

FLIGHT OF THE CENTRISTS

**Christine Todd Whitman explains why
Obama is losing the middle**



The Ripoon Forum

Summer 2009
Volume 43, No. 3

the new **REVOLUTIONARY**

**Elham Gheytauchi on the brave women who
are leading the protests in Iran**

**Plus: Ileana Ros-Lehtinen leads the fight against
tyranny in Latin America**

**And: Condoleezza Rice's speech at the Reagan Library
on why democracy matters**



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Volume 43, No. 3, Summer 2009

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In this Edition

It's been said that politics is like a pendulum because it swings between two extremes. Over the past eight months or so in Washington, we have certainly seen that to be the case.

Take foreign policy. If foreign policy in the Bush Administration was marked by a fierce determination to safeguard American lives and interests regardless of what other nations thought, the early months of the Obama Administration have revealed a clear willingness to consider other nations' interests alongside our own.

But as this summer has shown, diplomacy has its limits. From the protests in Iran to the unrest in Honduras, events have transpired that no amount of talking could have stopped. And so we are left with the question – what should the United States do now? To help us answer this question, we feature essays by two leading voices in each of their respective fields.

From academia, professor and Iranian-American activist Elham Gheytanchi discusses the protests in her native land and how they are being led by the brave women of that country who have long been oppressed. From the arena of policy and politics, the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, writes about the slide toward tyranny in Latin America and her belief that the U.S. government needs to take a stronger stand in support of freedom.

This edition of THE RIPON FORUM also features a little-noticed speech that former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently gave at the Reagan Library. In it, she not only lays out a strong case for “Why Democracy Matters,” but also explains, in a question and answer session afterward, why she believes the current Iranian regime is nothing more than a “hollow shell.”

The European Union's distinguished Ambassador to the United States, the Honorable John Bruton, provides an excellent assessment of the EU-U.S partnership, while David Satter of the Hudson Institute looks at the President's recent trip to Russia and what it did – and, more specifically, did not – accomplish. Also, in a pair of essays, Josette Sheeran of the World Food Program and Carolyn Crowley Meub of the non-profit Pure Water for the World look at the formidable challenges facing each – global food shortages, and the lack of clean drinking water around the world.

On the domestic front, this edition of the FORUM also features Congressman Frank Wolf writing about entitlement reform and Senator Mel Martinez writing about TARP transparency. Former Governor and Cabinet Secretary Christine Todd Whitman pens a timely essay on why President Obama is hemorrhaging support in the political center, while Republican pollster Christine Matthews writes an equally important piece about minivan Moms and why Republicans need their support.

As always, we hope you enjoy this edition of THE RIPON FORUM and encourage you to contact us at editor@riponsociety.org with any thoughts or ideas you may have.

Lou Zickar
Editor
THE RIPON FORUM

Congress Must Take the Giant Leap for Future Generations

FRANK WOLF

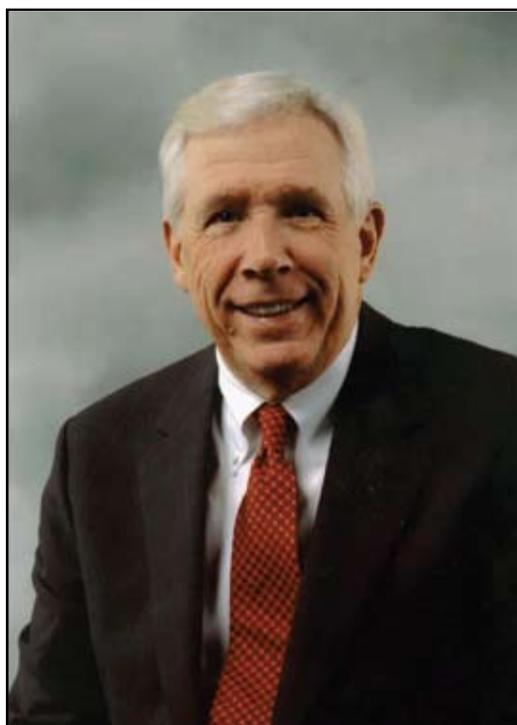
As the nation commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing this summer, and astronaut Buzz Aldrin called for the kind of investments it will take to bring America's space program back to the moon and beyond, I couldn't help but think about how far behind American students are in the sciences compared to their international counterparts.

Tests show that one-third of U.S. students lack the competency to perform the most basic mathematical computations. The U.S. was ranked 21st out of 24 countries in math and science proficiency in 2006. Now more than ever we need to ask ourselves: where will we find the money to close this gap?

For the first time in our nation's history, the national debt has topped \$11 trillion, doubling since 2000, and will double again over the next 10 years if left unchecked. This year's federal deficit is exploding at a staggering \$1.8 trillion, leaving red ink as far as the eye can see. Instead of confronting these issues and ensuring that the country's best days truly are ahead, the 111th Congress seems content to kick the can down the road and saddle our children and grandchildren with mountains of debt and a lower

standard of living.

Congress, at the president's urging, passed the \$787 billion economic stimulus bill in February, which has done nothing to stop unemployment from reaching



This year's federal deficit is exploding at a staggering \$1.8 trillion, leaving red ink as far as the eye can see.

a 26-year high of 9.5 percent in June and some believe could reach 11 percent or higher. Now

the president wants health care reform with a measure – moving through the House fast enough to give lawmakers whiplash – that has a current price tag over \$1 trillion and does nothing to address the skyrocketing cost of Medicare and other entitlement programs.

Medicare and Social Security add up to a massive \$56 trillion in promises Uncle Sam has made that are coming due as the Baby Boom generation begins to retire. This year's Medicare and Social Security trustees report found both programs are hurtling toward bankruptcy even faster than previous annual reports have predicted. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office recently released projections that publicly held government debt will reach 82 percent of GDP – double what it is now – by 2019. Standard & Poor's Investment Service has reported that the U.S. could lose its coveted triple-A bond rating by 2012. Look at California -- its credit rating has been lowered twice and the state is now paying bills with IOUs. Look at countries like Ireland or even Great Britain, which received a downgrade warning from Standard & Poor's. Why do we believe that our federal

government is insulated from the same fate?

Economists of all stripes have expressed concerns about policymakers getting the country's fiscal house in order. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan recently told lawmakers on Capitol Hill that the government's deficit is the single biggest hurdle to economic recovery, and that the stage is set for a potential upsurge in inflation if lawmakers continue to do nothing. It's astonishing that we are willing to allow countries such as China and Saudi Arabia to buy up America, while Congress continues to swipe the seemingly limitless taxpayer credit card.

Simply put, our nation is going broke. If lawmakers were serious about the debt and the deficit, issues that Americans are increasingly worried about, Congress would halt the budget gimmicks and the slick talking points, and muster the political will to have an honest conversation with the American people about where we are, where we're headed, and what changes need to be made to get us back on track.

To ensure that this overdue conversation takes place, Jim Cooper, a Blue Dog Democrat representing Tennessee, and I have introduced legislation to create a national bipartisan commission that will look at the totality of our nation's financial future – entitlement spending, other federal spending and tax policy – and offer a recommended plan of action to Congress which requires an up or down vote. A key part of the process would be town hall style meetings in each of the 12 Federal Reserve districts to allow

and encourage the American people to weigh in. Similar to the base closing process, the Cooper-Wolf Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Commission has teeth, and Congress would be forced to act.

America is facing extraordinary economic circumstances, and I believe there are moral implications to allowing our children and grandchildren to be swept away by what former U.S. Comptroller General David Walker has called "a financial

Instead of confronting these issues and ensuring that the country's best days truly are ahead, the 111th Congress seems content to kick the can down the road and saddle our children and grandchildren with mountains of debt and a lower standard of living.

tsunami strong enough to swamp our ship of state." Every day that lawmakers wait for these issues to be addressed through "regular order" is another day that entitlement spending will tighten its grip on the vital discretionary dollars and squeeze out would be opportunity for future generations.

The bipartisan commission concept would restore Americans' confidence in Congress's ability to come together when the going gets tough, and would ensure that the resources are available to give our children the first class education they need to compete in the global marketplace, to fund clinical trials that will lead to break throughs in medical research, and keep America's transportation and infrastructure safe.

Congress needs to trust the wisdom of the American people. Some 56 percent, according to a Peter Hart/Public Opinion Strategies poll, believe the bipartisan commission concept is the best way to deal with America's financial future. The idea is supported by over 70 House members, and Senate Budget Chairman Kent Conrad and ranking member Judd Gregg have endorsed a similar measure. I offered the SAFE Commission as an amendment to the stimulus legislation when it was marked up in the Appropriations Committee where I serve, and again on the annual Financial Services spending bill that passed the House earlier this month. In both instances, it was denied a vote on the House floor.

The SAFE solution has been endorsed by academics at the Brookings Institution, the Heritage Foundation, the Concord Coalition, the Business Roundtable, the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, the National Federation of Independent Business, and both the Virginia and Tennessee chambers of commerce. Syndicated columnists such as David Brooks, David Broder, Robert Samuelson, Michael Gerson, and Fred Hiatt have all written favorably about the proposal.

It's time for Congress to come together – Democrats and Republicans – and make a difference for the generations of young Americans who are counting on us for a secure future. **RF**

Frank Wolf represents the 10th District of Virginia in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Keeping TARP Transparent

MEL MARTINEZ

A government working, as President Abraham Lincoln said, “by the people, for the people,” is part of what has always made our nation unique.

As such, Americans want and deserve to know how their taxes are spent. Whether Congress spends one dollar or \$1 trillion of taxpayer money, Americans expect transparency and openness in government.

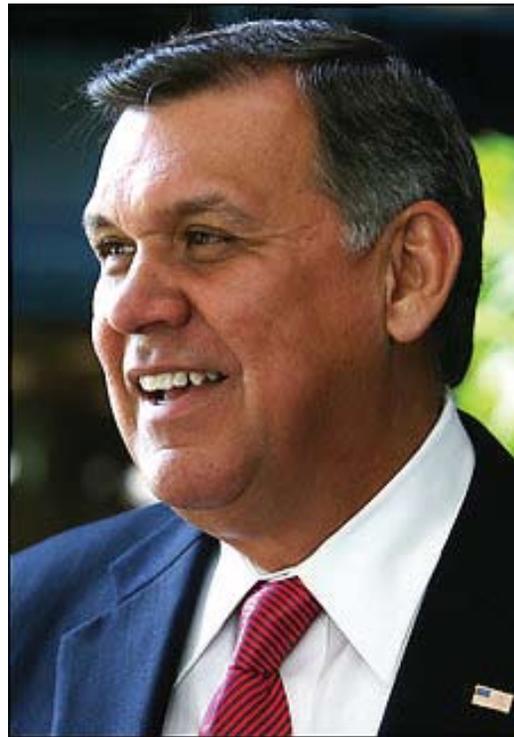
Right now, with the federal government spending at unprecedented levels in an attempt to address economic concerns, the need for greater transparency and oversight is paramount, especially when the financial security of our nation is at stake.

Late last year, the U.S. entered into a financial crisis unlike anything we have seen since the Great Depression. If Congress had failed to act, economists predicted credit markets would have seized and economic activity would have ground to a halt, putting our nation into further peril.

In response, Congress authorized \$700 billion for the Troubled Asset Relief Program, or TARP. Congress intended this authority to be used to purchase toxic assets and mortgage-backed securities. Although a catastrophic meltdown of our nation’s financial markets was averted, the haste in which the program was created left voids in oversight and

minimal control over how the funds are spent.

After the program was created, TARP was expanded by the Department



Right now, with the federal government spending at unprecedented levels in an attempt to address economic concerns, the need for greater transparency and oversight is paramount...

of the Treasury to include 12 separate programs involving government

and private funds of up to almost \$3 trillion – roughly the equivalent of last year’s entire Federal budget. From large capital infusions into hundreds of financial institutions, to a program designed to modify millions of mortgages, to public-private partnerships purchasing toxic assets from banks using tremendous leverage provided by government loans or guarantees, TARP has evolved into a program of unprecedented scope, scale, and complexity. As a result, the Federal government has struggled to keep track of how Treasury funds have been spent.

Currently, the Treasury Department lacks a data-driven, transparent process for reporting when funds are infused into TARP entities and whether they have been used and performed as intended. There are reports being filed, but in many cases they contain redundancies and inconsistencies.

Some have argued that analysis can be performed with the reports already being provided to Congress; however, almost all analyses performed to date have been collected through survey responses and audits. Surveys are self-reported responses to fixed information in fixed periods of time. Unfortunately, they occur after the funds have been spent,

making it difficult to ensure proper accountability.

The TARP's special inspector general recently released a report based on surveys collected from more than 300 TARP recipients. The report contained specific information about how TARP recipients are using the federal aid. Of the banks surveyed for the report, 110 have used the funds for investment, 52 used it for debt repayment, and 15 used it to purchase other banks. While this report is a good first step toward greater transparency, it is only a snapshot of an issue that requires constant monitoring and analysis.

In an effort to provide greater oversight of the use of TARP funds, I have joined with Senators Mark Warner (D-VA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and Sam Brownback (R-KS) to bring better transparency to the program. Our effort, introduced as the TARP Transparency Act, has earned the support of fiscal advocacy groups

such as Citizens Against Government Waste, Americans for Tax Reform, and the Center for Fiscal Responsibility.

If approved by Congress, the law would direct the Treasury Department to collect all TARP data in a readily usable fashion to make it transparent

Every American has a right to know how the more than \$700 billion authorized through TARP has been used.

and traceable. Detailed information on TARP expenditures and the actions of TARP fund recipients would be made available through a single database in a standardized format. The information would be collected and disseminated

in near real-time to help present a clear picture of how and where the money is being used.

Large, complex government programs such as TARP can often be the source of misspent taxpayer dollars. Every American has a right to know how the more than \$700 billion authorized through TARP has been used. Congress cannot be a good steward of the public trust if it has limited access to essential details of the TARP.

Transparency in government is healthy for our democracy. Americans expect it, and Congress has an obligation to provide it. **RF**

Mel Martinez is a U.S. Senator for Florida, a member of the Senate Banking Committee and former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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by ELHAM GHEYTANCHI



**the new
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**The brave women who are leading
the protests in Iran**

Women lead the protests in the aftermath of the controversial presidential election earlier this summer in Iran. In a country where 62 percent of all university attendees are women and an overwhelming majority of the population is young, young women have poured into the streets to protest the fraudulent election.

The image of Neda, a 27-year old student who was brutally murdered on June 20 in Tehran while protesting the results of the national election, has brought the role of women in this post-election crisis to light. Indeed, at the forefront of these non-violent demonstrations, which are being violently suppressed by the government-backed militias known as the Basij, are brave Iranian women.

The Supreme Leader and all of the institutions directly operating under his supervision – namely

the Judiciary, the Guardian Council overseeing the parliament, military forces and state TV – have forcefully suppressed women’s rights during the past 30 years. Any attempt to organize or work within the governmental institutions for improving women’s conditions has been aborted by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Although the political apparatus in Iran has prevented the women’s movement from becoming institutionalized, it has not been able to completely

eradicate women's right activism. The proof is the existence of the One Million Signature Campaign (www.we-change.org/english), a vibrant, nationwide grassroots movement that is active in 16 provinces in Iran, is strongly supported by the Iranian diaspora, and is demanding changes in the discriminatory laws against Iranian women.

In the wake of the recent unrest in Iran, mothers of all those who have been unlawfully killed have formed "The Mourning Mothers of Iran" (<http://www.mournfulmothers.blogfa.com/>). These mothers have decided to break the silence. Despite pressures from the state not to speak up, they gather every Saturday evening between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. (the time Neda was martyred) in major parks in Tehran dressed in black to commemorate the young people who were killed in the streets, those in the prisons and those who have disappeared.

As these protests continue, one thing becomes clear – the Iranian political system is facing a deep-rooted crisis of legitimacy. The very first victims of this crisis are women who are beaten up, imprisoned, tortured and abducted. There are unconfirmed reports of a dire situation in Iranian prisons. The state TV is broadcasting confessions of the prisoners who have, under torture of course, "confessed" to having relations with the CIA, the British government and Israel to overthrow the regime.

Consistent with the past behavior of the Iranian authorities, the protesters are being framed as puppets of the West and especially the United States. The protesters, who include supporters of the rival presidential candidates Mousavi and Karoubi, as well as the populist reform-minded president Khatami, are now accused of espionage for foreign governments and threatening the national security. Prosecution of such alleged crimes under Islamic punitive laws is very harsh.

As always, the U.S. response to the Iranian government is of grave importance and has serious implications. If, as some in the Obama administration argue, Iran's atomic bomb clock is ticking, should the U.S. negotiate with Iran just as the Iranian government is violating the fundamental human rights of its citizens?

On the one hand, any public support of the demonstrators by the American government will be

used by the Iranian hardliners as "evidence" for their alleged cooperation with the West. On the other hand, the hardliners seem determined to crush the protesters. In the absence of any viable civil society organization, precisely because the regime has feared them and thereby crushed them, human rights violations including torture, abduction and imprisonment seem likely to continue.

Could there be negotiations with pre-conditions based on the release of political prisoners by the Iranian state? I asked women's rights activists in Iran this very question.

Bahar, a young women's rights activist, expressed her disappointment that the U.S. government might even consider negotiating "with an illegitimate government, one which has no doubt come to power through fraud." Biti, another activist, said the Iranian government is gradually becoming a military dictatorship and "they will not abide by any pre-condition proposed in the process of negotiations."

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The Iranian public is outraged by China and Russia's full support and acknowledgement of Ahmadinejad. On July 17, protesters shouted slogans against the governments of these two countries for recognizing the illegitimate government of Ahmadinejad. This is not the case with the newly elected administration of president Obama.

U.S. foreign policy towards Iran reflects not only America's national interest but also American values and international norms regarding human rights. Internal dissent in Iran is rising, and this time the sheer number and variety of opposition figures will make it arduous for the state to accuse them of being agents of the West.

U.S. foreign policy should make its priorities clear. Any state that violates human rights of its citizens is not a legitimate partner in any negotiations. **RF**



Elham Gheytnchi is an Iranian-American sociology professor at Santa Monica College who works with women's rights activists in Iran and has written extensively on the culture and politics of that nation. She can be reached at gheytnchi_elham@smc.edu.

by ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

ILEANA'S CAUSE

The top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee discusses her longtime fight against tyranny in Latin America and why she believes the U.S. needs to take a stronger stand in support of freedom

Too often, we in the United States take freedom and the rule of law for granted and give little thought to the need for their defense.

Yet the liberties we assume are far from secure in many other countries, especially in our own hemisphere, where a growing assault on democracy is threatening U.S. interests and the human rights of millions of people.

Hugo Chavez, Daniel Ortega, Evo Morales and Rafael Correa are but the latest in a long line of authoritarian rulers in Latin America. Their embrace of the Castro dictatorship in Cuba and their efforts to employ its methods to secure their rule have already undermined basic freedoms and democratic institutions.

Their ambitions are growing, as demonstrated by the recent events in Honduras where an attempted coup by former president Zelaya was defeated by a coalition determined to defend the rule of law. Chavez openly proclaims his determination to overthrow the legitimate government there and reinstall his ally, including by military force. Ortega has added to this threat even as Morales, Correa, and others work to ensure that Zelaya is reimposed on the people of Honduras.

This is but the latest assault on democracy in the region. In pursuit of his absolute rule and under the guise of populism, Chavez is working to destroy the little media freedom left in Venezuela, eliminate property rights, and strip his opponents of all resources and ability to oppose his expanding power. In Nicaragua, Ortega's blatant manipulation of last November's municipal elections are but the latest step toward destroying those who defy him, while Morales and Correa have successfully imposed changes in their countries' constitutions that have greatly enhanced their powers.

This growing threat is made worse by Iran's expanding influence.

Using trade and investment deals to purchase the friendship of anti-American leftist leaders, the Iranian regime has established a growing presence throughout the region. Its demonstrated willingness to use its embassies and proxies, such as Hezbollah, to carry out its extremist agenda makes this presence a direct threat to U.S. national security.

All of these rulers regard the U.S. as an enemy and seek to eliminate its influence in the region. If we are to successfully defend our interests, we must act to strengthen our democratic allies, such as Colombia, which are under assault. Unfortunately, we have fewer allies than many think.

Far from being a reliable force for promoting peace and democracy in the region, the Organization of American States, or OAS, has become an instrument for undermining the principles in its founding charter. Just months after issuing the welcome mat for the Cuban regime's re-integration into the inter-American system, it chose to support and legitimize Zelaya's blatant violations of the Honduran constitution and rule of law. But these are only the latest examples in an increasingly disturbing pattern.

These actions underscore the growing irrelevance, and even threat, of the OAS to promoting democracy in Latin America. That is why I recently offered an amendment to the bill providing funding for foreign policy operations that would have reduced the United States' contribution to the OAS by \$15 million. I see no reason why American taxpayers should continue to be the primary contributors to an organization that often serves more as an enabler of dictators than a defender of democracy. But this amendment is but a first step toward leveraging U.S. contributions to effectuate reform and positive change throughout the OAS system.

U.S. interests would be better served by giving those funds to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), an organization with a long record of fighting for fundamental freedoms and democracy around the world. The same month that the OAS was opening its doors to the Cuban

regime, the NED was honoring Cuban democracy activists who continue to be oppressed and imprisoned by Havana. Instead of giving credibility to the Castro brothers as the OAS did, the NED was working to strengthen and support those struggling for freedom against enormous odds and a merciless oppressor.

Some in this country believe that being popular among Latin America's left-wing dictators is the key to a successful U.S. policy in the region. But the U.S. and our interests will only suffer if our policy continues in joining the chorus of apologists, enablers, and outright fans of Castro, Chavez, and their allies. Instead, we must defend freedom, human rights, democratic values and institutions, and free market principles. Our policies must never hedge or retreat when our interests are at stake. Whether in Latin America or elsewhere in the world, we cannot afford to be silent or accommodating when freedom is under siege, nor appease tyrants when they are on the march. **RF**

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen is the Ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

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Why DEMOCRACY *Matters*

CONDOLEEZZA RICE

As I look through the difficult and critical circumstances in which we find ourselves, I'm quite convinced that when times are hard the most important thing you can do is to go back to first principles, go back to your values, go back to what guides you – the lodestar that should move you forward. So I'd like to entitle my remarks, "Why Democracy Matters."

It's a bit odd, I think, that a former Secretary of State would have to actually defend the proposition that democracy matters. But I think we better start defending that proposition. In part, I'm driven to talk about this because I served in a pretty controversial and consequential time over the last eight years. But as many controversial matters that came before us, the one that seems to have been most controversial was to speak firmly for the democracy agenda – for the freedom agenda.

People said we were too idealistic to believe that democracy could spread to the corners where it had never taken root – that it was impractical, somehow. That somehow it was not serving U.S. interests to speak strongly and firmly for the rights of every man, woman and child to live in freedom. That somehow it was not practical to believe that people – regardless of their station in life, regardless of their culture, regardless of their circumstances – would want to enjoy the very rights that we all enjoy. That somehow that was impractical and was too idealistic.

But you know, standing for democracy as the United States of America is both practical and right, and that's the proposition that I want to defend.

Freedom is our Best Ally

The United States has got to stand for the universality of freedom and the universality of democracy. It has to stand for it because it is right – it is the moral thing to do – but also because it is in our interest to do so. President Reagan, in his second inaugural, had one simple line that captured that. He said, "America must remain freedom's staunchest

defender, for freedom is our best ally." Remain a staunch defender because it is right, but also because freedom is our best ally.

So why is this proposition so controversial? Well, there are several objections. One, that you cannot impose democracy. You cannot impose it by bayonet point, you cannot impose it from abroad. This is most certainly true. But the fact of the matter is, if we look around the world and we look, for instance, at the recent events in Iran, we see something that I think is a fundamental truth: you don't actually have to impose democracy, you have to impose tyranny. If men, women and children are asked, do they want to have a say in their future or would they have it dictated to them from on high, they will choose to have

a say in their future. And so, you don't impose democracy, you impose tyranny.

What about the argument that there are people who are perhaps just not ready for democracy? Well, this to me is one of the most patronizing things that one can say. We are ready, but they're not. And by the way, it's been said at various times about a lot of people. It was said once that Latin Americans weren't ready for democracy. They were given to military juntas and coups. They didn't care



Condoleezza Rice delivers a speech at the Reagan Library on July 14, 2009.

about democracy. It was once said that Africans didn't care about democracy. They were just too tribal and, of course, it didn't matter to them that they had a right to have a say in their future. And, by the way, it was once said of black people. They were too child-like. They didn't care about the vote. They weren't really ready for democracy.

Well, of course, everyone is ready for freedom and ready for democracy. It may well be that economic circumstances are such that it makes democracy hard. It may well be that the absence of traditions in democracy make democracy hard. It may well be that the absence of civil society – of a strong fabric to society – makes democracy hard. But saying that democracy is hard and saying that someone is not ready for democracy are two very different things. The idea that there are some who are just not ready for democracy is both patronizing and it is insidious.

Third, there's the argument that perhaps countries can go through authoritarian capitalism and do quite well anyway, so why bother with democracy? Of course, the example that is most often given here is China. They're doing quite well, thank you very much, with authoritarian capitalism. But one has to wonder if this is a long-term proposition for success because, after all, it's awfully hard to tell people that they can think at work but not at home. And one wonders if the tremendous economic success of China that is clearly quite extraordinary is not creating the kinds of strains and stresses in that society that ultimately will not be dealt with by a rigid political system governed from the top down.

I don't mean to suggest that China is in danger of collapse. But there is one wonderful thing about democracy – it's big and it's messy and it's chaotic. Someone once called it "controlled chaos." Well, you might wonder sometimes about the controlled piece, but it is accordion-like. It is capable of giving people institutions in which they can try and resolve their differences peacefully. It is capable of giving people a say in how those differences are resolved. And finally, if you don't like those who are governing you, you can throw the bums out. That, more than anything, is the final shock absorber.

You see in China instead growing strains and stresses from this tremendous economic and social upheaval. We've seen it in many ways. We've seen it recently with the riots among Uyghurs, the people of East Turkmenistan as the Chinese call it, who are unable to express themselves because, if there is difference and it is in a dictatorial society, there is only one way to deal with it – somebody suppresses somebody. So ethnic rights tend not to be

protected in authoritarian societies. We saw it when China had difficulty after the earthquake explaining to the parents of Chengdu, the place that I visited after the earthquake, why the school collapsed and killed children but the party headquarters, just a little ways away, didn't collapse. The anger of those parents at the shoddy workmanship in that school was palpable. They had really nowhere to go.

We saw it in the product safety issue in China, where the government seemed to be unable to deal with it, where their solution was to execute the guy who dealt with product safety. Now this is not a long-term solution, because sooner or later no one is going to want to deal with product safety. And so the question for authoritarian capitalism is, in the long run, can it reach an equilibrium? Can it tell its people to get wealthier, to have greater property interests and still to allow politics to be held in the hands of a very few? I think not.

Guided by History, not Headlines

There is finally the argument, perhaps more difficult and mostly used in the Middle East, that when you have democracy – when you have elections before a society is fully matured and civil society in the like – sometimes the bad guys win. And what do you do when the bad guys win? We faced this quite a few times during the period of my tenure in office. We saw Hamas win in the 2006 elections in the Palestinian territories. We saw Hezbollah do well in the 2005 elections in Lebanon. We saw Islamist parties do well in the first elections in Iraq.

But you know, an interesting thing has happened. The second time around, the extremists have not done very well at all. And one wonders why that is. I would suggest to you that while elections are not the only step that one must take for democracy, they are a fully necessary step. What you see is that in authoritarian societies, particularly in the Middle East, there was politics going on, but it was going on in the radical mosque and it was going on in the radical madrasas, and decent political forces were not allowed to organize.

In that freedom gap, as a group of Arab intellectuals called it, you got not only the organization of the most extreme forces, but you also got the kind of nihilist forces like Al Qaeda, a different kind of politics. Decent political forces did not come into being in the Middle East. But now in freer environments like Lebanon and Iraq and even the Palestinian territories, you are seeing that decent political forces the second time around are doing better. So in Lebanon, my favorite example, Hezbollah lost in this last election.

**The United States has got
to stand for the universality
of freedom and the
universality of democracy.
It has to stand for it because it
is right – it is the moral thing
to do – but also because it is
in our interest to do so.**

Now why did Hezbollah lose? Well, in part because it turned out they weren't the great resistance movement. They used their arms against the Lebanese people in May of 2007, and you know what? The Lebanese people had a way to punish them. They punished them at the ballot box. Where else could the Lebanese people have punished a terrorist group like Hezbollah?

You see in Iraq that in the most recent provincial elections, the Islamist parties, the most extremist parties, the parties funded by Iran lost and more decent political parties did better. I think that it is quite possible that what we will see is that as elections take place in the first round, the bad guys may indeed win because they're the best organized – they were in the radical mosque, they were in the radical madrasas. But as time goes on, the slogan, "Vote for us, and we will make your children suicide bombers" won't do very well at the ballot box. If decent political forces with a different message can come forward, then this will turn out for the better.

So I don't think that there are really good arguments for those who say that either the United States should not advocate for democracy, should not make it a pillar of foreign policy, or that we should just wait until somehow it naturally emerges – as if democracy somehow naturally emerges. People fight for democracy, and America has

to be their ally in that fight. To be sure, elections are not sufficient. We have to support democratically-elected governments, because one important thing happens when people go to the ballot box – they expect more of their governments.

It's also true that it's not a straight line. There will be ups and downs, it will go back and forth, and part of the issue is not to lose heart when it does. Because we have to remember that history has a long tail, not a short one. I used to make not very many friends in the press when I would say to them that today's headlines and history's judgment are rarely the same. But it is true. If you look to any point in time, you can see that there were times when something looked so impossible, and not very long after it just seemed inevitable.

Would you have dreamed that, in 1991, the hammer and sickle would come down from the Kremlin for the last time? And in 2006, the President of the United States would attend a NATO Summit in Latvia. Those things that once seemed impossible in retrospect seem inevitable. And so history has a long tail, and our part is to do what is right for history, not what is right for the day's headlines.

That was the essence of Ronald Reagan. I can remember when Ronald Reagan gave his landmark speech and called the Soviet Union the "evil empire," and said that it would end up on the "ash heap of history." I have to admit, I thought, "Oh my goodness – how undiplomatic." But you know, it was right and it was calling it as he saw it. In calling it how he saw it, he emboldened a whole generation of people who knew that they were living in a society and a state that was a lie.

And he spurred leaders like Mikhail Gorbachev to try not to destroy the system, but to reform it. But of course it was rotten to the core. And in trying to reform it, Gorbachev did destroy it. And this mighty Soviet Union – with 30,000 nuclear weapons, 5,000,000 men under arms stretching 12 time zones – collapsed without a shot.

History has a long tail, but that long tail only comes out in our favor if we're true throughout the whole entire period to our values and to our principles. We have to stand for democracy, and we cannot be neutral about what form of government is right. **RF**

Condoleezza Rice served from 2005 to 2009 as the nation's 66th Secretary of State. This essay is drawn from a speech she delivered at the Ronald Reagan Library on July 14, 2009. The speech can be viewed in its entirety at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvOjtvXrIgl>.

RICE ON IRAN

"I see in Iran a very interesting phenomenon. I see that these bloody tyrants wanted somehow legitimacy. And so they held a fake election. Then they tried to win the fake election by more than they might have won it. Fifty one percent wasn't enough. It had to be 62.2 percent and – surprise, surprise – people reacted against that.

"I don't care whether this regime lasts a year or three years or five years. It's done. It has lost any sense of legitimacy with its own people. This is a country in which the great majority – something I believe like 70 percent -- of the people are under the age of 35. What now is their seminal political memory? It is what happened in Tehran in the streets. And so they've lost their best and their brightest forever. In part, they lost it because the world turned on Ahmadenijad and he was shown to be incompetent as well as a dictator. That's a healthy development in Iran.

"I feel for those people in the streets and the way that this brutal regime will put them down. But it's now a hollow shell. If we don't do anything to prop it up, just like the Soviet Union was a hollow shell, it, too, will collapse. I don't know if it will be next year or five years from now. But the Iranian regime, I believe, is done."

*In response to a question at the Reagan Library
July 14, 2009*

Securing Our Future: The EU-U.S. Partnership

JOHN BRUTON

This year marks an important anniversary for the European Union. Twenty years ago, the Berlin Wall fell, opening the door to freedom for countries previously smothered beneath the Iron Curtain, and marking the beginning of the end of both the Cold War and the post-World War II division of Europe.

Much has changed in the EU since then. We have enlarged dramatically – from 12 to 27 Member States. The enlargement of the Union has been a hugely ambitious project, but it makes the European Union an ever more effective partner to the United States as we defend and extend our common values and interests. Like the U.S., the EU believes that democracy, freedom, respect for human rights, and the rule of law are necessary to ensure peace, security, and stability around the globe.

In my five years as European Commission Ambassador to the United States, we have witnessed great change for the better in EU-U.S. relations. We have removed significant trade barriers and partially liberalized the aviation sector. We have found ourselves increasingly working in tandem to tackle global security challenges, ranging from counterterrorism to climate change and the economic crisis.

The problem of nuclear weaponry on the south Asian sub-continent and the growing pace of nuclear enrichment by Iran pose a grave threat to the international nuclear non-proliferation system.

The EU has already joined with the United States in putting pressure on Iran to abandon its present course, while recognizing that ways have to be found to meet Iran's legitimate security concerns, integrate it into the global economy, and move toward a general reduction in nuclear weapons in South Asia and the Middle East.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty obligates current nuclear states to secure, reduce and eventually eliminate their arsenals. This is in accordance with the wishes of the world community and ought to be heeded by NPT signatories and non-signatory states alike. Without an effective NPT and robust controls, the risk of terrorists getting their hands on nuclear materials increases dramatically. Reinvigorating the NPT is the key to deploying nuclear power more widely for civilian purposes and

addressing some of our energy security needs.

Science tells us that our time to reach a global agreement on climate change is very short, and the



Ambassador John Bruton

Like the U.S., the EU believes that democracy, freedom, respect for human rights, and the rule of law are necessary to ensure peace, security, and stability around the globe.

EU welcomes the current debate taking place in Congress about the best way to reduce emissions and foster renewable energy. Only if the U.S. makes clear commitments at the Copenhagen talks later this year will we be able to convince countries like India and China to limit their own CO₂ emissions.

Actions taken to address climate change and energy security have the potential to not only contribute greatly to the health of our planet, but also to play a role in overcoming the current economic crisis by promoting new technology and new jobs. According to a recent report by the Pew Charitable Trusts, “The clean energy economy, still in its infancy, is emerging as a vital component of America’s new economic landscape.”

But we cannot use climate change and clean energy to justify protectionist measures. The provision in the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which directs the Department of Energy to provide financial assistance to U.S. car manufacturers involved in the development and production of electric vehicles, but limits that financial assistance to American producers rather than leaving it open to the best and most competitive manufacturers, is both protectionist and wasteful.

In our highly interdependent global economy, protectionism by one country could bring down the whole WTO-based global trading system, so the EU and the U.S. must together lead the drive for open trade and investment. Protectionist measures that introduce one-sided restrictions on trade in the name of security would be equally dangerous; so too are restrictions on exports.

Increasing the cost of travel across the Atlantic, as proposed in the so-called “tourist tax” pending before Congress as part of the Travel Promotion Act of 2009, would not help build stronger economies, but would simply mean erecting a barrier between us. With the establishment of this entrance tax by the Congress, there could also be a demand for Americans to pay the same fees for travel to Europe, which could further depress transatlantic travel.

The WTO’s rule-based system must be strengthened to deal with threats to free trade, and economic stimulus should be applied where it creates

capacity for sustainable future growth. Once we’ve got our economies back on a sound footing, we must prevent such a crisis in the future by designing a new regulatory system, and ensuring that the assets of the banking system are valued transparently.

Finally, we must prioritize the Middle East peace process. The two-state solution is the only viable way to proceed, and the time to put it in place is now. Palestinians have a right to a viable homeland, as Israelis do. Israel must have security, but that comes from building good relations with their Palestinian neighbors. Palestinians must strengthen their security institutions and suppress terrorism, and Israel’s other Arab neighbors must show that they accept Israel’s existence. The EU wants to work with the United States and the other Quartet partners to give this project the urgency it needs.

Nuclear proliferation, energy security, climate change, the global economic crisis, and the Middle East are challenges that can only be dealt with successfully through vigorous and cooperative EU-U.S. leadership. However, they will not be solved quickly or easily, and the generations that

follow us must be prepared to work together to come to grips with such problems – and new challenges we can’t even imagine – as well.

Activities like tourism, exchange programs, and the various dialogues in which the EU and U.S. engage are the keystone of long-term transatlantic relationship-building. Such ties can be further strengthened by secure, visa-free travel between the U.S. and all EU Member States. Currently, U.S. citizens can travel to all 27 EU Member States without a visa, but EU citizens from Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Poland, and Romania still need a visa when traveling here.

Keeping the transatlantic relationship strong is vital, because whatever our minor differences, where the EU and the U.S. lead, others follow. We must continue to foster this indispensable partnership to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. **RF**

John Bruton is the European Union’s Ambassador to the United States.

Keeping the transatlantic relationship strong is vital, because whatever our minor differences, where the EU and the U.S. lead, others follow.

To Russia with Hope (...and little else)

DAVID SATTER

President Obama's visit to Moscow July 6-8 did not result in serious agreements, but it changed the tone of U.S.– Russian relations. Whether or not this is a good thing, however, is very much open to doubt.

Obama made a serious attempt to befriend the Russian leadership. He praised the “extraordinary work” that Putin has done for the Russian people and took seriously Medvedev's vow to strengthen the rule of law. He also promised to take into consideration Russia's “peculiar” view of its relations with Georgia and Ukraine and to inform the Russian leaders about the upcoming U.S. evaluation of the missile shield planned for Eastern Europe.

In fact, however, Obama may have set a trap for himself. The Russians said that they were ready for the U.S. to “reset” its relations with Moscow, but it was taken as obvious that a reset on the Russian side was not desirable or necessary.

This is actually not surprising. Direct or indirect apologies for U.S. behavior are interpreted in Russia not as the first step toward a dialogue but as U.S. confirmation of the rightness of Russian positions. The result of Obama's outreach may therefore be that once the era of good feelings has passed and Obama is obliged to make hard decisions, his conciliatory gestures will be treated as another example of treacherous behavior on the part of the U.S.

The first potential conflict is over the plans for the U.S. anti-missile shield in Eastern Europe. If the present

feasibility study shows that the system is workable, steps will very likely be taken toward its deployment. This will inevitably inspire furious Russian claims that the U.S. promised to cancel the installation. Of course, the U.S. did no such thing. But by telling the Russians that they would be consulted on the results of the feasibility studies, Obama introduced enough ambiguity in the U.S. public position for the Russians to claim that they were assured of a voice in the system's fate. It is not accidental that on state-controlled television after Obama's second day of talks, the Russians described the discussions on

the missile shield as a prelude to an American decision to drop it altogether.

A similar problem exists with the issue of NATO expansion. Russian spokesmen and those who echo their position in the West have suggested a grand deal according to which Russia is ceded control over the former Soviet republics and in return, Russia helps

the West with Afghanistan and Iran. As a seeming down payment on this arrangement, the Russians agreed to allow the U.S. to transport military supplies and personnel for Afghanistan across Russia. The transport agreement was presented as a favor to the U.S., although the defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan is also crucial to Russian security. But this “favor,” because it does not reflect common values, can be withdrawn at any time. This is likely to happen once the U.S. takes steps to facilitate NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia.



Direct or indirect apologies for U.S. behavior are interpreted in Russia not as the first step toward a dialogue but as U.S. confirmation of the rightness of Russian positions.

In the meantime, the existence of this land bridge will serve as a source of pressure on the U.S.

Finally, the U.S. is rightly concerned with the Russian human rights situation. Part of the reason for this concern is humanitarian. But there is also a strategic rationale for protesting Russian human rights abuses. A country where the population is without political rights and subjected to endless official propaganda is too easy to turn against the West.

While in Moscow, Obama not only praised the Russian leaders who have constructed an authoritarian regime, he also declined to mention individual cases of political repression in his meetings with opposition groups and representatives of civil society. The emptiness of this approach was demonstrated only two weeks later when Natalya Estemirova, a human rights defender in Chechnya, was abducted and murdered. She was a close associate of two murdered human rights defenders, Anna Politkovskaya, and lawyer, Stanislav Markelov, neither of whose cases were raised by Obama.

If the killing of political opponents in Russia continues, Obama may feel obliged to make a public protest. But once a pattern has been set it can prove difficult to change. In return for Putin's supposed

"friendship," Bush muted U.S. criticism of Russian human rights abuses and atrocities in Chechnya for almost eight years. If Obama does not begin to speak out forcefully on the terror tactics being used against human rights defenders in Russia, it will be difficult to do so later.

Bush distrusted the outside world – perhaps too much. Obama shows signs of distrusting it too little. Most of the countries that are adversaries of the U.S. are in that position because they rely on systems that are based on force. They are prepared to make allowances for resistance, but are little moved by appeals to their better natures.

As Obama is about to find out, an outreach to adversaries that cannot be maintained has very dim prospects. It may, in the long run, only make matters worse.

RF

*David Satter is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and a visiting scholar at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. His most recent book is *Darkness at Dawn: the Rise of the Russian Criminal State* (Yale).*

- a)  more oil
- b)  more natural gas
- c)  more wind
- d)  more solar
- e)  more biofuels
- f)  energy efficiency
- ✓ g) all of the above

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HUNGER IS ON THE MARCH

JOSETTE SHEERAN

Hunger is on the march, fueled by the food and financial crisis, which has added more than 100 million people to the ranks of the malnourished.

Today, for the first time in 40 years, more than one billion people are hungry; one out of every six people on earth does not get enough food to sustain a healthy life. Every six seconds a child dies from hunger.

No strategy will end hunger unless it both secures individual access to affordable nutrition as well as increases world wide production. Food security may be the single most critical issue of our time. Malnutrition permanently stunts bodies and minds in children under two. We are in danger of losing a generation.

Ending hunger is not only about growing more food. Last year, we had enough to feed the world. But skyrocketing food and fuel prices drove desperately hungry people to riot in more than 30 countries. Hunger can lead to dangerous destabilization. Without food people riot, migrate or die. None of these are acceptable options.

As economist Amartya Sen, who won a Nobel Prize for his work on the causes and cures for famine, demonstrated famine is a result of lack of access to food saying, "Starvation is the characteristic of some people not having enough to eat. It is not the characteristic of there being enough to eat."

The World Food Program last year reached 100 million of the world's most vulnerable. With food prices higher than a year ago in 50 developing world countries, and the economic crisis hitting the incomes of the world's poorest people, we see a compounding crisis of urgent hunger.

In each nation, region and community access to food was cut off for a variety of reasons – conflict in regions from Pakistan to Somalia forced millions from their land, long-term drought in sub-Saharan Africa left once productive lands barren, global economic forces in financial capitals far from their shores made food unaffordable.

A half century ago, the world created institutions, including the World Food Program, designed to be counter-

cyclical, to expand – not contract – when times are bad. WFP is the safety net for the world's most vulnerable. Even with a doubling of contributions to the WFP last year, global food aid supplies are at a 20 year low – just when they are needed the most. At this moment of dramatically growing need, it is vital that we continue to ensure access to food to those who have no other solution. We need to tap into the knowledge of how to leverage food aid into food assistance – how to work with nations so they inherit targeted nutrition safety net programs toward food self-sufficiency.

The world knows how to solve hunger. Over the last two centuries many nations have done just that. Just a few generations ago Ireland was ravaged by famine. Twenty years ago China received more of WFP's food than any other country. Today they provide resources for our work in other countries. Brazil is busting the hunger curve by creating sustainable safety net programs for its people that cost less than .5 percent of its GDP.

It's false logic to choose between an investment in agriculture or an investment in individual food access. As we help small farmers get more from their land, we also need to build a world where every person has affordable access to adequate nutrition.

The United States has written the book on combating hunger at home with agricultural production combined with food safety nets, such as school lunches. This country is a leader in food fortification and nutritional knowledge. We urge the United States to put the hungry individual, along with the small holder farmer, at the center of its food security call to action.

If we do this right, today's investment in nutrition could be the end of food aid tomorrow. **RF**



Josette Sheeran, on a 2007 visit to the Sudan.

Today, for the first time in 40 years, more than one billion people are hungry...

Josette Sheeran is the Executive Director of the World Food Program. She previously served as Under Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs in the administration of President George W. Bush.

H2O = Health, Hope, and Opportunity

The effort to bring clean water to Haiti

CAROLYN CROWLEY MEUB

The definition of insanity, according to Albert Einstein, is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting it to have different results. If we continue to do what we've always done in Haiti, we will always get what we've always gotten – not a good return on our investment. A look at Haiti may also provide insights for what our foreign aid policy should consider for any country around the world.

After decades of spending billions of dollars in aid to Haiti, where does the country now stand? It remains the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere with staggering rates of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, violence, and infant and maternal mortality; the health of its citizens is among the worst in the world. Meanwhile its Latin neighbors have made significant progress in developing their nations and economies. Report after report has pointed to a wide array of hotly debated reasons for this colossal failure – poor governance, donor conditionality, corruption, U.S. interference, occupations, mandates and economic blockades to name but a few.

The health statistics of Haitians are startlingly bleak. The life expectancy is only 44 years. Eighty percent of the population does not have reliable access to clean water. At any given time, two thirds of the people are ill, largely from preventable water borne illnesses. Three fourths of hospital beds are occupied by

patients with water borne illness. It is no wonder that Haiti remains mired in the cycle of poverty, illiteracy and violence.

How can a nation grow and develop its economy, educate its children, employ its adults and govern itself responsibly and democratically when its people don't even have a chance to have the most basic of needs – clean water? Imagine trying to effectively run an educational system where two thirds of the

children are chronically ill and thus frequently absent. Imagine trying to run a profitable business where two thirds of the employees and customers are chronically ill. Imagine trying to effectively govern and lead a people who are chronically ill. The experience of Haiti has clearly shown that it simply cannot be done.

The tragedy is that with the billions of dollars spent in Haiti in the past decades, negligible amounts have been directed at sustainable water programs that will improve the long term health of Haitians. Humanitarian aid addresses an immediate condition but it most often does not result in a sustainable program that will impact the future. Little has been done to improve access to clean water and even

less has been done to educate the people on hygiene and the importance of such things as hand washing in order to reduce the transmission of infectious disease. Foreign aid programs



A dirty stream in Citi Soleil, a shanty town in Port-au-Prince.

Consider this: in 2004, \$3.5 billion was spent on treating malaria that killed 840,000 children ... yet only \$1.5 billion was spent on interventions to deal with diarrhea caused by bad water which killed 1,800,000 children – the largest killer of children.

need to embrace the vision of directing efforts at the youngest generation of Haitians -- its children. For it is only when its children have at least a chance to grow and develop into healthy adults will the tragic cycles in Haiti be broken. Haitian children endure from bad water irreversible and permanent organ damage to the heart, kidneys, liver, bones and lungs, and brain development is severely impaired. Chronic water borne illness weakens the immune system making it difficult to effectively treat other endemic diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, pneumococcus, meningitis, and HIV/AIDS and leads to malnutrition and starvation.

Consider this: in 2004, \$3.5 billion was spent on treating malaria that killed 840,000 children and \$10.8 billion was spent on HIV/AIDS that killed 315,000 children; yet only \$1.5 billion was spent on interventions to deal with diarrhea caused by bad water which killed 1,800,000 children – the largest killer of children. How do we get the best return on our investment? We need to reconsider investment priorities. Addressing the lack of clean water does so much more than just save lives.

We should be looking at “sustainable” and “scalable” programs. We must spend more on sustainable projects that will address root causes of the problem. The proverbial truth that it is better to teach people to fish than to give them fish applies equally to sustainable water projects.

Just recently, with just a small amount of money through an agreement with Management Sciences for Health, an USAID contractor, a small private non-profit organization has begun to address these concerns in Haiti with extraordinary results. Pure Water for the World, Inc.’s program focuses on two simple things: 1) teacher training so that they can provide hygiene education to the children; and, 2) providing a clean water system for schools.

Educating Haitians on the causes and prevention of water borne illness is a primary focus of PWW. Drawing from the American social policy of teaching health and safety in schools and then encouraging students to take the message home, PWW has developed an effective program in the schools to educate students on the very simple and easily teachable ways to prevent infectious disease. Armed with this new knowledge, children take these messages into their homes and neighborhoods. This highly successful model has

the potential to be life changing for the people of Haiti and changing cycles.

Since August 2008, PWW has provided over 200,000 school children in Cite Soleil, a large slum outside of Port-au-Prince, with safe drinking water and have trained over 1,000 teachers who are teaching hygiene in the classrooms.

PWW has done this by using bio-sand filters that are made in the PWW facility in Port-au-Prince. PWW is not only providing clean water, but we are employing 25 people. Bio sand filters are simple, inexpensive, and highly effective in removing pathogens via sand filtration, eco-responsible, and virtually maintenance free.

PWW also has a class room for teaching teachers a hygiene education program to implement into their school curriculum. In order to participate, school officials must sign contracts stating the terms of the program. The schools become a partner

with PWW which is a critical element for success. The average price tag for a school is approximately \$1,500 – an average cost of less than \$6.00 per child. Only money prevents PWW from expanding exponentially.

Despite these fiscal challenges, we are not about to quit. After all, the Haitians have not given up; they are resilient, strong and proud. They deserve help – but the right kind of help. And, we need them to be

our friends at least as much as they need us. The political, social, humanitarian, and geographical reasons are obvious. Haiti could easily become an even hotter bed of political and social unrest. What we do need to do is to change the way we help.

We need to save the newest, youngest generation, and we need to realize that it will take at least a generation to turn life around in Haiti. But if we redirect our efforts in support of projects like PWW, someday in the near future the young girls and boys in the slums of Cite Soleil and elsewhere in Haiti will rise from the rubble that is their country and lead their nation into the twenty first century.

Haiti needs another chance. This time let’s do it right. **RF**

Carolyn Crowley Meub is the Executive Director of Pure Water for the World, Inc., (www.purewaterfortheworld.org). She previously served as an aide to the late U.S. Senator Robert T. Stafford (R-VT). Her husband is a member of the Forum’s editorial board.



Children drinking purified water in Citi Soleil.

Flight of the Centrists

Why Obama is losing the middle and what Republicans should do in response

CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN

Even long honeymoons come to an end.

Now six months into his term as President, Barack Obama's long-enjoyed popularity is starting to show signs of wear.

Recent polls show his approval rating slowly declining, and dipping below 50 percent for the first time in his presidency on July 24. The drop is particularly pronounced among unaffiliated voters, with whom Obama now has only a 37 percent approval rating.

This trend line raises several questions: what has Obama done to precipitate this decline? And what opportunity does that open for Republicans?

Obama's declining popularity is not unexpected. No one can maintain the kind of high expectations that accompanied his inauguration. But the decline is also reflective of his abandonment of several key campaign promises.

Throughout the 2008 election season, then-Senator Obama spoke eloquently of a new era of politics that would put aside hyper-partisanship and make government work for the people. One practical step he promised was to post on the Internet the text of every bill that came to his desk at least five days before he would sign it, thus increasing transparency of government.

Unfortunately, that pledge has been honored primarily in the breach. In fact, the very first bill he signed was

never posted online, and a number of other important bills that he has signed since were not posted for at least five days. Honoring that pledge may strike some as more symbolic than substantive.



...as [Obama] breaks from the ideals he espoused, the centrist voters that helped elect him president are becoming disillusioned.

But in politics symbolism often sends a very powerful message.

Further, despite his promises of bipartisanship, he has shown a willingness to ram through critical

pieces of legislation on nearly straight party-line votes. I was discouraged to read recently that White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel and Senior Advisor David Axelrod both said that passing the health care reform bill on a strictly partisan basis in the next several weeks was more important than taking the time to build a bipartisan solution.

For more than 60 years, presidents from both parties have been trying to pass meaningful health care reform. There is no doubt we need it now more than ever. But that does not mean we should be rushing through a bill that carries a price tag of \$1.5 trillion over the next 10 years and that could fundamentally alter more than 15 percent of our entire national economy. It seems that the Senate is having the same thoughts and doubt that they can get something done on healthcare before the August recess.

"We're looking to fundamentally change the status quo in Washington," Obama said during the campaign. Americans did not vote for Barack Obama's politics as much as they voted for a man who inspired them to believe that, "Yes, we can" change Washington. Now, as he breaks from the ideals he espoused, the centrist voters that helped elect him president are becoming disillusioned.

Recent poll numbers are particularly noteworthy because, as I have said many times before, centrists are the key to victory in this country. The Times of

London noted after the 2008 election that, "For all the transformation in U.S. politics wrought by the past four years, Americans themselves do not seem to have undergone any great ideological conversion."

Just as in 2004, 22 percent of voters in 2008 identified themselves as liberal (it was 21 percent in 2004), 45 percent as moderate and 34 percent as conservative. This is still a center-right nation, and I am sure the President views his declining popularity among that group with great concern.

The corollary is the imperative that we as Republicans need to rebuild our support among a constituency that is crucial to the GOP's future electoral success. To reach centrists, we need to return to being the party of ideas. We cannot afford to simply discredit the Democrats' programs; we have to propose solutions and show why ours are the right ones for America.

When the House of Representatives recently passed the Obama Administration's cap-and-trade bill that was fraught with problems, Republican

attacks on the bill did not focus on specific deficiencies. They focused, rather, on the very concept of cap-and-trade, calling it "cap-and-tax."

The irony here is that the cap-and-trade concept was first used almost 20 years ago, under a Republican president,

To reach centrists, we need to return to being the party of ideas. We cannot afford to simply discredit the Democrats' programs; we have to propose solutions and show why ours are the right ones for America.

to successfully reduce acid rain. And although I listened very carefully for a constructive alternative from the Republicans, I never heard one.

Television ads about health care reform are one way for the GOP to present some positive proposals. Such ads will of course contain a negative portrayal of Obama's plan – and utilizing the Congressional Budget Office evaluation

of it, which demonstrated that it will cost us far more than it will save, is certainly fair game. But then we have to show what our alternative plan would be.

Finally, if the Republican Party is to court the center-right where the majority of Americans find themselves, we have to reexamine the issues on which we focus. With the future of health care hanging in the balance, Republicans in the Senate the other week decided to focus on a concealed weapons law.

Instead of focusing on issues that appeal to a minority of voters, we should focus on the core conservative principles of limited government that have served our Party well and made our country great.

We need to earn back the voter's trust, and that takes positive actions as well as thoughtful criticism. **RF**

Christine Todd Whitman is the Founder and Co-Chair of the Republican Leadership Council. Previously, she served as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Governor of the State of New Jersey.

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Minivan Moms and the GOP

CHRISTINE L. MATTHEWS

They've been called soccer moms, minivan moms, and security moms, and 2010 may bring yet another moniker for married women with children. But however they may be branded, there is one label that increasingly doesn't fit them: Republican.

In 2004, this cohort was considered a key turn-out group by the Bush campaign team and is credited with helping to re-elect George W. Bush with 56 percent of their vote. However, by 2006, they were considered "in play" by both parties, and by 2008, they had shifted toward Democrats.

In the 2008 election, married moms and dads had a 13 point gender gap: Married women with children voted for Barack Obama by a 51-47 percent margin, while married dads voted for John McCain by nine points. In suburbs everywhere, couples were waging battle over whose bumper sticker to put on the minivan.

As a member of the minivan mom contingent (actually, Volvo wagon mom), as well as a Republican pollster, I have both personal and professional interest in the party's slide among this key demographic group.

The Republican Party's slippage with married women with children is concurrent with the party's slide in

the suburbs. The suburbs went red in 2000 and 2004, but voted for Barack Obama in 2008. The suburban vote represents an increasing share of the electorate (nearly 50 percent, which is



The Republican Party's slippage with married women with children is concurrent with the party's slide in the suburbs.

up 6 percent since 2000) and holds the key to election outcomes. Typically, rural and urban areas have cancelled each other out: the shrinking rural

vote is overwhelmingly red, while urban voters are reliably blue.

Unfortunately, the Republican message continues to be geared to the 21 percent of the electorate in rural America – rather than the vast majority of Americans who live in the increasingly diverse mix found in suburbia and cities.

Democrats made and continue to make a concerted effort to play in the suburbs, and are hitting their stride with suburban moms, while the GOP seems increasingly out of touch. One of my mom friends (married to a diehard Republican) recoils when she sees the label "G.O.P." which, she says, always reminds her of "G.O.B" (for Good ole boy).

Republicans, with some notable exceptions, seem to have lost the ability to appeal to these voters with a mix of pragmatic conservatism that contains an intellectual idea-driven component. Instead, many of our messengers seem to be selling a hateful blend of "us vs. them" or "evil vs. moral and ideological purity." This does not play well in suburbia, and it does not play well with the women who live there.

Having Sarah Palin on the ticket in 2008 did not help Republicans with suburban moms. In an NBC News/WSJ poll taken right before the 2008

election, women were split by where they lived on Palin: women in suburbs viewed her unfavorably (37 percent favorable – 54 percent unfavorable), while small town/rural women had an opposite view (54 percent favorable – 37 percent unfavorable). Suburban men, on the other hand, split evenly on the former Alaska Governor, while small town/rural men were generally positive.

For many swing voters, Sarah Palin has more in common with reality TV than the reality of their own lives. While she will not attract these women back to the party, there are surely Republican women who understand the concerns and lives of many of these married moms who would be appealing candidates and could help the party win these women back. This is a key time for recruiting candidates, and every effort should be made to reach out to this group of women to find community, school, and business leaders who could be appealing candidates.

For many women with families at home, the cost is too high to consider running for office. But these women

are exactly the kind we need right now. They are also less likely than men to think of themselves as potential candidates, and they are less likely to be recruited to run for office, according to Brown University's Citizen Political Ambition Study. So, GOP party leaders may need to work a little harder to find these women and spend more time encouraging them to run.

In late June, the Republican National Committee announced its Women's Interactive Network encouraging state parties to develop women's programs. While it's a fine idea to set up a sales force, the more important focus should be on finding the ideas, policies, message and messengers that will give them a good product.

After all, if you have a good product, the customers will come. **RF**

Christine L. Matthews is the founder and president of Bellwether Research and Consulting (<http://bellwether-research.com/>).

For many swing voters, Sarah Palin has more in common with reality TV than the reality of their own lives.

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The Ripon Society convenes its Second Bully Pulpit of the Year ON HEALTH CARE

ALLISON BRENNAN

WASHINGTON, DC -- With Congress debating the most drastic health care reform bill since 1965, The Ripon Society held its second Bully Pulpit Policy Discussion on health care on July 9, further examining the current debate. A panel of Congressmen and Association leaders voiced its concern over the implications comprehensive health care reform will have on their constituents and industries.

Congressman John Fleming (LA-4) asserted that the largest point of contention between Republicans and Democrats is the single-payer option, "I think the question is: will it improve the competition atmosphere and drive prices down or will it increase them?"

The single-payer option which puts the onus on government to pay for individual health care has Fleming concerned it will create an uneven distribution of privilege and cause costs to rise. "We will end up with what Canada and the UK have today which is basically a public run system bloated with rationing and long lines you will have a second tier which is those who are privileged and those who can afford a very expensive private option."

Fleming backed up his

opposition to the single-payer system by introducing House Resolution 615. Challenging his Democratic Colleagues, Fleming told the Ripon Society of his resolution, "If you vote for a single-payer system, you must

improving quality and covering those who aren't covered...It's not about people who have coverage and are happy," Shadegg said, adding that 83 percent of Americans are content with their current health care.

Shadegg also discussed his "Improving Health Care for All Americans Act," aimed at preserving competition among insurance companies and allowing the public to choose their own insurance carrier. "Everybody gets a choice but instead of having the government take away the [tax] exclusion, you let the individual decide if they want to keep the employer plan and the [tax] exclusion or if they want to take the tax credit and buy their own plan, giving the same

level of competition and the same level of choice for every American."

Responding to concern over rising costs in health care, Carol Kelly, Senior Vice President at the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) voiced several solutions to the panel, "In this whole context of health care reform, what we are trying to do is provide higher quality care at lower costs through something we call in the pharmaceutical industry... medication adherence."

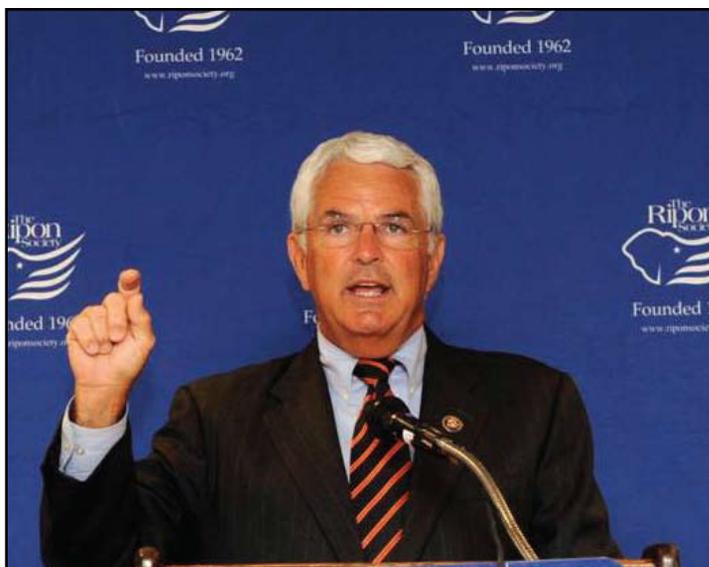


photo by Marty LaVor

Arizona Congressman John Shadegg speaks at the Ripon Society Bully Pulpit on Health Care on July 9.

be willing to enroll in such a system when it becomes available."

Congressman John Shadegg (AZ-3) who is also opposed to a single-payer over haul of the current health care system voiced his disagreement about the direction health care reform is headed, "I think [the Democrat's plan] fundamentally has the entire issue wrong. I think this debate is not really about fixing health care in America it's about two things: one, reining in cost and maybe as a subset,

Medication adherence is a concept that stems from a study done by the National Council on Patient Information, finding that the health care system pays an additional \$177 billion yearly because people who do not properly take their medication. One of the ways NACDS promotes reducing costs with regard to medication adherence is through Medication Therapy Management. Said Kelly, "Medication Therapy Management is the opportunity for a pharmacist to work with a patient as a coach to make sure that they understand and that they take their medications and they're on the right group of medications that don't have contraindications."

While Medication Therapy Management can be found in Medicare Part D, NACDS is working to standardize and codify the program further through CMS.

The American Health Care Association (AHCA), which serves the nursing home and assisted living industry, was represented on the panel

by Senior Vice President of Policy and Government Relations Dave Hebert. According to Hebert, the AHCA has asked Congress to make long term care a part of health care reform.

The industry represents 1.1 percent of the GDP, or \$153 billion. It also employs 4.5 million people and is one of the only industries in today's economy that is still hiring with 50-75,000 jobs open – a fact Hebert made specific reference to in his remarks before the group.

"Our concern among other things," he stated, "is as a result of health care reform, they will essentially kill the golden goose. We could be hit with about \$53 billion in cuts. That would be absolutely devastating. The impact of the house bill would cause us to lose 30,000 jobs, perhaps more."

Hebert stated that Congress has repeatedly rejected the AHCA's attempts to introduce their long term care proposal as a part of the 2009 health care reform. The AHCA's plan would save the nursing home and

assisted living industry \$60 to \$80 billion.

When offered up in talks, Hebert said that, "We have been told time and again that long term care will not be part of this discussion. We think that's a tragedy. Now is the time to strike if we are going to reform health care."

In response to Hebert's comments, Kelly questioned how comprehensive the present health care reform really is, "If we are spending \$1 to \$2 trillion on health care reform but we're not addressing long term care, when are we going to address it?"

Health care reform is on a fast track. Of this, Congressman Shadegg said, "I think the only way [health care reform] will stop is number one, it doesn't pass before the August break...and two, the only way it would not pass is if the American people figure out what's in it before there's a vote on it." **RF**

Allison Brennan is an editorial assistant with The Ripon Forum.

Postscript

REMEMBERING A FRIEND



The nation lost one of its most inspirational leaders this spring with the passing of Jack Kemp. The Ripon Society also lost a friend.

He spoke to the Ripon Society in 1989. As former *Forum* editor Bill McKenzie recalled in the May 5th Dallas Morning News, Kemp's appearance was marked not only by the vigor he had once shown on the gridiron, but by the inclusive nature the conservative had always exhibited toward others -- even, in the case of Ripon, those of a more centrist stripe.

"He showed up at the dinner with all the flash and flair of a former NFL quarterback," McKenzie recalled. "I remember he quipped to some of us who were waiting to usher him in that he had come to enlighten us. But he had none of the insular, angry and arrogant tone one might expect of a speaker walking into a skeptical audience. Instead, he flashed his big, toothy smile, slapped backs and did all the things good pols do to win over an audience.

"I remember being surprised and impressed. A good friend had worked for Kemp back in the early 1980s, and I knew she respected him. But I had thought he was a Johnny-one-note. If it didn't have to do with tax cuts, forget it. And deficits? Don't bother, they don't matter. But he was really good at the dinner and clearly was a guy who was aware the GOP couldn't just talk to itself."

Jack Kemp reminded us of a time when Republicans were known more for their optimistic vision than their capacity for saying 'no.' He embodied Reagan Republicanism — positive, hopeful, always looking for the better idea, and always believing a better day was just ahead.

He will be missed.

RF

Ripon Profile

Name: Janice K. Brewer

Hometown: Glendale, AZ

Occupation: Governor of Arizona

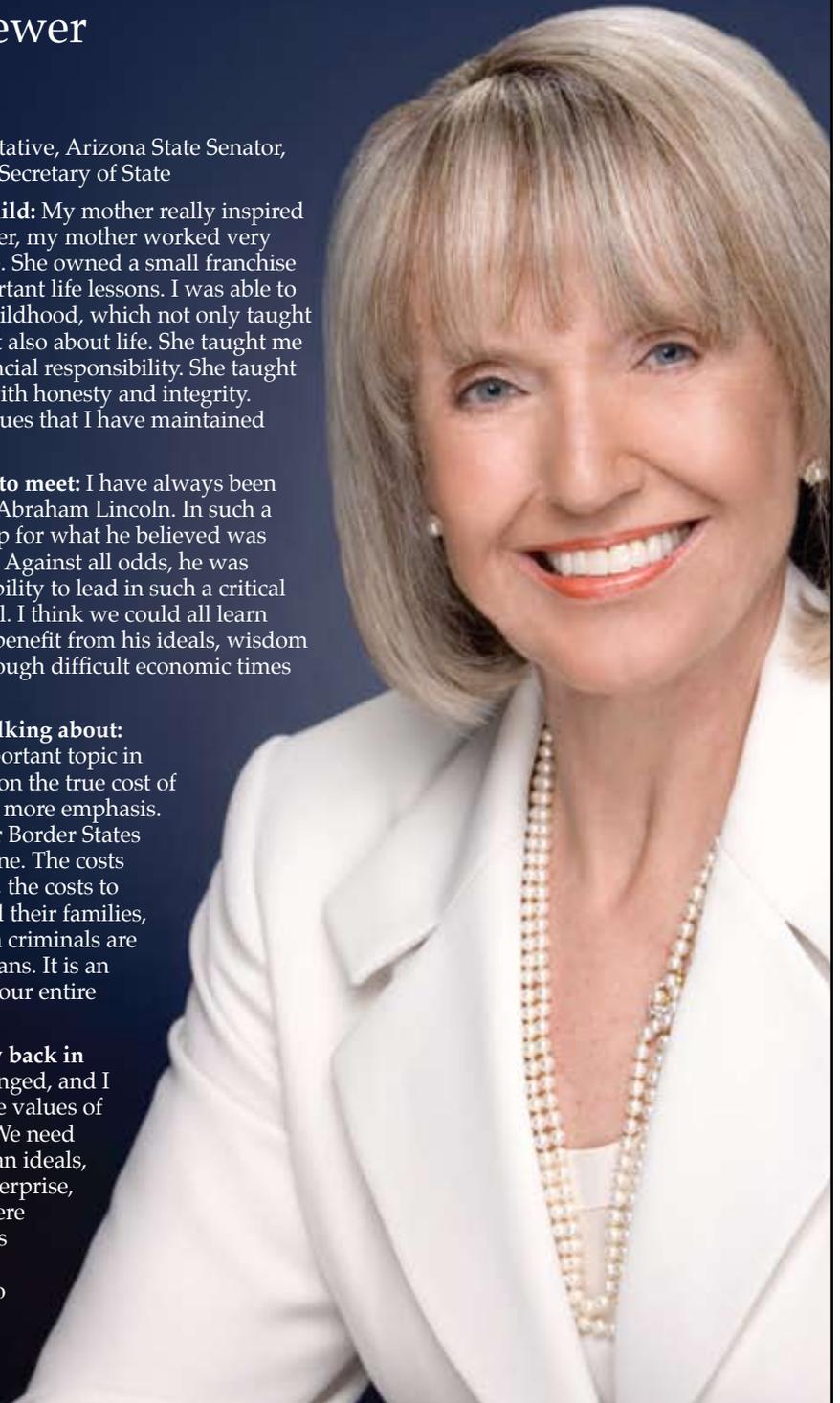
Previous Jobs: Arizona State Representative, Arizona State Senator, Maricopa County Supervisor, Arizona Secretary of State

Individual(s) who inspired me as a child: My mother really inspired me as a young girl. After I lost my father, my mother worked very hard to provide for my brother and me. She owned a small franchise dress shop, where she taught me important life lessons. I was able to help her in her shop throughout my childhood, which not only taught me about basic business principles, but also about life. She taught me about the value of hard work and financial responsibility. She taught me the importance of treating others with honesty and integrity. My mother really helped shape my values that I have maintained throughout my life.

Historical figure(s) I would most like to meet: I have always been very interested in the life and mind of Abraham Lincoln. In such a time of turmoil, he was able to stand up for what he believed was right and stand firm in his convictions. Against all odds, he was able to keep our nation together. His ability to lead in such a critical moment in history truly is inspirational. I think we could all learn much from Lincoln, and I know that I benefit from his ideals, wisdom and humility as I continue to work through difficult economic times in Arizona.

Issue facing America that no one is talking about: Although immigration remains an important topic in our national debate, public discussion on the true cost of illegal immigration enforcement needs more emphasis. The financial and personnel burden for Border States is much larger than most people imagine. The costs to educate the children of illegal aliens, the costs to provide health care to illegal aliens and their families, and the costs to incarcerate illegal alien criminals are draining the pocketbooks of all Arizonans. It is an issue we must not ignore and one that our entire nation must address and resolve.

What the GOP must do to win its way back in the polls: Our principles have not changed, and I think, for the most part, they mirror the values of the American – and Arizona – family. We need to continue to focus on those Republican ideals, including limited government, free enterprise, and individual initiative. Of course, there will be disagreements; every family has them. But, in the end, these spats are only background noise, and we need to listen, instead, to the voices of Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan and follow the lessons they taught us.



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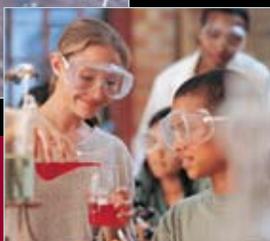
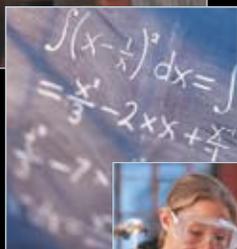
- September 15th - Dinner with Richard Lugar
- September 17th - Breakfast with Patrick Tiberi
- September 22nd - Breakfast with Steven LaTourette
- September 30th - Breakfast with Todd Tiahrt
- October 6th - Breakfast with Peter Roskam
- October 14th - Breakfast with Jeff Flake
- October 20th - Breakfast with Marsha Blackburn
- October 28th - Breakfast with Frank Wolf

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