



Obama's War on Liberty

Politics, like war and other large and destructive enterprises, is full of unintended consequences and, often, unintended humor. So is journalism, most notably headline writing. The typical headline regarding the President's State of the Union Address as it drew near was: "Obama to refocus on economy, jobs." It is a good headline, but a poor reflection of reality.

Obama cannot refocus because he has had no focus to begin with. George Will rightly summed up the agenda of this very ambitious young President early in his time in office by saying Obama has one priority. It's called: "Everything."



During his speech Wednesday night, I listened vainly but with thirsty ear for a coherent theme. It is possible I missed it somewhere between the car radio and the living room TV. But I doubt it. There was too much contradiction in his rambling address to permit a coherent theme. On the one hand, there would be a spending freeze — that would not touch national defense, homeland security, foreign aid, Social Security or Medicare (and probably would not touch congressional pay raises should that become an issue again). On the other hand, we must have a second economic stimulus program, a new college loan program and, of course, the health insurance reform that has preoccupied so much of the President's time and attention before he found his new focus. There must be increased investment in infrastructure, including rail and other mass transit programs, investment in "green" technologies, cap-and-trade legislation, and, in all likelihood, a federal program for partridges in pear trees. Listening to Obama brings to mind the thought that H.L. Mencken expressed after sitting through a speech by President Truman — the thought that if there were any cannibals in the audience, the President would surely have promised them a missionary or two. Or we may recall that oft-quoted exhortation from President Kennedy's Inaugural Address: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

That line was delivered days — weeks at most — before the President asked Congress, presumably on our behalf, for all manner of things our country could do for us. And for those coming of age in the heady days of The New Frontier, the President also found things our country could do *to* us — like draft us into the armed forces and send us overseas to fight in a growing war we had no part in making. In that way, as in others, Obama is truly Kennedyesque — and Johnsonian and Nixonian. For while we no longer have functioning military draft, the President will continue to take increasing amounts of our money — and your children's money, since he will be borrowing most of it — and spend it in our name to continue killing people in foreign lands who have not attacked us and upon whom we have made no formal declaration of war. And in some cases our military is attacking and killing American citizens overseas who are suspected of being allied with the terrorists. These are gangland style executions, without trials or hearing or even charges brought before the bar of justice. Thus, the gravest threat to



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the life and liberty of some Americans, even when overseas, comes from the government of the United States.

And yes, Obama wants our country — our government, really — to do all sorts of things for us: create news jobs for us by the millions (he thinks), fix our schools, provide for our healthcare coverage, limit our carbon emissions, and limit our freedom of speech. That's right, the man and his party who were often critical of George W. Bush's trespasses on our constitutional rights now wants to abridge the freedom of speech.

How he avoided any reference to baseball's steroids scandal in his wide-ranging address is puzzling, but he apparently left a few topics for future demagoguery. He could not resist, however, taking a mind-numbing cheap shot at last week's 5-4 decision by the United States Supreme Court ruling that corporations and unions may spend money on independent issue advocacy ads that mention candidates right up to and presumably including the day of election. The Court has ruled, not for the first time, that the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States trumps the McCain Feingold Act of 2002.

That act prohibits expenditures by any but media corporations for any ad that mentions the name of a candidate on the ballot for election within 30 days of a party primary or 60 days before a general election. Citizens United, an incorporated political action group, had produced a negative film about Hillary Clinton that the group had sought to show within 30 days of a presidential primary election in 2008 in which Senator Clinton was a candidate. The group had planned to show it on pay-per-view TV — thus avoiding regulation by the Federal Communications Commission, which has charge over broadcast media, i.e. "the public's airwaves." But the Federal Elections Commission ruled the film could not be shown since it violated a key provision of McCain-Feingold. Citizens United appealed that ruling all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and, lo and behold, won! That is because five — and, regrettably, only five — of the nine members of the High Court read the language of the First Amendment, "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech," to mean Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech. Sometimes clarity breaks out in unexpected places.

The decision followed a ruling by the same court a few years ago that affirmed the right of another incorporated political action group, one known as Wisconsin Right to Life, to run an ad within the proscribed time period that named U.S. Senator Russ Feingold, along with Sen. Herbert Kohl, as officials Wisconsin voters should call to urge the Senators to bring several of then-President George W. Bush's judicial nominations to a vote. Feingold, co-author of the campaign "reform" act bearing his name, was on the ballot for reelection at the time. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Wisconsin Right to Life.

Yet President Obama Wednesday night called the judges, sitting in their robes in front of him, on the carpet for issuing a ruling he characterized as a threat to the survival of democracy. Just as did the *New York Times*. Ditto the [Washington Post](#). The next morning Vice President Joe Biden was on TV suggesting that Congress needed to remedy what was apparently an oversight by the Founding Fathers. Funny, isn't it, how the political and media establishment wish to control political debate.

So, too, do the radical feminists, the divas of the culture of death. A controversy brewing in the sports pages this week has to do with an ad CBS has accepted for its Super bowl telecast that will feature Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow of the University of Florida and his mother. Pam Tebow will tell how when she was pregnant with Tim and took ill in the Philippines, she ignored doctors' advice to have an abortion. The ad, sponsored by the conservative, pro-life Christian organization Focus on the Family, is frankly anti-abortion. But it is not coercive. It seeks to persuade, not force, women to bring their



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babies to term.

Yet *USA Today* reported on Wednesday that "a coalition of dozens of advocacy groups called for CBS not to air the ad." The report quoted Jehmu Greene, president of the Women's Media Center and a spokesman for the coalition, who said: "An ad that uses sports to divide rather than to unite has no place in the biggest national sports event."

Even allowing for the concentration of stupidity inherent in such a coalition, the sheer hypocrisy of the statement is overwhelming. Nothing has ever divided America more than the "right" of abortion, which these women and their various organizations proclaim and defend. Yet now they want unity and a sham peace, a peace that denies a voice to those who would speak for the pre-born infants being slaughtered in the United States at the rate of approximately 4,000 a day. They want unity the way Hitler wanted peace. They want to invade and destroy the freedom and the opportunity of their opponents to speak out.

There is a terrible and terrifying logic behind their stand. If the right to life has been scrapped, the safety of all other rights must likewise be in jeopardy. That was not the purpose of the Constitution of the United States nor, specifically, of the amendments known as the Bill of Rights. That Barack Obama, a "pro-choice" zealot who once taught constitutional law, does not know that is a triumph of ideology over reason.



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