

The W&L Spectator

THE Student Journal
of Fact and Opinion

Conservatives'
Public Enemy Number 1:
Who is it, and why should you be concerned?



Also in This Issue:

A Conservative TV Show?

What is with the coffee in the Coop?

Liberals in The Spectator?
Unveiling our Point-Counterpoint Section

Volume XIII Issue 2
Winter 2007

Letter from the Editors



After we printed the last issue of *The Spectator*, a student remarked that, though he disagreed with the position taken in "The State of Student Self-Governance," he had refrained from writing a letter to the editor because he did not want to cause a controversy.

Ignoring other issues this brings up, the most important goal of the *Spectator* is to promote "the free exchange of ideas in an environment where meaningful debate and ideological diversity are often lacking." We like to be agreed with – and who doesn't? However, we don't need you to tell us we are Right. We already know. What we do need is for our ideas, ideas theoretically shared by other members of the community, to be challenged. Our opinions alone do not constitute a debate. If you think we are being intolerant, closed-minded, or completely ridiculous, tell us, and tell us why.

So, as you peruse this issue, if you are struck by an idea you cannot believe was put into print, send us an e-mail. We would love to hear from you.

Expectantly,

Jennifer Sanow and Heather Hart

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Mission Statement

The W&L Spectator is a non-partisan publication dedicated to promoting the free exchange of ideas in an environment where meaningful debate and ideological diversity are often lacking. We, as staff, seek to serve the W&L community by infusing it with the ingredients necessary for a balanced educational experience. These ingredients include conservative, libertarian, and classical liberal thought. We believe that peace is best achieved through strength, that utopia is nowhere, and that true equality is blind to race, creed, sex, and sexuality. We take it as our mission to expose the inadequacies of the non-traditionalist ideas that do not understand and fail to work with our student body. We strive to adhere to the beliefs of the student body that the administration often overlooks. We invite the active participation of any student or alumnae who shares our vision and would like to join our movement.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in the articles herein are solely those of each respective author. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of any other staff member or of Washington and Lee University.

The Spectator is a member of the Washington and Lee Media Board, which can be reached at mediaboard@wlu.edu.

Contents

- 4 Conservative Television?
- 5 The Fare of Fair
- 6 Point - Counterpoint:
Universal Healthcare
- 8 Conservatives' Public Enemy
Number 1
- 10 Temperature Rising:
The Truth About
Global Warming
- 12 The Rise of the Modern
Private Military Company
- 15 Campus Interviews:
Preparation for the Future?

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Conservative Television?

On November 6, 2001, the first season (Day 1) of *24* premiered on FOX Cable with only 8.6 million viewers; by the premiere of Day 5, that number had reached 13.78 million. The winner of numerous Emmys and Golden Globes, *24* is based on the real-time adventures of federal agent Jack Bauer (played by Kiefer Sutherland) and his efforts to save Los Angeles, the United States, and quite possibly the universe from various terrorist organizations. The show's aim is to present situations in which the U.S. faces threats of nuclear or biochemical warfare and internal corruption and the steps that the government would take to counteract those attacks. I will admit that the show pushes the limits of realism with its gratuitous violence, explosions, and plot twists to hold the audience's attention, all of which are quite effective (I don't know about you, but I wasn't going anywhere after Jack ripped a guy's throat out with his teeth in this season's premiere). At the same time, the show is realistic enough to have the more paranoid among us considering the preparations needed if we ever found ourselves in a terrorist situation.

24 has been called a "conservative show" by some critics, due mostly to the fact that the terrorists are often portrayed as Muslims (Liberals everywhere screech "*Ethnic stereotyping!*") and that Jack will unhesitatingly torture suspects to get information that might save American lives (Conservatives everywhere cheer for Jack's motives). The show is

undoubtedly one of the more conservative programs on television – and a rare find in the vastly liberal media – but it is also adept at presenting the extreme views of both sides. For example, in the current season I found myself screaming and swearing in frustration at the current President Palmer's sister, who, in an impressive display of stupidity, deleted the files of American-Islamic citizens in her database in what she mistakenly considered an effort to protect their privacy. This move ended up throwing even more suspicion on them. On the other end of the spectrum, I tried to throw the remote control at one of the president's advisors, who took racial profiling to extremes and ignored the Constitution in his efforts to create detention camps — without the President's authorization. Yes, many of the bad guys are radical Islamic followers, but they are also Russian, German, Chinese, and American.

The show's goal is not to push either conservative or liberal propaganda; instead, it is to attract viewers with an action-packed, addictive plotline that glues us to our seats. Somewhere along the way, however, it also provides a show that conservatives can really enjoy. Perhaps it is the portrayal of men and women who are dedicated to the safety of their country, even if that safety comes at the price of not being nice to the country's enemies. Perhaps it is the absolute moral conviction with which the Counter Terrorist Unit and Jack Bauer fight to protect the lives of

their countrymen. Indeed, Jack's character embodies the sense of duty and loyalty that inspires our military forces in the real world. It seems that many liberals today cannot comprehend that sense of duty, that willingness to give up their lives for their countries; they emphasize the military's destructive nature, insisting that it is something ultimately evil. *24* and its hero beg to differ.

Interestingly, many liberals also enjoy watching *24* — even though it's been branded as a "conservative show." One would think that their delicate sensibilities would be offended by the scenes of torture, but they cheer along with conservatives while Jack Bauer does what he must to save the country. Maybe deep down some liberals aren't as liberal as they'd like to pretend; if it came down to their own lives or the humane treatment of terrorists, would they really take the supposedly higher moral ground? All I know is that every Monday, I enjoy an hour of watching Jack Bauer single-handedly defeat 30 terrorists and blow up buildings, cars, people, etc. — safe in the knowledge that I will never live in Los Angeles.

Allie Locking is making a bomb shelter and can be reached at lockinga@wlu.edu.

The Fare of Fair

In recent years, the fair trade movement has gained much momentum. Everywhere one goes, the labels for “fair trade certified” are emblazoned on all sorts of products. From Lexington’s Wal-Mart to W&L’s very own co-op, the fair trade tag is appearing on an increasing number of products. At the forefront of the fair trade agenda is coffee, the over-committed college student’s beverage of choice.

Following the rise of coffee from a cheap drink to a luxury brew, activists began to complain that companies like Starbucks were making unjustified profit margins at the expense of the producers in developing countries. The creation out of these complaints was the concept of fair trade. In theory, by purchasing the fair trade products, the consumer is supposed to feel that he is doing his part in helping the “exploited Third World farmer,” the supposed beneficiary of the movement.

Though not bad in their intentions, organizations such as Oxfam International and Global Call to Action Against Poverty ignore some basic economic facts in their attempt to raise Third-World nations out of poverty. The most prosperous nations are those that choose to operate under the wealth-creating free-market system. The international groups determined to make a difference simply trade the free-market model for one which is “fair.”

The reason so many organizations clamor to get onto the “progressive” bandwagon to

ensure fair trade is that they believe unregulated free trade ignores any standard for labor and wages, and solely lines the pockets of the multinational corporations. In recruiting celebrities like Bono and P. Diddy, the groups aim to mainstream the demand for fair trade products, exemplified by the “Make Trade Fair” campaign, led mostly by rock stars. Also, the fair trade groups have been able to enlist influential members of the Evangelical Christian community, such as rockers Relient K and W&L alum Pat Robertson, to add Christian duty to the intended social justice motivation of the campaigns.

Within fair trade movements, the product is exclusively purchased from collectives. For an individual to gain from the transactions, he must join the collective, ultimately forfeiting his right to establish his own profit-maximizing price. Within the collective, the incentive to produce an increasingly better product is gone, for one’s product is merely part of a whole. The entire system on which the free nations of the West have been able to flourish is gone.

Marketing schemes to sell fair trade products are an attempt to capitalize on our privileged American guilt. Starbucks sells its coffee in close to 40 countries, yet offers its fair trade-certified products in only 17 of those countries, all of which are considered modernized and developed. If maintaining fair trade is the goal, then why are the

international coffeehouses not brewing the more expensive, but “fair” java globally? Simple economics can answer that question. The fair trade movement aims to eventually create a fixed price for coffee by the pound. This price floor created by the fixed price would lead to excess supply.

The truth is that after oil, coffee is the largest industry in the world. Any impact regarding coffee could be disastrous to the global economy. To use the words of Cato Institute senior fellow Brink Lindsey, fair trade is a “well intentioned, interventionist scheme . . . doomed to end in failure.”

As the ageless virtue states, two rights don’t make a wrong. If the current system in which coffee is sold is wrong, and the methodology of current fair trade practices is also wrong, then it would be best to let a free market establish prices for coffee which will be mutually beneficial for all involved. After all, I think Adam Smith knew a little bit more about economics than Bono.

Grant Russell drinks his coffee black and can be reached at russellg@wlu.edu.

Point - Counterpoint: Universal Healthcare

The Healthcare

Imperative:

A normative defense of universal access

The status quo model of healthcare in the United States is unsustainable, and most Americans — even the fully insured — believe that existing coverage is wholly inadequate. An October 2003 ABCNews/Washington Post poll found that 78 percent of Americans are “dissatisfied with the cost of the nation’s healthcare system;” more than half of poll respondents are “dissatisfied with the overall quality of healthcare in the United States.” It is not difficult to discern why so many are disillusioned with the current state of affairs. Despite the fact that the United States spends 15 percent of its gross domestic product on healthcare costs, Americans are neither the healthiest in the world, nor do they live the longest. Forty-five million Americans are uninsured, and a great many more are underinsured, raising the specter of a national healthcare crisis, one that demands a total reconceptualization of health services delivery and warrants a renewed look at government-provided, or “universal,” healthcare.

The benefits of such a policy would be manifold. First, establishing universal healthcare would improve the quality of life for all Americans. Such a policy would guarantee preventative and rehabilitative care, vital forms of

medical treatment that are currently inaccessible to the poor and uninsured. These groups are currently less likely to fill prescriptions, register for routine check-ups, receive immunizations, and undergo physicals — universal healthcare would reverse all of these trends, enabling citizens to be more healthy and productive. Lives would be saved. A study conducted by the non-partisan Institute of Medicine revealed that 18,000 “excess deaths” occur each year because citizens either cannot afford the costs of care or receive inadequate or ineffective treatment due to their inability to pay.

In addition to the intrinsic value of universal healthcare coverage in America, introducing these policies would help recover many of the *costs of the uninsured* that are incurred by *all Americans*. Some reports estimate that poor health and shorter life spans of the uninsured cost the American economy as much as one hundred thirty billion dollars each year in lost productivity. The class of uninsured also contributes to rising costs of educational programs for developmentally delayed children, the precarious state of overstretched federal assistance programs (Medicare and Medicaid, among others), and overwhelmed hospital emergency rooms. Local economies are weakened, healthcare infrastructures are taxed to their breaking points, and “skyrocketing insurance premiums [are digging] further into profit margins and undermine the ability

of business to invest in expansion.” Ultimately, the magnitude of the losses caused by the current framework of employer-based insurance is so great that it is nearly incalculable—it is clear, though, that the costs are in the billions.

These costs to society are so great that a fully organized political movement supporting drastic change has materialized in recent years. Universal healthcare coverage has become increasingly popular, a sentiment reflected in recent public polling. Some sixty-two percent of respondents to the ABC/Washington Post poll support a universal healthcare policy of some kind; an overwhelming majority polled by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2003 indicated their preference for government-provided health insurance and, surprisingly, said that they would support such a policy *even if forced to forgo the tax cuts passed by the Bush Administration*. Countless other studies confirm these results.

These numbers are striking because they contrast sharply with the prevailing sentiments of the Republican Party, and more broadly, of the extreme political right—that universal healthcare is the ultimate attempt to “socialize” America’s paradigmatic capitalist economy (insert *ad hominem* attack on Hillary Clinton), an assault on the free-market system, and a blatant effort to undermine the American work ethic.

Continued on Page 14

Against Universal Health Care

The goal of providing quality medical care to all Americans is a noble goal indeed. It is also quite impossible. Yet millions of Americans want it done, and their elected officials tell them it can be done. Those who disagree can expect to be branded as enemies of the underprivileged. In reality, however, a truly compassionate government would not guarantee universal health care. To make good on such a guarantee would produce two effects irreconcilable with the goal of said compassionate government. First, it would require an enormous tax burden, thereby depriving the private sector of the means of building wealth, including the advances in medical services that our economy has made possible. Second, it would greatly impair the quality of health care for all Americans. The first of these effects is so obvious that it requires no discussion at all; accordingly, this article will discuss, somewhat briefly, the effect of universal health care on the quality of medical services.

It should be news to no one that health care is expensive. For this reason, any government that sponsors universal health care will have to restrict coverage in order to save money. The government will not be able to pay for everything, and thus there will be restrictions on available services

— or at least services for which the government will pay. In addition, medical professionals are often undercompensated in socialized-medicine programs, and this has the effect of rationing services because it cuts the supply of those services.

Even absent all of this, there remains the problem that when the government pays for health care, people will use more of it, whether or not they should. As Chicago economist Thomas Sowell points out in *Applied Economics*, “The normal weighing of costs against benefits, which causes more urgent things to be done ahead of less important things when prices ration scarce resources, is less effective when costs are paid by someone other than the actual decision-makers.” The cost of paying for one patient’s medical services is diffused throughout the taxpaying population, but the benefit is concentrated in that one patient. Under a system of universal health care, it becomes rational for the patient to seek medical help for a problem (say, a sleeping problem or some vague sensations of pain) that he himself would not pay to check out. The result is that “people with minor ailments may take up so much of the doctors’ time and medical resources that those with more serious medical conditions are forced to wait.”

The empirical evidence bears out Professor Sowell’s economic analysis. Consider these figures from *Waiting Your Turn 16th*

Edition: Hospital Waiting Lists in Canada, a report published by the Fraser Institute: In 2006, the median delay in Canada between a patient’s referral to a general practitioner and his eventual treatment was *17.8 weeks*.

“Among the various specialties,” the report finds, “the shortest total waits . . . existed for medical oncology (4.9 weeks), radiation oncology (5.0 weeks), and elective cardiovascular surgery (8.0 weeks).” The longest waiting periods were for “orthopaedic surgery (40.3 weeks), plastic surgery (35.4 weeks), and neurosurgery (31.7 weeks).” The national median wait time for cataract surgery is 12.5 weeks; for radiation therapy, 3.4 weeks; for a hip or knee replacement, 29.7 weeks; for an MRI exam, 10.3 weeks in most fields where MRIs were requested (for the psychiatric data set, the figure is 11.7 weeks).

Delay is not simply a matter of personal inconvenience. As Professor Sowell observes, “People can die from conditions that were initially not very serious, but which grew progressively worse while they were on waiting lists to receive medical care.” Two years ago, no less an authority than the Supreme Court of Canada — not exactly a fount of right-wing thought — acknowledged that “delays in the public health care system are widespread and that in some serious cases, patients die as a result of waiting lists for public health care.”

Continued on Page 14

Conservatives' Public Enemy Number 1

The Republican Party has accomplished the unimaginable: It has governed from the left and governed very poorly, yet in so doing it has driven the electorate to the party of Carter, Clinton, and Kerry. The Grand Old Party had nothing more to offer the people than the dubious promise to be the lesser of two evils. While the Democrats did not earn their victory, the Republicans richly deserved their defeat. And they will suffer worse defeats if they do not learn to fight the Democrats. Next year's presidential election will be a seminal one. If conservatives care about the direction of their country, they will use 2008 as the occasion to take back the Republican Party, to draw a bright line between the Left and the Right, to keep power away from the enemies of the conservative cause. Going into 2008, however, conservatives must understand what this article will explain.

The subject of this article is arguably conservatives' worst enemy — the politician who, if elected president, will do the most harm to the conservative cause. He voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment. He opposes overturning the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*. He supports illegal immigration. He opposes requiring proof of American citizenship as a condition of voting or receiving welfare benefits. He supports bilingual education, perhaps the most consistently fruitless program ever conceived to teach the English

language. He wants the United States to submit to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. He led the drive to shackle the American military in its interrogations of terrorists. He played a crucial role in preserving the Democrats' right to filibuster Republican judicial nominees. He is a champion of campaign finance reform. He received a C+ lifetime rating from the National Rifle Association in 2004.

He is Senator John McCain.

He has already done much to frustrate conservative goals, and as president, he would have countless opportunities to do more of the same.

John McCain is a truly appalling creature, a blend of everything bad in politics. He exemplifies all the vices of the average politician, yet acts as if he were the conscience of the Senate. St. John McVain the Incorruptible has worn out many mirrors examining his alleged virtues, yet his self-righteousness is inversely proportional to his actual righteousness. For years, McCain, the only Republican among the Keating Five, has been the scourge of corruption and the guardian of light and truth. But if the fruits of his moral crusade are the measure of his moral standing, then McCain is hardly a success. Consider this: In 2004, Wisconsin Right to Life wanted to run television advertisements saying, "Contact Senators Feingold and Kohl and

tell them to oppose the filibuster [of President Bush's judicial nominees]." The pro-life group wanted to run this advertisement within 60 days of a general election in which Feingold was a candidate. But it would be a crime to do so — thanks to McCain's campaign finance reform statute.

McCain, to be sure, is not quite a liberal — he has bucked his party on spending, and conservatives should give him credit for that. But he is not even remotely conservative, which is why he has enjoyed the media's adulation for the last decade and a half. As the reader is well aware, McCain is seeking the Republican Party's nomination in the 2008 race for the presidency. He has already done much to frustrate conservative goals and, as president, he would have countless opportunities to do more of the same. Yet many conservatives will seriously consider voting for the Arizona maverick in the primary elections, and almost all would vote for him in a general election. This is because conservatives believe McCain to be "good enough" — fiscally and socially conservative overall, hence acceptable, despite his supposedly few left-wing beliefs.

Conservatives, then, have a lot to learn about John McCain.

Consider abortion. McCain has long said that he favors banning abortions, except in cases of rape or incest or where medically necessary for the mother. Last year, on ABC's "This Week," he said that he supports overturning the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which

first announced a constitutional right to abortion. But in August of 1999, McCain told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that, while he would “love to see a point where [Roe] is irrelevant, and could be repealed because abortion is no longer necessary,” nevertheless, “certainly in the short run, or even the long run, I would not support the repeal of *Roe v. Wade*, which would then force x number of women in America to [undergo] illegal and dangerous operations.” Days later, under fire from conservatives, McCain “righted” himself: *Roe*, he said, should not be overturned in the near future, for the reason already given, but he hoped to see the ruling overturned some day.

Is McCain pro-life? It is difficult to imagine any pro-lifer characterizing abortion rights as “necessary,” as McCain did. Further, his reason for opposing the immediate repeal of *Roe* should lead him to opposing the repeal of *Roe* at any point in the future. Why would the criminalization of abortion result in “x number of . . . illegal and dangerous operations” if it occurred today but not if it occurred many years from now? Surely this is absurd. Presumably, McCain means that *Roe* should not be overturned until the culture advances to the point when women stop getting abortions. But in a country where no one obtained abortions, there would be no need to ban the practice. (By the way, contrary to popular myth, overturning *Roe* would not, by itself, make abortion illegal; it would simply return to the states the power to decide whether abortion should be legal.)

Most conservatives want a president who will appoint anti-

Roe Justices to the Supreme Court. There is no reason to believe that McCain would do any such thing. To this author’s knowledge, McCain has never — not even recently — said that he favors the immediate repeal of *Roe*. And if he ever says or has said otherwise, he is almost certainly lying — just as he lies about opposing amnesty for illegal aliens. He wants to be president, so he exaggerates his conservatism to get the Republican nomination. But once he is elected, he will do next to nothing for conservatives.

There is another reason why conservatives should not trust McCain to nominate good judges (better known as “originalists”) to the Supreme Court: his utter contempt for the United States Constitution. McCain’s greatest achievement is the enactment of a sweeping campaign-finance reform statute. As McCain knows, that statute violates the First Amendment. Take it from McCain himself, speaking on Don Imus’s radio program on April 28 of last year: “I work in Washington, and I know that money corrupts. And I and a lot of other people were trying to stop that corruption. Obviously, from what we’ve been seeing lately, we didn’t complete the job. But I would rather have a clean government than one where ‘First Amendment rights’ are being respected that has become corrupt. If I had my choice, I’d rather have the clean government.”

Judges who agree with McCain on this subject are highly unlikely to vote to overturn *Roe*. And it makes no sense to believe that McCain would put his legacy at stake by appointing originalists to

the Supreme Court, simply to placate the same conservative base that he has done so much to frustrate throughout his career. Many conservatives voted Bush in 2000 and 2004 because they believed that Bush would appoint more Supreme Court Justices like Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. Next year, conservatives will not be able to pretend that McCain will appoint judges of that sort. McCain will appoint only judges who will uphold his future handiwork — no doubt even more tyrannical restrictions on the ability of groups (political or otherwise) to pool their resources to argue their opinions. The land of the free? Not on McCain’s watch.

Conservatives have put up with RINOs — Republicans In Name Only — for far too long. We have seen politicians far more conservative than McCain run on the right and then govern from the middle or the left, while the Democrats pull harder to the left, thus moving the political center of gravity ever closer to pure collectivism. McCain will not be more of the same; he will be worse. His election would accelerate the liberalization of the GOP and the country at large. This outcome can be justified only if winning elections is more important than enacting conservative policies. But that cannot be. Policy is the very reason why we care who wins elections. The whole point of electing Republicans is to make sure that liberal policies will be thwarted, not ratified for political gain.

If McCain wins in 2008, then there will be two consecutive

Continued on Page 11

Temperature Rising

The Truth About Global Warming

With the campaign trail to the 2008 elections heating up, one particular issue has many politicians and voters quite “hot and bothered.” The environment and climate changes have been on the political radar for decades, but in the last 10 years, with the advent of Global Warming, environmental issues have risen to the forefront of national policy and political debate.

Much of the hype surrounding global warming has developed from recent studies proving the progressive melting of polar ice caps in the Arctic and the steady retreat of glaciers worldwide. Greater concerns involving global warming stem from an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural weather disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina.

The massive storm that destroyed 80% of New Orleans ignited a furious debate about the effects of global warming on the environment. According to special projects editor of *The Boston Globe*, Ross Gelbspan, “[Hurricane Katrina’s] real name is global warming.” In Germany, Environmental Minister Jurgen Tritten wrote an article in a German newspaper saying, “Greenhouse gases have to be radically reduced worldwide. The U.S. has, up until this point, had its eyes closed to this emergency.” He linked Hurricane Katrina to global warming and America’s refusal to reduce gas emissions.

Former Vice President Al

Gore, in his 2006 documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, dramatically asserts that melting ice in Greenland and Antarctica could raise sea levels by 20 feet, radically changing coastlines around the world. Ironically, some research shows that the Antarctic ice cap is, in fact, thickening. In 94 minutes of sensationalist slide-show presentation, Gore claims global warming is caused by human beings.

stable, viable climate.

The real truth behind global warming is much more complicated than Gore’s artistic license suggests. The Earth’s climate is admittedly warming. According to the EPA, the Earth has warmed about one degree Fahrenheit over the last century. However, the cause of this temperature increase is still largely unknown, and the greenhouse effect is only one hypothesis.

The Earth’s climate has been changing throughout history. Evidence gathered from ice cores, boreholes, tree rings, glacier lengths, pollen remains, and ocean sediments has allowed scientists to form pictures of the globe’s climate dating back millions of years. According to the EPA, there are many causes or “drivers” of climate change present throughout history.

One of the most significant drivers found to effect the climate is the continuous

changing in the Earth’s orbit and the intensity of the sun. Both of these factors affect the amount of sunlight in contact with the globe, and thus affect its temperature. According to NASA research, reduced solar activity from the 1400s to the 1700s was likely a key factor in the “Little Ice Age” which resulted in a slight cooling of North America, Europe and probably other areas around the globe.

So contrary to popular belief, conservatives are not ignoring global warming and do care about the environment. They are hardly



<http://www.towapresidentialwatch.com/images/cartoons/HelmetMd.JPG>

The defeated presidential hopeful links this natural phenomenon to notorious greenhouse gases. In its simplest terms, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines the greenhouse effect as a rise in temperature because certain gases in the atmosphere trap energy from the sun. In truth, the greenhouse effect is not all bad, as some talking heads would lead one to assume. The greenhouse effect is what allows the Earth to maintain a

seduced by sensationalist media and knee-jerk reactions. Instead, those of the political right choose to evaluate the situation and all the various options.

In a document published by the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change, scientific research proves that since 1979, the Earth's temperature has not been increasing. Secondly, if the proposed Kyoto treaty were adopted by the U.S., statistics show that greenhouse gas emissions would at best be reduced

by about 2%. Global warming theory advocates claim reduction of roughly 60% is needed to curtail man's effect.

Despite liberal propaganda to the contrary, conservatives are not failing to act on the threat of global warming. According to reports and President Bush's climate agenda, the U.S. has spent more than \$18 billion on climate research, which is three times as much as any other country. Each year since his election, the President has sought more funding for climate-change

research.

Getting to the bottom of this phenomenon will require a bipartisan effort, and an end to the finger-pointing and name-calling, for any sort of nation-wide solution to be reached.

Annie Kasper leaves the water running while brushing her teeth. She can be reached at kaspera@wlu.edu.

Continued from Page 9

Republican presidents - Bush and McCain. After McCain leaves office, the next president will almost certainly be a Democrat. The election of three consecutive Republican presidents will be most unlikely; there is no reason to believe that the Republicans can keep the White House out of Democratic hands for five elections in a row. And this is why conservatives should be selective about whom they support. If the Republicans nominate another RINO like McCain, it would be far more prudent to let the RINO go down to defeat and nominate an actual conservative the next time around. (Remember that when

Jimmy Carter beat Gerald Ford in 1976, it paved the way for the Reagan Revolution.)

The idea that "any Republican" has to be better than Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama is simply stupid. The current Republican President has committed more crimes against conservatism than anyone since Lyndon Johnson — for instance, reckless federal spending, unconscionable budget deficits, the "Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002," a libertine border policy, expanded federal power in areas such as education where the federal government has no legitimate business doing anything, the revival of Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy, and the

elevation of sensitivity over survival in the War on Terror. Conservatives must think about the long-term health of the conservative cause. Otherwise, in a few short years, the GOP will look very much like its equivalent in Britain. Conservatives who care about conservatism will just say "No" to John McCain.

Alan Williams is making political campaign buttons in preparation for the 2008 election. He welcomes comments at williamsa@wlu.edu.

Write to *The Spectator*

We welcome feedback and comments. Please let us know your thoughts at:

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The Rise of the Modern Private Military Company

Its Role in the Current Iraq Conflict

On Wednesday, March 31, 2004, four United States citizens and employees of Blackwater USA were burned, dismembered, and eventually hanged from a bridge by a mob of angry Iraqis in Falluja. These grisly images provided many Americans with their first encounter with the modern Private Military Company (PMC). In light of these tragic events, it has become important for the American public to understand not only the roles of PMCs in Iraq but the larger forces that have contributed to their rise.

Private military companies are for-profit corporations that offer a variety of services ranging from logistical support to providing soldiers. PMCs are employed by a diverse group including, according to Peter Singer, author of *Corporate Warriors*, “ruthless dictators, morally depraved rebels and drug cartels to legitimate sovereign states, respected multinational corporations and humanitarian NGOs.” In the past 16 years, the international security market has experienced unprecedented growth with industry revenue surging from \$55.6 billion in 1990 to close to \$202 billion in 2006. The principal event precipitating this surge in spending was the breakup of the Soviet Union and the subsequent scaling back of national militaries.

While the United States no longer faced the specter of a war

with the USSR, the reduced United States military was unprepared to face many of the regional and ethnic conflicts, humanitarian emergencies, and new missions such as counter-narcotics and counterterrorism that have emerged since 1990. To compensate for its deficiencies, the United States relies heavily on various PMCs to perform functions once reserved for the armed services. In the current Iraq conflict, a myriad of PMCs are deployed in services ranging from prisoner interrogation to catering.

In addition to the reduced need for a large-scale military to combat possible Soviet aggression, the scaling back of the United States military was driven by ideological forces. Starting in 1979, Margret Thatcher and her conservative government implemented what Singer refers to as “vociferous and comprehensive program of denationalization and privatization of many state industries.” The success of Thatcher’s policies spurred governments around the world to follow suit, including the United States.

During the 1990s, under Presidents Bush and Clinton, private companies took over hundreds of billions of dollars worth of government activities. Naturally, this trend flowed over into the military sector, and in 1992, Brown and Root, now KBR, was asked to produce a classified

report detailing how private companies could help provide logistics for U.S. troop deployments in potential war zones around the world. Since 1992, activities traditionally reserved for the military – such as operating and maintaining military equipment, protecting convoys, and policing – have shifted over to PMCs. In the first Gulf War and Balkans conflicts, the presence of U.S. contractors became so pervasive that some U.S. soldiers quipped that they should have uniform patches that say “Sponsored by Brown and Root.” Some military analysts believe that the U.S. Army will require contracted personnel, even in the close fight area, to keep its modern systems, especially information-related systems, functioning. The conclusion of the Cold War and the global trend toward privatization have contributed to the newly privatized state of many portions of the United States military.

Currently in Iraq there are nearly 100,000 employees of PMCs, many of whom are employed by CACI International, Blackwater USA, and KBR. CACI is a provider of information systems, technical and communications services, and proprietary products to defense intelligence and civilian agencies of the U.S. Government. Currently, CACI has a market cap of approximately \$1.43 billion, and in

the fiscal year 2006, CACI has revenue of \$1.75 billion. The company's board of directors consists of mostly former high-ranking government personnel including the former Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa, and the Commander in Chief of NATO Forces Southern Europe, the Deputy Director of Operations, NSA/Central Security Service, and other retired high ranking government personnel.

Of CACI's total revenue, 73.1 percent came from the U.S. Department of Defense. A portion of this revenue is derived from CACI's interrogation contracts within Iraq. In May of 2004, the Taguba Report, containing information regarding the alleged mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners was leaked to the world press. This report accuses CACI interrogator Steven A. Stefanowicz of encouraging soldiers to set conditions for interrogations and says he "clearly knew his instructions equated to physical abuse". Despite the alleged abuses, in August 2004, CACI was awarded another Department of Defense contract worth up to \$23 million and remains active in interrogation and other information services in Iraq.

In November 2006, the Halliburton Corporation spun off KBR, a subsidiary which provides military logistics and support services

ranging from base construction to food provision. KBR, a \$3.63 billion company with \$9.63 billion in revenue, is the Army's sole contractor for providing food and shelter to the military in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the 2006 fiscal year the Army paid KBR between \$4 and \$5 billion under contract. Many of KBR's contracts have been awarded in no-bid contests, garnering criticism from many critics who accuse the company of using its connections with Vice President Dick Cheney, former CEO of Halliburton while KBR was a subsidiary, to win contracts. Despite allegations of corruption, KBR remains one of the largest PMCs in Iraq and a major recipient of government contracts.

Blackwater USA, based in Moyock, North Carolina, is the nation's largest privately held PMC. Since the commencement of hostilities in Iraq, Blackwater has performed such high-profile tasks as guarding Ambassador L. Paul Bremer and protecting convoys. Blackwater has its roots in the military community and employs members from U.S. and international special operations forces, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement agencies. Many critics of Blackwater and other PMC's are appalled at the lack of accountability, as they do not fall under the jurisdiction of military

law. Retired Marine Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, a vocal critic of Blackwater, stated in an interview with PBS that "The problem is, in protecting the principal they had to be very aggressive, and each time they went out, they had to offend locals, . . . being overpowering and intimidating, . . . making enemies each time they went out." Blackwater's performance remains some of the most controversial of the private military firms operating in Iraq.

The fall of the Soviet Union and the trend toward privatization have dramatically altered the U.S. military landscape. Increasingly, private citizens are becoming integral parts in the American war machine. In many cases, civilians and soldiers have become interchangeable. It appears that PMCs will continue to expand their role in conflict zones around the globe. Given their rising prominence, it will be important for the government to regulate PMCs to a greater extent, thereby reducing the corruption and abuses of power many now associate with these corporations.

Denis O'Leary hired a bodyguard as part of his research for this article. He can be reached at olearyd@wlu.edu.

W&L By The Numbers -*Monica Chinn*

Number of ...

Cents that Postmaster General John Potter recommended stamps be increased to: 41
Cents it cost to mail a letter 40 miles when George Washington endowed Liberty Hall: 8

Routes that Lee Highway is designated by from New York City to San Francisco: 17
Years after death the highway was dedicated to Robert E. Lee: 33

Number of Sports Hall of Fame Alumni: 5
Number of Walks of Shame This Weekend: You Know Who You Are

Continued from page 6:

The same vapid, impotent arguments are made again and again: the uninsured are too lazy to procure jobs that provide adequate benefits.

Existing social programs provide an adequate safety net for those without coverage. The invisible hand of the market system will correct the allocation disparity. ❖

But all of these arguments fly in the face of the reality that has emerged over the past twenty years: that most people in the United States have non-existent or inadequate access to healthcare, and those lucky to receive it often find that it's not even that effective due to existing burdens on the industry. A 2005 study commissioned by the Rand

Corporation observed that there are "deficits in quality of care across all types of care—chronic, preventative, and acute."

What about the costs of universalizing healthcare? Detractors argue that universalized healthcare would constitute an unreasonable financial commitment costing the government money billions or even trillions that it currently does not have. But these arguments concerning the cost of universal healthcare—estimated to be in the thirty to sixty billion dollar range—almost seem comical in the face of the hundreds of billions of dollars being spent to fund the war in Iraq.

In the end, these questions remain: why is the United States the

only industrialized nation that does not guarantee affordable healthcare to its citizens and treat its access as a right? How can the United States spend more on healthcare per capita than any other industrialized country in the world and still have such a shoddy track record? Why is access to doctors, clinics, and medicines reserved for only a small segment of the world's richest country?

There are no easy answers, but it is evident that dramatic change must be part of the solution.

Chris Martin is saving up in case he ever finds himself uninsured. He can be reached at martinc@wlu.edu.

Continued from Page 7

Of course, Canada's problems are not Canada's alone. A 2002 article in *The Observer* (a British publication) described a report leaked from the United Kingdom's National Health Service, on the subject of British public health care. The article began with these words: "Thousands of NHS cancer patients are dying unnecessarily because waiting times for life-saving treatments are growing alarmingly." This, in countries where everyone is guaranteed health care.

The myth persists that countries that offer universal health care have, on balance, better care than the United States. Proponents cite the infant mortality rates of the United States (7.2 deaths per thousand live births) and of other developed countries (5.0 deaths per thousand live births), as well as the overall similar life expectancies between the United States and other developed countries. For all the

money that this country spends on medical care, the argument goes, Americans have little to show for it.

But, as John C. Goodman points out in the Cato Institute's January 2005 issue of *Policy Analysis*, life expectancy and infant mortality are each functions of many factors that do not bear on the quality of medical care. Goodman responds with other medical statistics putting the United States either well ahead of other developed countries or at least on equal footing with them, and these statistics more directly concern the quality of medical care.

For example, he notes that the mortality rate for breast-cancer patients is 46 percent in the United Kingdom, but only 25 percent in the United States (and 31 percent in Canada); for men in the United Kingdom who are diagnosed with prostate cancer, the mortality rate is 57 percent, versus 19 percent in the United States (and 25 percent in Canada); and "the annual rate of

cancer deaths is 70 percent higher in the United Kingdom than in the United States." And, significantly, "When Americans see their doctors, [they are] more likely to receive treatments with high-tech equipment."

America's health-care system is far from perfect, and will always be. Yet it is closer to the ideal than the systems in other countries the Left would like to emulate. One would think that our current difficulties paying for such programs as Medicare would deter progressives from advocating yet another bold leap towards utopia. But what ought to be, seldom is. And there is no better illustration of the disconnect between fantasy and reality than the dismal failure of universal health care to solve the problems it was created to solve.

Alan Williams went to the doctor yesterday, and he's fine.

W&L Campus Interviews

Preparation for the Future?

Washington and Lee boasts numerous and varied campus organizations, ranging from the social to the philanthropic and contributing to the vibrancy and dynamic of the W&L community. Each of these organizations requires the cycling of membership. As older members graduate, these organizations must attract new membership. Some organizations are non-selective; new membership is guaranteed with interest from the student. Other organizations are more selective and must interview students for their positions.

It is these organizations that have excited controversy across the campus. One would expect the interviews of such organizations to be a serious event with intense competition, as many highly qualified students apply for few spots. Indeed, some organizations require multiple interviews that can intimidate the most confident of applicants. However, even in this intensively competitive and career-minded university, questionable interviewing tactics are wide-spread. Indeed, uncomfortable, if not downright humiliating, interviews are almost a rite of passage into some organizations. Two organizations in particular have been mentioned by several students, the Fancy Dress Committee and the Contact Committee. These two committees, though singled out in this article, are by no means the only committees on campus that commit such offenses.

The Contact Committee is responsible for bringing speakers to

campus. One could argue that this is a very reputable committee, one that holds a serious position on campus and manages thousands of dollars. However, many students have expressed dissatisfaction with the interview process. Andrew Gerrish, a sophomore, said that, "the interview was unprofessional. They delved into my personal life." Even more appallingly, an anonymous student revealed that she was asked to "interpretive dance to a song while singing it." It is not likely that Contact is composed entirely of closet musical theater enthusiasts, nor is it likely that the ability to carry a tune is critical to the committee's functioning. Why, then, was performing made a requirement for a chance at committee membership? David Kronenfeld, head of Contact, shared his perspective. "Contact chooses to conduct their interviews in a manner that may make some uncomfortable. The tasks [we set] are not intended to humiliate or degrade any of the interviewees but rather to identify which candidates would perform best in an environment in which they may be uncomfortable or stressed. Contact members must host speakers on W&L's campus and as such are ambassadors for W&L. Four years of experience have shown me that the interviewees who are able to respond to Contact's random interview questions and tasks are better able to engage in small talk about topics other than the weather with speakers."

The Fancy Dress Committee was also accused of having poor interview

techniques. Sophomore Erika Rost recalled, "They asked me about previous experience, which was on the application, and about what I would bring to the committee. The next question was, 'Who are the three hottest guys in this school?' Then they asked me to do a cheer about FD. I felt that the random questions of the interview carried more weight than my four years of experience. My intelligence was insulted and I was definitely not taken seriously." The validity of the committee is suspect when the interview results in nothing more than social gossip.

These interviews could serve as valuable building blocks and teaching tools to the harder and more important interviews that will come later in life. Instead, they have become processes by which interviewers test and often ultimately humiliate their applicants. While an interview should by no means be easy or mindless, it should reflect the purpose of the committee. We are all adults, and the interviews should remain professional. Student organizations would do well to treat their applicants with respect, as the integrity of the committee suffers when the interview practices stray so far from convention as to be offensive.

Jackie DiBiasie is busy practicing her dance routine; she has an interview next week. She welcomes comments at dibiasiej@wlu.edu.

Out Loud

“Government is not reason; it is not eloquence; it is force. Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master.”
-George Washington

“A wise and frugal government which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government.”
-Thomas Jefferson

“Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.”
-Barry Goldwater

“It is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong.”
-Voltaire

“Government at its best is a necessary evil, and at its worst, an intolerant one.”
-Thomas Paine

“Governments harangue about deficits to get more revenue so they can spend more.”
-Allan Meltzer

“Government is the great fiction, through which everybody endeavors to live at the expense of everybody else.”
-Frederic Bastiat

“Government does not solve problems; it subsidizes them.”
-Ronald Reagan

“Everything government touches goes to crap.”
-Ringo Starr

“If you put the federal government in charge of the Sahara Desert, in 5 years, there'd be a shortage of sand.”
-Milton Friedman

“Collecting more taxes than is absolutely necessary is legalized robbery.”
-President Calvin Coolidge

“The American Republic will endure, until politicians realize they can bribe people with their own money.”
-Alexis de Tocqueville