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[Barack Obama Channels Richard Cheney](#)

September 25th, 2009 Posted in [Civil Liberties](#), [Terrorism](#), [Individual Liberty](#), [Obama administration](#) | [No Comments »](#)

So much for President Barack Obama being a civil libertarian. [Writes Dana Milbank](#):

Somewhere, in a secure, undisclosed location, John Ashcroft is chuckling.

President Obama campaigned on a promise to restore transparency to government. But now the time has come to renew the USA Patriot Act, the bete noire of civil libertarians. When the Obama administration's point man on the legislation came to Capitol Hill on Wednesday, he sounded very much like his predecessors in the Bush administration.

Sen. [Patrick Leahy](#) (D-Vt.), chairman of the Judiciary Committee, asked Assistant Attorney General [David Kris](#) whether the administration would support congressional oversight as part of the Patriot Act. "We don't have a position on anything particularly yet," Kris answered.

Sen. [Dianne Feinstein](#) (D-Calif.), chairman of the Intelligence Committee, asked whether the Democrats' proposed changes to the Patriot Act would impede current investigations. "We're not going to discuss classified matters here, and also there is this Justice Department policy about commenting on ongoing investigations," the official commented.

Sen. [Russ Feingold](#) (D-Wis.) pointed out that of the several hundred "sneak and peek" search warrants issued under the Patriot Act, only three were for terrorism cases and most were for drugs. "I guess it's not surprising to me that it applies in drug cases," Kris replied.

Feingold was surprised by the witness's lack of surprise. "As I recall, it was in something called the USA Patriot Act," he said scornfully, "which was passed in a rush after an attack on 9/11 that had to do with terrorism."

Unfortunately, President Obama is yet another member of the long line of faux liberals, willing to toss civil liberties overboard for the smallest excuse.

[Why America Doesn't Want Nationalized Health Care](#)

September 25th, 2009 Posted in [Health Care](#) | [No Comments »](#)

The Fraser Institute of Canada talks candidly about its national system. [Reports Reuters](#):

As America grapples with reforming health care with an eye to introducing a public option, a new book published by the Fraser Institute, one of Canada's leading economic think tanks, details the failures of Canada's government-run

health care system and serves as a warning to U.S. policy-makers.

“The Canadian health care system is a textbook case of government failure in medical insurance and medical services. All available evidence indicates that Canadians are paying more but getting less from our government-run health insurance system,” said Dr. Brett Skinner, Fraser Institute director of bio-pharma and health policy and author of *Canadian Health Policy Failures: What’s wrong? Who gets hurt? Why nothing changes.*

Glenn Beck Speaks Truth to Power: McCain Worse than Obama!

September 25th, 2009 Posted in [Republican Party](#), [Conservatives](#), [Campaign 2008](#), [John McCain](#) | [No Comments](#) »

Give Glenn Beck his due—he’s willing to say unpalatable truths for conservatives. [Such as arguing that John McCain would have been worse than Barack Obama as president!](#) I agree. Thanks, Glenn, for helping to disabuse so many conservatives of their reflexive support for the GOP.

Charlie Rangel: The Tax Law Writing Tax Evader

September 24th, 2009 Posted in [Congress](#), [Democratic Party](#), [Taxes](#) | [No Comments](#) »

[Check out the cute little ditty on Rep. Charles Rangel \(D-NY\)](#), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, who prefers to live under different rules than the ones the rest of us are stuck with.

Maybe the President isn’t so Bad: Russia’s President Dmitry Medvedev

September 20th, 2009 Posted in [Foreign Policy](#), [Military Policy](#), [Russia](#) | [No Comments](#) »

I’m growing to like Dmitry. Consider his recent speech criticizing the U.S. for attempting to run the world. [Agence France-Presse reports on Medvedev’s talk:](#)

There can be no “high-flown justification for military adventures, suppression of rights and freedoms — of any illegal activities,” he said.

U.S. presidents once would have said the same time. Before the U.S. government began routinely invading and attacking other nations, anyway.

Yet Another Reason Not to Turn Medicine Over to the Government

September 20th, 2009 Posted in [International](#), [Health Care](#) | [No Comments](#) »

The president wants to nationalize American medicine. That’s a bad idea for many reasons. The U.S. system is an expensive hybrid, but politicized systems are worse. Yet another example of the problem of government-controlled care comes from Great Britain, where the government works overtime denying treatment in order to save money. And unlike when an insurance company says no, there is little effective appeal from a government denial of care.

[Reports the Daily Mail:](#)

Doctors left a premature baby to die because he was born two days too early, his devastated mother claimed yesterday.

Sarah Capewell begged them to save her tiny son, who was born just 21 weeks and five days into her pregnancy - almost four months early.

They ignored her pleas and allegedly told her they were following national guidelines that babies born before 22 weeks should not be given medical treatment.

Miss Capewell, 23, said doctors refused to even see her son Jayden, who lived for almost two hours without any medical support.

She said he was breathing unaided, had a strong heartbeat and was even moving his arms and legs, but medics refused to admit him to a special care baby unit.

Miss Capewell is now fighting for a review of the medical guidelines.

Medics allegedly told her that they would have tried to save the baby if he had been born two days later, at 22 weeks.

In fact, the medical guidelines for Health Service hospitals state that babies should not be given intensive care if they are born at less than 23 weeks.

The guidance, drawn up by the Nuffield Council, is not compulsory but advises doctors that medical intervention for very premature children is not in the best interests of the baby, and is not 'standard practice'.

James Paget Hospital in Norfolk refused to comment on the case but said it was not responsible for setting the guidelines relating to premature births.

A trust spokesman said: 'Like other acute hospitals, we follow national guidance from the British Association of Perinatal Medicine regarding premature births.'

Miss Capewell, who has had five miscarriages, said the guidelines had robbed her son of a chance of life.

Deciding on care when there is little likelihood of success is never easy. But it should not be a political decision made by the national authorities. America's system is messier. Despite its faults, however, it is also freer, more flexible, and more humane.

[The Thin Reed of the Afghan Police Force](#)

September 20th, 2009 Posted in [Foreign Policy](#), [Afghanistan](#), [War](#) | [No Comments](#) »

"Victory" in Afghanistan, whatever that might mean, depends in part on the evolution of the Afghan police. But so far things aren't looking good. [Reports the Atlantic](#):

Without a doubt, eventual success in Afghanistan will rest on a foundation of robust security, safeguarded by the police. But the vast majority of the police force today complains about paltry salaries and a complete lack of benefits. The lucky ones get a uniform, a grey shirt and a pair of cotton or polyester slacks, along with slightly advanced machine guns. Others carry rusty old AK-47s across their chests and wait for the Taliban in their Pathani salwaars. Even during

patrols, it is not rare to find a policeman running in his sandals.

Unlike most police forces, Afghanistan's 77,000-strong national police deals less with civilian law and order, and more with an insurgency that has engulfed most of the southern part of the country and the tribal areas bordering Pakistan. From dawn to dusk and dusk to dawn, the policemen contend with one of the most fanatical and militant groups in recent history—all for a monthly salary of around \$110 (about 7,000 Afghans). While this is an improvement over the average monthly Afghan income of \$25, it is nearly two and a half times less than that earned by the Afghan National Army (whose training is admittedly more rigorous, and whose missions are considered more involved than the routine but dangerous patrols carried out by the police). In light of this, one might imagine that everyone would simply sign up for the army instead of the police, but the army has quotas, which makes it more difficult to get into.

Given the widespread discontent about the rate of pay, it's not surprising that the police force is rife with corruption and bribe-taking. Talk with any taxi driver or farmer in Lashkar Gah, and you'll hear stories about police shakedowns. One farmer from the nearby town of Gereshk, who was transporting his wheat harvest to Lashkar Gah, said that a police officer had taken 1,000 Afghans from him the previous week. "They will search your pockets and take money and valuables from you," he said, "and you can't say anything because you know you will have to deal with them again the next day."

There are lots of reasons why people don't like the Taliban. But then conduct like this, plus election fraud, give ample reasons for hating the authorities as well. The U.S. had an interest in ousting al-Qaeda from Afghanistan in 2001. The U.S. does not have a commensurate interest in providing Afghanistan with good governance in 2009.

[The Waste Never Stops, as Bureaucrats Skim Off Congressional Pork](#)

September 20th, 2009 Posted in [Budget](#), [Congress](#), [Pork](#), [Stimulus](#) | [No Comments](#) »

You've got to love it. The president proposes massive spending to "stimulate" the economy. Congress passes much of the money to friends and campaign contributors through earmarks. The bureaucracy skims off a percentage for its own use.

[Reports the New York Times:](#)

Thirteen federal agencies took nearly half a billion dollars off the top of Congressional earmarks for administrative expenses in 2008, nearly 3 percent of the total amount that members of Congress had directed to pet projects in federal spending bills.

The Defense Department led the way with nearly \$240 million deducted from earmarks. Several agencies, including the Education and Housing and Urban Development Departments, did not withhold any money to process and provide oversight of earmarks.

The findings, summarized in a [report](#) from the White House [Office of Management and Budget](#), provide the first governmentwide look at how much federal agencies keep from earmarked money.

The report was done at the request of Senator Ben Nelson, Democrat of Nebraska, who said he first learned of the practice three years ago when the recipient of an earmark he had requested

notified him that it had not gotten the full amount.

“This is an issue of transparency,” Mr. Nelson said. “Some of these agencies are clearly taking money without any authority, and they should not have these off-budget expense accounts.”

Isn't it time to kick all of these people out of office?

[Mexico's Vicente Fox: Time to Legalize Drugs](#)

September 20th, 2009 Posted in [International](#), [Drugs](#), [Mexico](#) | [No Comments »](#)

Mexico has a drug problem. Made in America.

That is the message from former Mexican President Vicente Fox. And he is right.

[Reports the St. Louis Post-Dispatch:](#)

Mr. Fox says a thirst for riches propels the street violence. So legalizing drugs — as Holland has done — could have the same effect that ending Prohibition had in the United States in 1933: Removing the incentive for criminals.

But if the domestic market in Mexico collapsed because of legalization, the export market might become even more valuable. Any move toward legalization would work only if done in concert with the United States, Mr. Fox said.

“The whole problem in Mexico derives from the huge consumer market here in the United States,” he said in an interview before his speech.

More than 1,600 persons have been killed so far this year in Ciudad Juárez. Across the border in El Paso, Texas, which bills itself as the nation's “third safest city,” officials worry that the violence will cross the border.

Mexico imports \$250 billion in U.S. goods each year; economics alone dictate that the United States must do whatever it can to help solve the its neighbor's crisis.

Mexico's challenge, Mr. Fox said, is to preserve the gains made before the drug violence escalated and a worldwide recession took root. That will require a willingness on both sides of the border to think radically.

It's time for the U.S. to end its counterproductive “war on drugs.” Drug abuse poses a health, moral, and spiritual problem. Let us treat it as such, and not as a matter for the criminal law.

[Mainstream Media Misses the ACORN Story](#)

September 20th, 2009 Posted in [Budget](#), [Lefties](#), [Media](#), [Government Grants](#), [ACORN](#) | [No Comments »](#)

Even Jon Stewart is embarrassed. [Check out the snippet from his show:](#) he acknowledges that it's a shocking story and asks, where were the real journalists?

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