeing, and seeing more than once. This is the movie for which the mall-churches should be buying out theaters and holding small groups; but you won’t see the world or the worldly church embrace God’s Not Dead because, frankly, it confronts them.

With only 780 screens the Pure Flix movie God’s Not Dead shocked Hollywood Box Office gurus by pulling in 9.2 million and a fourth place overall finish this past weekend. Raking in just under $12,000 per screen average, God’s Not Dead just may be the most popular top 5 movie that you’ve never heard about. The popularity of the film is being spread as the Gospel should be, by word of mouth from people who have seen it and been authentically touched by it.

Without the big budget or celebrity splash surrounding Son of God, this collaboration between Pure Flix and Freestyle Releasing has Variety and Entertainment Weekly hailing it as the “Biggest Shocker” and “Biggest Surprise” of the weekend. But this movie is a success for a different reason: It’s not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. On numerous occasions it shares that gospel in a direct and dramatic way.

Starring Kevin Sorbo [Hercules] and Dean Cain [Superman] with appearances by Willie and Korie Robertson of Duck Commander and the Christian rock band Newsboys, the low budget movie challenges status quo dismissal of true Christianity and defuses many of the stereotypes. When college freshman Josh Wheaton is challenged to defend his belief in God by his atheist philosophy teacher (Sorbo), he finds that his struggle transcends the classroom and forces him to choose between discipleship and his most cherished relationships.

The plot was inspired by real life cases of religious bigotry on college campuses, 40 of which are listed in the credits at the end of the film. And to all those who take their faith seriously, there are some very familiar moments in this film. The unanswered question that the movie poses is “What do Communism, Atheism, Liberalism and Shiny-Happy Christianity have in common?” The stunning answer is that they all, with differing levels of hostility, oppose the true disciple of Christ.

I don’t imagine that this movie will cause legions of unbelievers to walk the sawdust trail, although I do think that many may come to Christ as a result of the seeds planted, but the true effect of God’s Not Dead will be on the life of believers. It is an absolute challenge to true discipleship. Many are missing that point. Not only is the gospel shared on multiple occasions but more than once we are reminded, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” - Matthew 10:32-33

In a time when Churchianity’s biggest names are busy denying the real Jesus and apologizing for his Word, God’s Not Dead stands out as a challenge to the embarrassed believer to let the dead bury their dead and to take up his cross. And this is why it will continue to be provocative.

The controversy over the movie Son of God came from within the Christian community for its social justice theme and its watering down of the gospel, while the movie was embraced by everyone from the ADL’s Abraham Foxman to the High Priestess of New Age possibility, Oprah Winfrey. The controversy over God’s Not Dead will not come from within the Christian community at all; it will come from Muslims, atheists and embarrassed believers. And with a plethora of reviews coming out about the movie Noah; the buzz about God’s Not Dead is poised to push it to a second eye-popping weekend as it expands to 1100 screens.

“I have not posted comments about Noah because I haven’t seen the film,” wrote Todd Starnes of Fox News. “That being said, I’m a bit perplexed by ‘celebrity’ Christian leaders who are saying that Christians have a responsibility to see Noah – even if it’s contrary to the Bible. And a number of folks who’ve seen the film say it strays greatly from the Bible’s version of events. One ‘celebrity’ Christian leader went so far as to say Christians would hurt their witness in Hollywood if they did not support the Noah film. That’s a load of fertilizer, friends. If all these pro-Noah Christian leaders are so passionate about Hollywood making faith films – why aren’t they promoting God’s Not Dead?”

David Steiger, co-host of the Uncommon Show agreed: “Tell me, why it took a low budget group of virtual no names (apologies to Sorbo and Cain) to make so great a Gospel proclaiming movie, when Son of God could have and should have had that covered already? Where were the mega-pastors on this one - buying out theaters, telling their flock to skip church and go to the movie? Where are the “small group” books? Why are the mega-shepherds silent on what is easily the boldest Gospel movie in the last decade? I guess it doesn’t fit their narrative.”

These men may be too gentlemanly to tell you what everyone is thinking: that the makers of God’s Not Dead did not pay for “spontaneous” acclaim. They didn’t offer a taste of the profits to “Christian mouthpieces” that would push their movie; like construction companies offering Tony Soprano a kickback to get a piece of the Esplanade. It’s called integrity and yes, there are still Christians, even prominent ones that have it. And that is why you don’t hear the big names pushing this movie, there’s no Mammon in it for them.

Most of the “supporters” that I have talked to about Son of God had not seen the movie and yet they still scolded me, though I had seen it, for critiquing it. The supporters of God’s Not Dead have seen the movie and are going back multiple times and bringing others with them. And that’s how I feel as well.

God’s Not Dead takes on all comers - the new Atheists, Islam and even Communism. And it does so without a sniveling apology for our existence as believers or for Christ’s exclusive claims. How so very faithful. How so very refreshing.

If I had any criticism of the movie, it’s that some of the characters are almost a caricature; too severe in their nature and forging a thread worn stereotype, but they do have some basis in reality: Kevin Sorbo could have been portraying Ted Turner, a bitter man turned hostile to God because of the excruciating experience of losing his sister at a young age. Fortunately, it doesn’t get in the way of the most daring Christian movie since The Passion of the Christ.
The EPA’s Inappropriate Alliance with Radical Environmental Groups Must Stop

While running for reelection in 2012, President Obama repeatedly claimed that he would pursue an “all of the above” energy policy. But after winning a second term, his administration seems to have decided that “all of the above” doesn’t include oil, natural gas or coal.

In just the past year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pushed forward regulations designed to stop new coal plants and shut down old ones, continued to block the much-needed Keystone XL pipeline, and pushed for regulations that threaten to impede production of natural gas. Under Obama, oil and gas production on federal lands has been stifled.

The latest and most disturbing evidence of this bias against conventional energy comes from a raft of e-mails unearthed as part of a lawsuit against the EPA. These emails document extensive collusion between EPA officials and environmental activists.

They show, for example, EPA officials working directly with green groups to coordinate messaging, decide on locations for public hearings, help environmentalists gather public comments to support the EPA and give advance notice of an administrative order.

The Energy and Environment Legal Institute, which sued to retrieve these emails, noted that the “level of coordination in these documents is shocking.”

What’s especially troubling about these revelations is that the EPA appears to be working hand in glove with environmental groups bent on strictly limiting, if not eliminating, oil, natural gas and coal production in the United States.

The Sierra Club, for example, not only wants to do away with coal, but now has a “Beyond Natural Gas” campaign that calls this energy source “dirty, dangerous and run amok.” That’s despite the fact that natural gas is a clean and abundant source of domestic energy that is directly responsible for the recent decline in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

Yet emails suggest the EPA is now actively promoting environmentalists’ unfounded attack against natural gas.

In one correspondence, regional EPA administrator James Martin tells the general counsel for the Environmental Defense Fund that a set of hearings in Denver “will make Roy Palmer nervous!” Palmer is an executive with Xcel Energy, a leading natural gas utility in Colorado.

In January, the EPA reassured environmentalists that it plans to move ahead on implementing cumbersome rules concerning fracking, an advanced drilling technology that is responsible for making vast supplies of domestic natural gas and oil economically recoverable.

The emails also reveal how the EPA has plotted with environmentalists to kill the Keystone XL Pipeline, which if it’s ever built will provide U.S. refiners with access to tremendous supplies of oil from our Canadian neighbor.

The Sierra Club’s Lena Moffit thanks an EPA senior advisor for meeting with the organization and even offers to suggest ways to stop the pipeline from being built in one e-mail.

This isn’t the first time the EPA was found in a too-cozy relationship with green groups hostile to conventional energy sources. Under Obama, the EPA has increasingly used what critics call a “sue and settle” strategy. First, environmental groups sue the EPA, claiming it’s not doing enough or is moving too slowly. The EPA then quickly settles, agreeing essentially to everything the green groups want. Often, the EPA even reimburses the environmentalist groups’ litigation costs.

A Chamber of Commerce report found 60 such “sue and settle” cases in Obama’s first term, which resulted in the EPA agreeing to publish more than 100 new regulations that will cost the economy billions. A dozen state attorneys general are now suing the EPA to release records of these settlement deals with environmentalists.

The country simply cannot afford to have an agency as powerful as the EPA working with activist groups to put needless roadblocks in front of energy production.

The reality is traditional forms of energy will remain the dominant source of energy for decades. The Energy Information Administration reports that renewable energy will fill just 10 percent of the nation’s needs by 2040, up only slightly from today’s 7 percent. Meanwhile, oil will account for 35 percent, and natural gas 29 percent.

What’s more, encouraging the development of cheaper conventional energy is good for the economy, creating jobs while making businesses more competitive in the global marketplace. It’s no mystery why oil rich Texas and North Dakota economies are booming and unemployment in those states is so low.

The bottom line is that the EPA shouldn’t be in the business of dictating which energy source our country can use, much less working with outside activist groups to make that happen. If the mission of the EPA truly is to “protect human health and the environment” it must base its decisions on the facts, not on the ideology of hardline green energy groups.

DREW JOHNSON
Drew Johnson is a senior fellow at the Taxpayers Protection Alliance, a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational organization dedicated to a smaller, more responsible government.
Commentary: Matt Barber

The Communist States of America

A preferred ploy of left-wing change agents is to ridicule critics when they point out the undeniable parallels between the goals of today’s “progressive” movement, to include the Democratic Party in general, and the goals of the early, and very much still alive, communist movement.

If, for instance, one mentions the historical fact that nearly every adult who, at any time, was in any position of influence over a young, soon-to-be-radicalized Barry Soetoro was an avowed communist, to include his own parents, then one is immediately mocked and dismissed as a neo-McCarthyite hack pining for the bygone days of the Red Scare. This is an evasive, ad hominem strategy employed by those who are caught, for lack of a better word, red-handed.

To all this I say, if the jackboot fits, wear it. If it quacks like a commie and goose-steps like a commie, then a commie it is.

There are multiple layers within “progressivism’s” pseudo-utopian, truly dystopian Marxist philosophy. The left’s lust for redistributionist statism is well-known. Less understood, however, is the “progressive” rush toward cultural Marxism.

Cultural Marxism entails, among other things, that secularist aspect of left-wing statist ideology that seeks, within society, to supplant traditional values, norms and mores with postmodern moral relativism. Cultural Marxists endeavor to scrub America of her Judeo-Christian, constitutional-republican founding principles, and take, instead, a secular-statist Sharpie to our beloved U.S. Constitution.

Historian and U.S. military affairs expert William S. Lind describes cultural Marxism as “a branch of western Marxism, different from the Marxism-Leninism of the old Soviet Union. It is commonly known as ‘multiculturalism’ or, less formally, Political Correctness. From its beginning, the promoters of cultural Marxism have known they could be more effective if they concealed the Marxist nature of their work, hence the use of terms such as ‘multiculturalism.’”

Pastor, attorney and Massachusetts gubernatorial candidate Scott Lively is globally admired by liberty-loving traditionalists. Conversely, he’s universally reviled by cultural Marxists. He drills down a bit deeper: “Cultural Marxism is a variation of the Marxist strategy to build a utopian socialist order on the ashes of Christian civilization, but through subversion of the moral culture, especially the elimination of the natural family, rather than solely through destruction of capitalism.”

True though this may be, the ideological seeds of contemporary cultural Marxism nonetheless sprout from deep within the dead soil of historical communism. It is not economic redistributionism alone through which “progressives” seek to both “fundamentally transform America” and otherwise conquer the world, but, rather, and perhaps primarily, it is also through victory over the pejoratively tagged “social issues” (i.e., the sanctity of marriage, natural human sexuality and morality, ending the abortion holocaust, religious liberty, the Second Amendment and the like).

This is neither speculative nor hyperbolic. Both the historical record and the U.S. Congressional Record bear out this sinister reality. Regrettably, today’s “low-information voters” as Rush Limbaugh calls them – to include the useful idiots within the GOP’s “moderate” and libertarian wings – are simply too lazy, shortsighted or both to learn the facts.

“Surrender on the ‘social issues!’” demands the GOP’s cultural Marxist-enabling kamikazes.

In 1963, U.S. Rep. A.S. Herlong Jr., D-Fla., read into the Congressional Record a list of “Current Communist Goals” as enumerated by Dr. Cleon Skousen in “The Naked Communist,” penned in 1958. I encourage you to read the whole list, but for now let’s focus on those goals that most closely align with the seditious agenda of America’s “progressive” movement. It’s actually most of them. Though Herlong was a Democrat, the list reads like today’s Democratic Party Platform.

How far has fallen the party of the jackass:

- Develop the illusion that total disarrayment [by] the United States would be a demonstration of moral strength.
- Permit free trade between all nations regardless of Communist [or, today, Islamic] affiliation and regardless of whether or not items could be used for war.
- Provide American aid to all nations regardless of Communist [or Islamic] domination.
- Grant recognition of Red China. Admission of Red China to the U.N.
- Promote the U.N. as the only hope for mankind. If its charter is rewritten, demand that it be set up as a one-world government with its own independent armed forces.
- Resist any attempt to outlaw the Communist Party.
- Do away with all loyalty oaths.
- Capture one or both of the political parties in the United States.
- Use technical decisions of the courts to weaken basic American institutions by claiming their activities violate civil rights.
- Get control of the schools. Use them as transmission belts for socialism and current Communist propaganda. Soften the curriculum. Get control of teachers’ associations. Put the party line in textbooks.
- Gain control of key positions in radio, TV, and motion pictures.
- Continue discrediting American culture by degrading all forms of artistic expression. (An American Communist cell was told to “eliminate all good sculpture from parks and buildings, substitute shapeless, awkward and meaningless forms.”)
- Eliminate all laws governing obscenity by calling them “censorship” and a violation of free speech and free press.
- Break down cultural standards of morality by promoting pornography and obscenity in books, magazines, motion pictures, radio, and TV.
- Present homosexuality, degeneracy and promiscuity as “normal, natural, healthy.”
- Infiltrate the churches and replace revealed religion with “social” religion. Discredit the Bible and emphasize the need for intellectual maturity which does not need a “religious crutch.”
- Eliminate prayer or any phase of religious expression in the schools on the ground that it violates the principal of “separation of church and state.”
- Discredit the American Constitution by calling it inadequate, old-fashioned, out of step with modern needs, a hindrance to cooperation between nations on a worldwide basis.
- Discredit the American Founding Fathers. Present them as selfish aristocrats who had no concern for the “common man.”
- Belittle all forms of American culture and discard the teaching of American history on the ground that it was only a minor part of the “big picture.”
- Support any socialist movement to give centralized control over any part of the culture – education, social agencies, welfare programs, mental health clinics, etc.
- Infiltrate and gain control of more unions.
- Infiltrate and gain control of big business.
- Transfer some of the powers of arrest from the police to social agencies. Treat all behavioral problems as psychiatric disorders which no one but psychiatrists can understand [or treat].
- Dominate the psychiatric profession and use mental health laws as a means of gaining coercive control over those who oppose Communist goals.
- Discredit the family as an institution. Encourage promiscuity and easy divorce. Emphasize the need to raise children away from the negative influence of parents. Attribute prejudices, mental blocks and retarding of children to suppressive influence of parents.
- Create the impression that violence and insurrection are legitimate aspects of the American tradition; that students and special-interest groups should rise up and use “[united force” to solve economic, political or social problems.
- Internationalize the Panama Canal.
- Repeal the Connally reservation so the United States cannot prevent the World Court from seizing jurisdiction [over domestic problems. Give the World Court jurisdiction] over nations and individuals alike.

If achieving these specific communist goals was the final “progressive” step toward the larger goal of securing communist governance in America, then, tragically, “progressives” have realized that larger goal.

Look around. We are no longer the United States of America. We have become The Communist States of America.

Which means, for those who love liberty, revolution is once again at hand.

MATT BARBER

Matt Barber (@jmattbarber on Twitter) is an author, columnist, cultural analyst and an attorney concentrating in constitutional law. Having retired as an undefeated heavyweight professional boxer, Matt has taken his fight from the ring to the culture war.
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I’m now officially boycotting Walgreens.

I’ve never suffered fools gladly and have near-zero tolerance for blatant stupidity. You’d think, being in politics that I’d be used to it by now. I’m not. Here’s the deal…

On my first-born’s 14th birthday, Kristen wanted to go to this place in Los Angeles called “The Last Bookstore” - which is supposed to be just the coolest used bookstore ever (it is). We laid up in West Hollywood - because I can’t afford Beverly Hills! - had a great birthday dinner, and then drove over to downtown L.A. after rush hour was over.

We found the bookstore easily enough, only to discover it didn’t have a restroom. And, well, girls being girls, one was required (they never seem to “go” before we go). However, the helpful clerk at the front desk advised that the Walgreens a block up the street did.

So off we went to take care of business. Only… The restroom was a pay toilet. Not the kind of pay toilet of old where you had to scramble around looking for dimes or quarters. No, to gain access here, the store manager informed us, we had to buy something.

But I didn’t need anything. Nor did I want anything. My daughter just had to heed nature’s call.

Tough luck, advised the manager. If you don’t show me a receipt showing you bought something, I’m not unlocking the door.

As there was now steam coming out of my ears, a bottle of water for a buck seemed an appropriate purchase. But here’s the thing…

I understand that Walgreens is a drug store and not a public restroom. And I understand they don’t want downtown homeless bums making themselves at home in their johns rather than taking care of business in the alley like they usually do. However…

I’ve already bought a ton of stuff from Walgreens. And in all of my other visits and purchases at Walgreens – for which I had plenty of receipts at home - I’ve never once used any of their bathrooms. So if pay-to-pee is the name of the game, they owe ME.

That said, it’s their store and they can set whatever restroom policy they choose. On the other hand – and this is the great thing about the free market – I can protest such a stupid, anti-customer policy by shopping elsewhere.

Yep, they got me.

I had no choice but to spend that $1 on a bottle of water I didn’t want. But that’s the last $1 Walgreens will get from me. Because of their penny-wise-pound-foolish policy, Walgreens will now lose the hundreds, if not thousands of dollars I would have otherwise spent with them in the months and years to come.

For want of a nail…

CHUCK MUTH

(Mr. Muth is president of Citizen Outreach, a conservative grassroots advocacy organization. He can be reached at www.MuthsTruths.com)
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