



Politics and Vice

Nothing like politics more readily reveals man's intellectual and moral vices. If ever we were in need of proof of the truth of this proposition, the Republican Party's presidential primary race supplies it in spades.



The Democratic Party's penchant for duplicity has long been noted by most readers of this column. That it seeks "the fundamental transformation" of our country into something bordering on a socialist utopia will be denied only by those who choose to characterize its prime objective in other terms. The ugly truth is that the Democratic Party of which President Barack H. Obama is the titular head *abhors* the America conceived by our Founders, an America within which *liberty* is the cardinal value. The United States Constitution — the secret to this liberty — is a burden from which Democrats seek relief, for as long as it remains, it stands as a monumental impediment to their agenda, a systematic program that involves nothing more or less than the repeal of the Revolution of 1776.

These are harsh words. They are also true words.

But lest my judgment be mistaken for a specimen of Republican Party agitprop, it should be noted that, sadly, I believe with every fiber of my being that the *Republican Party* is no less committed than its rival to revoking the Constitutional Republic fashioned by our ancestors.

To see that this is so, we need to look neither long nor hard.

Consider, first, that our Founders chose to *secede* from their Mother country because of the abuses of which they convicted the English government. This is particularly telling, for by our standards, the latter was about as close an approximation of the ideal of a "laissez-faire" government vis-à-vis the North American colonies as any that has ever existed. At the very least, it wasn't *remotely* as intrusive as is our federal government today. Still, our Founders, in love as they were with liberty, determined that it was intolerably oppressive. As a result, they sought to establish, not a sovereign state, but a "federation" of sovereign *states*. In this new political arrangement the national government would only rarely be heard and almost never seen: as the offspring of the states, it would exist for their sakes *only*.

Next, consider the Republican Party's view of the federal government today.



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While their rhetoric may at times suggest otherwise, both their utterances and deeds at most other times inform us in no uncertain terms that establishment Republicans believe just as strongly as Democrats in the supremacy of the federal government. After all, it is Republicans more so than anyone else who expect for our federal government to *lead* — always through force — not just the United States, which would be bad enough, but *the planet*. Although there isn't anything remotely *defensive* about an interminable American project of "democratizing" the globe, so-called "defense spending," which already consumes no small amount of all national spending, is sacrosanct for Republicans: there isn't a single proposed cut that they won't swiftly reject.

Even domestically, though, Republicans are no less in favor of Big Government.

Whenever Republicans are in power, they never aspire to affect any meaningful reductions in the size of government. During the 1990's, Gingrich was in the vanguard of the much vaunted (and highly exaggerated) "Republican Revolution," a media-hyped phenomenon whereby Republicans assumed control of both chambers of Congress for the first time in decades. As Speaker of the House of Representatives, Gingrich's became the face of this "Revolution." Now, as a presidential aspirant, Gingrich is busy touting his accomplishments as Speaker. He helped to "balance the budget," create a budget surplus, and "reform" welfare, he tells us. While all of this is true, notice that Gingrich has *not* mentioned a *single* program for which he and the Republicans can be credited with slashing during their tenure in power.

He *has not* mentioned a single such program because he *cannot* make mention of one. Nothing of this sort exists.

Nor does the fact that there was a Democratic president during the 1990s explain away Republicans' failure in this regard. Even when Republicans held the presidency *and* the Congress, they not only maintained those programs and agencies that were in place; they created policies that served to *enlarge* the federal government further. The "Compassionate Conservatism" of President George W. Bush is nothing other than a robust and comprehensive species of "Welfarism." Whether it is "No Child Left Behind," "the Home Ownership Society," "Faith-Based Initiatives," "Comprehensive Immigration Reform," or any number of other policies, the Republicans under President Bush, with their "Compassionate Conservatism," managed to grow the government at a rate that hadn't been seen since Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society."

No, today's Republican Party is galaxies removed from the world of our Founders.

And yet this generation of Republicans, both elected officials as well as the rank and file of the party, speaks as if it were a contemporary replica of the founding generation.

It can't be repeated often enough that for however politically unpopular the language of "Compassionate Conservatism" may be nowadays, there is no one among the field of GOP presidential candidates, except for Ron Paul, that has to date repudiated this ideology of Big Government. Worse, Republicans continue to advocate policies that require further centralization of the federal government at the same time at which they speak of "limiting" it.

However, nothing reveals the hypocrisy and inconsistency of Republicans more than their reactions to the presidential primary race.

Ron Paul is the one candidate who is deadly serious about returning our government to the vision embodied in our Constitution. Some may take issue with the proposition that he is *the only* such candidate; yet none would dare to take issue with the proposition that he is as impassioned and ardent



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an exponent of genuinely Constitutional government as any that it has. But Ron Paul has been ignored, dismissed, and trivialized by the establishment of his party. Instead of turning to him, the majority of Republicans have instead looked toward most of the other candidates — all of whom are practically indistinguishable from each other.

Now, *Newt Gingrich* and *Mitt Romney* are the contest's frontrunners. This about says it all. Both are establishment figures; both have been vocal advocates of socialistic designs, whether health insurance "mandates," "initiatives" to combat "Global Warming," the venture to deliver "Democracy" to the proverbial Four Corners of the Earth via the United States military, etc.; and both now have establishment Republican pundits producing one lame excuse after the other in their transparent — and pathetic — attempts to render these champions of Big Government appealing to the base of their party.

Mitt Romney, we are told, *really* is conservative; he just *fooled* (deceived) the Democratic voters of Massachusetts into believing otherwise when he ran for office in that state. In any event, regarding healthcare, although he expressed his desire to do for America what he did for Massachusetts, he *now* claims that he has changed his mind on this point. And even though Gingrich just two years ago appeared in an ad with Nancy Pelosi in which he helped the latter promote "Cap-and-Trade," he *now* acknowledges that it was a mistake.

This, of course, is just a sampling of the sort of intellectual gymnastics in which the pundits are engaging with respect to polishing Gingrich's and Romney's images.

Rest assured, there will be much more reality-denying to come.



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