

LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE – TWO WORLD VIEWS ...WILL THE “TWIN” EVER MEET?

My Look at Americans – Their Attitudes and Their Politics

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USING THIS REPORT

This report isn't intended to tell a story that flows from section to section. Rather, each section stands on its own and can be considered separate from the others. The detailed "Contents" is a map so a reader can pick and choose topics of interest. If the reader wants a reasonably full "story" without all the detail, read only "IN BRIEF", "INTRODUCTION", "A SHIFT IN VALUES", and the last section "END OF UNITY? OR MAYBE NOT?"

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*My dream is of a place and a time where America will
once again be seen as a last best hope of earth.
– Abraham Lincoln –*

IN BRIEF

The following excerpts give an idea of what this report has to say:

- *To liberals, goodness and good intentions are the important thing, while conservatives would say goodness and good intentions, without wisdom, can be harmful.*
- *Do people on the Left want the right to impose their idea of what is good for society on others? Do they want to deny that to those whose idea of what is good for society differs from their own? The essence of bigotry is refusing to others the rights that you demand for yourself. Such bigotry is inherently incompatible with freedom.*
- *The definition of equality for a person on the Right would emphasize the concept of equal opportunity. The Left focuses on equality of the result. Liberals tend to*

- infer unequal opportunities when observing unequal outcomes – i.e. they believe equal outcomes result if people truly have equal opportunity.*
- *Conservatives contend that the Achilles' heel of liberals is losing the ability to identify and confront evil.*
 - *Many on the Left feel that no culture is inherently superior to another, just different.*
 - *The Right tends to look to themselves, family, and religion for answers. The Left looks to the state – i.e. a government that “listens” or “feels your pain”.*
 - *The Left views marriage in secular terms, while the Right views the union of two adults in a religious context.*
 - *Conservative philosophy, in its purest form, believes in government's role as defined, or limited, by the U.S. Constitution.*
 - *Liberals believe the greatest tool for creating prosperity is government. Conservatives believe the greatest threat to creating prosperity is government.*
 - *One theory states that the reason liberals look to the government to “take care” of the population is their elevation of “financial security” over “liberty”.*
 - *Dennis Prager.....sees “E Pluribus Unum” being replaced by the concept of “Multiculturalism”, “Liberty” being replaced by “Equality”, and “In God We Trust” being replaced by “Secularism”.*
 - *The Left seems to regard the notion of American exceptionalism as chauvinism.*
 - *Some Liberals viewed the conflict (Cold War) as between two “superpowers” – essentially “moral equivalents”. Conservatives had a more “good vs. evil” perspective.*
 - *According to one theory, the Left thinks legally and the Right thinks morally.*
 - *A conservative might even complain that the combination of political correctness and multiculturalism is the scourge of patriotism.*
 - *A published report in “Psychological Bulletin” described conservatism as a psychological disorder characterized by: fear, aggression, dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, uncertainty avoidance They need “cognitive disclosure” and “terror management”.*
 - *One researcher suggests that inequality takes a greater psychological toll on liberals than on conservatives, apparently because liberals lack ideological rationalizations that would help them frame inequality in a positive (or at least neutral) light.*

INTRODUCTION

Shortly after the nation's founding, the country was divided between Republicans led by Thomas Jefferson and Federalists led by John Adams. These two had a famous, sometimes bitter, rivalry/friendship until they died on the same day – July 4, 1826. The Adams faction adamantly believed that men need firm governance or else they would devolve into wickedness. The Jeffersonians seemed to have more faith in their countrymen.

The debate continues today but with an enmity having developed between the Left and Right. Sincere, reasonable people react to events, philosophies and visions for their country which are very opposite each other. How does this happen when they communicate with the same people, observe similar facts, and have similar experiences?

After researching this topic for over two years, I am convinced this is a natural, unconscious reaction for each person. There seems to be a “mind-set” (or model if you prefer) which individuals unwittingly follow as they reason their way through this complex world. I am not surprised by this division, given the compelling problems, challenges, and the enormous opportunities facing us every day – so much is at stake.

I am not a social scientist, and tend to reject their propensity to fit psychological explanations into definitions, assumptions, and formulas. They develop a theory into a model for explaining and predicting the illogical or complex. In spite of this skepticism about models, my study of two models has proved helpful. Becoming familiar with these theories did help me develop a process for thinking through, making sense of, and organizing this information – and it helped me better understand why I believe what I do. The first is a model appearing in Thomas Sowell’s book “A Conflict of Visions”. The second model appears in George Lakoff’s book “Moral Politics – How Liberals and Conservatives Think”. Mr. Sowell is an economist and a conservative. Mr. Lakoff is a linguist and a liberal.

In this report I identify and analyze some differences between the Left and Right. I have tried to simplify the presentation by separating the issues, but numerous concepts still appear one place and then reappear in others as well. This report should not be interpreted as suggesting that opinions presented are held by all those on either end of the political spectrum. These are generalizations or “trends” of thinking for many who follow these philosophies. My sources are often research projects that may reflect only tendencies and averages – certainly not absolutes for all members of either group.

I am conservative and this is written from that perspective. The analysis is presented in the form of observations, anecdotes, and opinions. Some are my personal opinions as enhanced by real experts. Others are entirely someone else’s ideas. My personal opinions will often be apparent, because it’s difficult to take politics out of politics. The terms “Left” and “liberal” are interchangeable; likewise for the terms “Right” and “conservative”.

I want to be on record joining with other conservatives in uniting behind our new President. We must show that we will act more respectfully than liberals did during George W. Bush’s presidency. Such treatment was beyond mere disagreement and criticism. It was undeserved and unprecedented. We who oppose many of Barack Obama’s policies will, I believe, act in accordance with conservative values of decency, while respectfully continuing to oppose him when we disagree. Borrowing Dennis Prager’s words from election night: “I did not vote for him. I did not want him to be President. But as of January 20, 2009, he will be my President.”

A SHIFT IN VALUES

Liberals feel they have been accused of having no values. And some conservatives have unfairly made that claim. I believe there has been a shift, not a rejection, of values by many modern liberals. Some argue that a loss of values is evidenced by the Left's acceptance of characters such as Michael Moore. For example, he was seated in the place of high honor at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. Critics view people like him as Marxists, demagogues or simply foolish. Support and praise for people like this seem to contradict traditional values.

Following are examples of what some believe represent a shift in values:

- General disfavor for abortion among all groups has evolved to strong liberal support for the right to have an abortion.
- Freedom of speech has in some quarters given way to “political correctness”.
- American military and soldiers have become less valued over recent decades.
- One report stated that the “tree” has started to replace, for some radical environmentalists, the U.S. flag as our most venerated symbol.
- Schools have evolved from bastions of discipline and learning, to more teaching about diversity and environmental or social activism.
- Teenage sex has become increasingly accepted.
- A patriotic American identity has started to be replaced by a “world citizen” identity. Anti-war values have replaced a view of nationalism and national security. Multiculturalism is believed by some to have contributed to this change.
- Secularism has partially replaced our former respect for “In God We Trust”; and certain causes, especially environmentalism/global warming concerns have replaced some of our former religious enthusiasm and traditions.
- Changing the content of history textbooks, the importance of political correctness, etc., are cited as evidence of truth, as a value, losing importance – falling behind priorities such as equality, opposition to war, secularism, etc.
- The traditional concept of humans having “dominion over the earth” has, for some, given way to “animals-and-humans-are-equivalent” beliefs.
- Satisfaction with the traditional concept of marriage has been challenged by movements to redefine marriage.
- The tradition of seeking fierce independence and self-reliance has been weakened by the “self-esteem movement”. Compare liberal politicians’ messages of “taking care of our citizens” to JFK’s famous inaugural quote: “...ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country”.
- Historical reliance on the mantra “the proof is in the pudding” has given way to a philosophy that purity of motive is what matters, not results. What matters most is having good intentions. To liberals, goodness and good intentions are the important thing, while conservatives would say goodness and good intentions, without wisdom, can be harmful.

Conservatives believe that liberals have more enthusiastically embraced this gradual evolution than has the Right. Conservatives claim to have tried to hold on to a more traditional set of values.

CONTRASTS AND COMPARISONS

More About Values

Freedom – Most on the Right and the Left are enthusiastically in favor of the concept of “freedom”. However, many conservatives believe the Left is in favor of things that are incompatible with freedom – as conservatives define freedom. One example is the innocent requirement by some schools and colleges for mandatory “community service” by students. What could be offensive about that? The fundamental question is: What qualifies teachers and college admissions committees to define what qualifies as good for society as a whole and thereby acceptable for fulfilling this requirement? Those who favor “community service” requirements would better understand the principle behind the objections if, for example, high school military exercises were required. Most on the Left would be opposed to even voluntary military training in schools. And the Right would regard military service as “community service” of the highest order.

Another example is the reaction by the far Left to the recent rejection by California voters of so-called “gay marriage”. Did they feel they had the right to win? Blacks and Mormons became targets of blame because of their solid opposition to changing the definition of marriage. These groups experienced verbal and physical attacks. The Left would clearly deny these groups the freedom to vote as they choose – and just because of their opposition to changing the definition of marriage.

Do people on the Left want the right to impose their idea of what is good for society on others? Do they want to deny that to those whose idea of what is good for society differs from their own? The essence of bigotry is refusing to others the rights that you demand for yourself. Such bigotry is inherently incompatible with freedom.

Equality – The definition of equality for a person on the Right would emphasize the concept of equal opportunity. The Left focuses on equality of the result. Liberals tend to infer unequal opportunities when observing unequal outcomes – i.e. they believe equal outcomes result if people truly have equal opportunity. This is known as egalitarianism. Cynics might claim that liberalism seeks to deliver equality in the form of “equal dependence” on government by more and more people, for more and more things. Critics would say the Left values equality (of outcome) above other values because it yearns for an America in which all people have similar amounts of material possessions. That may be what compels the Left to advocate laws that they themselves describe as “redistributive”. The Left wants to “divvy” up the pie. The Right contends that their policies would more effectively “expand the pie” and they sincerely believe that by doing so, everyone gets more. The Right would argue that differences are inherent in our

world, and occur in situations where discrimination is neither present nor possible – and that liberty and other values are far more important than equality of outcome.

The Right has contended that the Left hates inequality even more than it hates evil. Perhaps they consider inequality as the ultimate evil. The Right would accuse the Left of making law subservient to achieving what liberals would define as equality. Liberal economist J. Bradford DeLong writes: “An unequal society cannot help but be an unjust society Any society that justifies itself on a hope of equality of opportunity cannot help but be undermined by too great a degree of inequality of result”. The Left envisions an egalitarian society. The Right finds this concept “scary”.

Moral Equivalence – Liberals accuse conservatives of being too judgmental about other countries, cultures, and individuals. Conservatives observe that there has been a dramatic increase in criticism of the U.S. and a similar increase in quiet tolerance for other countries with which we have serious political and moral differences. Some believe this came from the opposition to the war in Vietnam, which led to a continuing anti-war sentiment, to a form of isolationism, and ultimately to a cozy philosophy of moral equivalence (more “live and let live”).

For example, the late, eminent, liberal historian Arthur Schlesinger, was asked if America was, all things considered, more moral than the Soviet society. He said America is not. Another example is a 2006 interview with Howard Zinn – professor emeritus of political science at Boston University, and author of “A People’s History of the United States”. His book was lauded by The New York Times as “required reading for all American students”. In the interview, he was asked if America has done more good for humanity than bad. His reply: “probably more bad than good.”

Moral Relativism – “Moral relativism” is defined by conservatives as the ability to determine right and wrong based on one’s feelings – and suggestions are preferred over commandments. Therefore absolute measures for good and evil disappear and the role of one’s religion, one’s God, or any transcending moral code is diminished. In America, the traditional determination of right or wrong, good or evil, was based in Judeo-Christian values. The left is accused of being opposed to many applications of this tradition, and any consistent or universal definition of ethics. Ethics and morality are therefore “relative” to..... “something”. Liberals are recognized as having religious beliefs, but are accused of relying on them as a source of personal inspiration, rather than dogmatic direction.

Relativism can have close ties to charges of racism if one group is judged by another race or culture. A good example is the statement by Michael Moore: “And I do not believe, as a white guy, that I am in any position to judge a black man who had to live through that (growing up as a minority)”. He was criticizing the concern Americans were showing about statements by Jeremiah Wright.

Conservatives contend that the Achilles’ heel of liberals is losing the ability to identify and confront evil.

Multiculturalism – I recently read that a new value of the Left is multiculturalism. Since the 1960s, conservatives would contend, a major goal of the Left has been to weaken American national identity and replace it with other cultural, national, racial and ethnic identities. Many on the Left feel that no culture is inherently superior to another, just different. Embedded in this is the resistance by the Left to English being declared the national language. Because the Left uses compassion for the children as one justification for their position, anyone supporting English immersion is either racist or lacking compassion – and probably both. The Right sincerely believes that comprehensive assimilation is a positive and that declaring a national language, and promoting English immersion in schools, is by far the best way for new citizens and their families to prosper.

Secularism – Some conservatives believe the Left not only wants America to have a secular government, but also to have a secular society. This philosophy honors the right to be religious, but claims it should be a private thing for home and church, and should never try to inject religious values into society. The Right wants America to continue being a Judeo-Christian society with a largely secular government – but one not indifferent to religion. These differing visions may explain the opposing views about prayer in school. The Right tends to look to themselves, family, and religion for answers. The Left looks to the state – i.e. a government that “listens” or “feels your pain”.

Marriage – Many on the Left want to redefine marriage to include same-sex couples for the first time in history. The Right wants gays to have equal rights, but to keep marriage defined as between a man and a woman. The Left views marriage in secular terms, while the Right views the union of two adults in a religious context.

Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You.....

Role of Government – Conservative philosophy, in its purest form, believes in government’s role as defined, or limited, by the U.S. Constitution. This is a fairly narrow definition by current standards. It demands a sense of independence and self-reliance for individual and corporate citizens. Liberals tend to have a broader concept of the role of government. First, they consider the Constitution a “living, breathing document” – to be used in the context of international law, moral relativism, and moral equivalence. Recently I heard a liberal speaker say that the greatest employment and corporate opportunities come from strong involvement by the Federal government. Liberals believe the greatest tool for creating prosperity is government. Conservatives believe the greatest threat to creating prosperity is government.

Liberal suggestions for health care reform are attacked by conservatives as moving toward socialized medicine and away from a more creative, productive, free enterprise system. Desirable or not, the reforms do define a new broader role for government.

One theory states that the reason liberals look to the government to “take care” of the population is their elevation of “financial security” over “liberty”. Some liberals feel the

government should be there to “take care” of citizens “from cradle to grave” – and they believe that should be everyone’s priority. This could take the form of a comprehensive system of “safety nets”. For example, liberals tend to think it’s a major role of government to deliver jobs to the economy. A conservative would be more inclined to say the government should merely provide an environment in which businesses have the opportunity to do so. The conservative would come much closer to an emphasis on the concept of “liberty”, as they define it – thus with more of an emphasis on self-reliance. That can be a scary proposition for many.

Nanny State – Taking a slight turn to the “left” from the last point, liberals are accused of seeking to control citizens beyond what is necessary or desirable. Conservatives accuse liberals of desiring, albeit with good intentions, to be involved in funding as many programs and aspects of our lives as possible. Government is sincerely thought by many on the Left to “know best”. But, conservatives say that we can’t escape the fact that even with the best intentions, such extensive funding brings unacceptable control. I saw a 2008 campaign slogan that characterized the liberal desire like this: “Let us lessen your pain” and “I feel your pain”. But it didn’t add, “just give us the power”. This may be sincere but it is considered by the Right to be wrong and misguided.

Author Eric Alterman says liberalism is limited only by what is “deliverable justice or fairness”. He wrote: “What is not deliverable by government, we leave to parents, and clergy, and the like”. In other words, in this person’s opinion, our government is only limited by what it can’t practically deliver – the balance is left for others. Wow! What a contrast to the conservative philosophy of having the government’s role limited to what is specifically provided for in the Constitution.

What Do They Hear Us Say? – We heard in the recent campaign that Americans were “bitter” due to their economic plight – “I hear your bitterness and pain” liberal politicians said. A conservative, reacting to the same circumstance would more likely say “I hear your sadness” – but may not even have that to say – they tend to be much more matter-of-fact about situations. Liberals have a thing about “listening” and “fixing things” – prompting the individual to request that government do “what is best for me”. A conservative would likely claim that they need to do what is best for America, which will also be best for the individual.

Government and Unions vs. Business – Liberals would say that businesses are inherently inclined not to have citizens’ best interests at heart. Therefore we need even more aggressive intervention by government and unions. I know of very few conservatives who would even attempt to argue that any individual business is set up to have the public’s best interest at their philosophical core. Rather, business’ central focus is to legally and ethically make a profit. They would also argue that the forces of the free enterprise system will do a better job, in the long run, of maximizing the public’s benefit. Well known economist Milton Friedman made the case in plain English: “The case for free enterprise, for competition, is that it’s the only system that will keep the capitalists from having too much power...The virtue of free enterprise capitalism is that it sets one

businessman against another, and it's a most effective device for control". I would add that it's not a perfect control, but better than the alternative.

Conservatives would argue that labor unions are not working for the public's interest. And government? Remember the alleged liberal habit of making "good intentions" the real measure of success. There are few better examples of "The Law of Unintended Consequences" than many of our government programs. Conservatives would believe in the benefits of "free trade" of goods and services. Liberals would advance the concept of "fair trade", and support barriers that shield domestic industries against foreign competition. Conservatives would contend that would result in reducing the incentive to innovate and change.

Taxes – Our tax system is the means by which we pay for government programs and how, some believe, social outcomes are encouraged and resource redistribution is accomplished. I recently came across a new argument. Conservatives typically accuse liberals of manipulating the economy in the wrong way and providing self-defeating incentives through tax policies. An often argued issue is the appropriate tax rates to be applied to capital gains. A conservative philosophy has consistently been that taxation on capital (e.g. capital gains taxes) discourages one of the most important forces in our economy – that of investing in business which provide the cutting edge of job creation and which ultimately results in more overall tax collections. A liberal philosophy has usually been that these tax rates should be raised. A liberal writer recently expressed a concern that lowering capital gains (here's the new part) hinders the free market by inducing people to make the wrong investment/spending choices. A higher rate "would discourage such wasteful avoidance".

Times and philosophies have changed in the last 50 years. In 1962, Democratic President John F. Kennedy stated at a news conference: "It is a paradoxical truth that tax rates are too high and tax revenues are too low and the soundest way to raise the revenues in the long run is to cut the rates now Cutting taxes now is not to incur a budget deficit, but to achieve the more prosperous, expanding economy which can bring a budget surplus".

Gun Control – The Right believes that the Second Amendment confers to an individual the right to keep and bear arms. The Founding Fathers originally granted this right to protect against tyranny by government. The Left would disagree that the amendment guarantees the right to own a gun – only that there exists the right of states to maintain militias. And in the context of a "living, breathing" Constitution, the Left would contend the original relevance of this amendment is no longer practical and that the Right's interpretation of the Second Amendment is an unfortunate impediment to public safety.

What is Religious Freedom? – The First Amendment deals with religion as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion; or prohibiting the free exercise thereof". The liberal interpretation has referred to this as the concept of "separation of church and state". They believe it implies that any interaction between religion and government is a violation of the Constitution – e.g. prayer in schools or religious symbols on government property. Conservatives argue that the original purpose

of the provision still governs – to protect citizens from the imposition of a religion by the government. They contend that liberals are trying to promote “freedom from religion” rather than “freedom of religion”. Conservatives go on to point out that religious terminology remained in our founding documents, thereby implying the current extreme interpretation was not the original intent. Further, they have examined the complete discussions by the Founding Fathers regarding the First Amendment as contained in the Congressional Records from June 7 to September 25, 1789. Nowhere in these discussions is the term “separation of church and state” ever mentioned.

Patriotism – Many on the Left are much more ambivalent about, and often hostile to, overt displays of American Patriotism. The Right is much more likely to vocally encourage such displays in their homes, neighborhoods, and municipalities. The Left has caused the term “flag waving” to have a negative connotation.

Mottos – The French Revolution’s guiding principles were “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”. Some on the Left would be more comfortable with that than the common motto of “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness”. Conservative writer Dennis Prager envisions a new “American Trinity” developing. According to him, the traditional conservative “trinity” is “E Pluribus Unum, Liberty, and In God We Trust”. He sees “E Pluribus Unum” being replaced by the concept of “Multiculturalism”; “Liberty” being replaced by “Equality”, and “In God We Trust” being replaced by “Secularism”.

The familiar American motto “E Pluribus Unum” means “out of many, one”. It represents our unity and is based on recognition of our inherent diversity. Liberals would interpret this as unity of thought throughout a diverse culture. Conservatives would interpret this as celebrating a common unique culture, not blurred by such things as multiculturalism. The Right would accuse liberals of viewing unity as all coming together under one philosophy – presumably liberal. The Right would be comfortable with some disunity and don’t see uniform thought as inherently self-redeeming - but it does believe we should all fit within the same American culture.

Dealing with the World

European Vision – It is argued that some on the Left think that the U.S. should follow policies more like those in Europe, and would even pattern some judicial decisions on certain European precedents. Some contend that the Left prefers Europe’s quasi-pacifism, cradle-to-grave socialism, egalitarianism, and secularism. The Right would say we should first find out whether the results that they get are better than the results that we get. They point out that the U.S. leads the world in too many areas for us to start imitating those who are trailing behind. Examples they give include: Europe has more generous minimum wage laws and at the same time have much higher rates of unemployment and longer periods of unemployment, than in the U.S.; the U.S. far outstrips Europe in the development of pharmaceuticals; and America’s per capita output, in terms of purchasing power, is the highest of any major nation.

There was an interesting quote in a recent Harvard Magazine: “Americans, on average, have a higher tolerance for income inequality than their European counterparts. American attitudes focus on equality of opportunity, while Europeans tend to see fairness in equal outcomes”. Equality, and the differing opinions of what it means, is a recurring theme in this report. I have read that the European practice of “statism trumping religion” has been influencing America for many decades – even centuries.

World Citizens – The Left fears nationalism in general (a liberal European fear since World War I, and a liberal American fear since the 60s). This view came through very clearly when Barack Obama emphasized to those present at his German rally that they were all “citizens of the world” and “the burdens of global citizenship continue to bind us together”. Some on the Left seem to prefer to identify as citizens of the world. The Right would identify first as citizens of America.

Many on the Left embrace the idea that the United Nations and other multinational organizations are imbued with a moral authority not found in “nation-states” like ours. Senator John Kerry, during his campaign for the presidency, described American foreign and defense policy as only being legitimate when it passed a “global test” – in other words, approval by the international community.

Another alarming statement recently surfaced – from a senior U.N. official. The subject was the disarming of some citizens in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. There had been considerable concern that this would set an unfortunate precedent. The U.N. official made a statement to the effect that, while she understood Americans were reluctant to part with their firearms, they had better get used to being “citizens of the world” just like everybody else. In his book, “The Audacity of Hope”, Senator Obama wrote: “When the world’s sole superpower willingly restrains its power and abides by internationally agreed-upon standards of conduct, it sends a message that these rules are worth following”. Threats to our traditional sovereignty come subtly from within and without.

But what do Americans think about the issue of international influence on American policy. A recent Rasmussen survey asked the question: Should the United States do what its allies want or should the allies do what the United States wants? Americans were polarized to an extent that surprised me. Republicans responded 66 percent to 13 percent that allies should do what the U.S. wants. Democrats responded that the U.S. should do what the allies want 39 percent to 30 percent. This is a very serious divide among our citizens. Interestingly, voters under 30 came out on the side of allies doing what the U.S. wants, 57 percent to 28 percent.

American Exceptionalism – The Left seems to regard the notion of American exceptionalism as chauvinism. Conservatives would tend to proclaim that, in spite of all its mistakes, America has done more than any international organization or institution, and more than any other country, to improve the world; and that traditional American values form the finest value system any society has ever devised and lived by. Many on the Left would regard world opinion, e.g. the U.N., as a better arbiter of what is good than is America. On the other hand the Right has a low opinion of the U.N.’s moral

compass and of world opinion. Most on the Right would consider the U.N. as having a much poorer record of stopping genocide and other evils than America has.

Globalization – Liberals have grasped onto globalization as the cause for many of our problems – particularly its impact on production and employment – outsourcing jobs, etc. This concern seems to contradict their alleged “world citizenship” view. Conservatives would argue that there is strong evidence that the global economy has had a relatively minor role in changing our industries and workforce. Rather, they argue, it is a technological and skills revolution which has shifted the type of jobs we have in the U.S.

Kind and Gentle? Or Tough Talk! – The Left envisions a world not hemmed in on all sides by inherent constraints and the painful trade-offs that these constraints imply. Theirs is a world where there are attractive, win-win “solutions” in place of those ugly trade-offs in the world. Theirs is a world where we can just talk to opposing nations and work things out, instead of having to pour tons of money into military equipment to keep them at bay. Most conservatives probably wish Ronald Reagan could have talked the Soviets into being nicer, instead of having to spend all that money on military equipment in order to bring the Cold War to an end. They would say that experience makes them skeptical about that “kinder and gentler” approach and the vision behind it. The Left has been criticized for attaching too much importance to being loved. Conservatives would try to convince you that they would rather be respected than loved – particularly if that comes from doing what is truly right.

International negotiations, in the eye of a liberal, are most successful if conducted between two equals. Conservatives would try to negotiate from a position of strength. Liberals have accused conservatives of not pursuing negotiations aggressively enough in time of international crisis. That’s at least partially correct because conservatives are less confident in the outcome of negotiations because they feel there will be too much capitulation on our part. They just want to win – plain and simple. Another way to contrast their respective attitudes regarding international negotiations and relationships involves their respective descriptions of the “Cold War”. Some Liberals viewed the conflict as between two “superpowers” – essentially “moral equivalents”. Conservatives had a more “good vs. evil” perspective.

National Defense – The Left wants a world, and therefore an America, devoid of nuclear weapons. The Right wants America to have the best nuclear weapons. The Right trusts American might more than universal disarmament. Liberals believe a world without nuclear weapons is achievable. Conservatives believe that since the technology exists, evil men and nations will obtain and use them. Therefore the Right does not believe in the Left’s goal of America and its enemies having the same weapons. They argue that the “enemy” certainly won’t let this happen.

Conservatives believe in peace through strength, and thus support strong national defense, and particularly in this era of “Islamofascism”, a proactive foreign policy (called by some the Bush Doctrine). Many liberals would disagree with use of such a strong word to describe terrorism, and would reject preemptory military policies. Also they

would believe in strength through peace, and believe they can better influence the behavior of enemies by demonstrating our good intentions.

This conflict of national defense philosophies isn't new. On Christmas Eve 2008 Samuel P. Huntington, the eminent Harvard political scientist died. He was a devout liberal and "New Deal Democrat" who nevertheless appalled other liberal academics going back over 50 years. In the 1950s he argued that protecting our liberal political and social order required a professional military that held a far less idealistic view of human nature than the general citizenry. His fellow liberals misread his opinions as a defense of militarism. In fact, he calmly argued further that liberals favor individualism because they take national security for granted – and that conservatives understand that national security is not in the natural order of things. He felt that to protect the liberal order which he valued, required rejecting the standard liberal view of good, evil and human nature. Many years later, still not compromising with his fellow liberals, he was not impressed with achieving the end of the Cold War. Rather he argued that the Western liberal democracy hadn't been vindicated as a universal ideal. It was, in fact, headed into a time of multipolar conflict in which culture was the dominant factor in international relations. That and his references to "Islam's bloody borders" was heresy to many multi-culturalists and "world citizen groups". But he was right – that's what eventually happened as we are now experiencing.

Clash of Civilizations – Many on the Left feel that the U.S. created the current clash between Muslims and the Western world. They have said "... (in 2003), it was a relatively small number of young Muslim men. Now, thanks to this clash of civilizations we've created, the threat could come from anywhere."

It must follow then that prior to 2003 the Islamic world was morally equivalent to Western civilization. And before our invasion of Iraq, the Muslim world was populated by peaceful young men; violent Islamists were made by America, not by any aspects of Islamic culture and values. Tell that to the blacks of the Sudan, to the Israelis, and to the Algerians who have lost tens of thousands to Islamic terror. And tell that to the families of the hundreds of thousands, even into the millions, who were murdered and maimed in Iraq by young Muslim men prior to America deposing Saddam Hussein.

And as we were recently reminded by a member of the British Parliament: "Ten years ago, in November 1997, 50 Swiss tourists rose early to visit the Valley of the Kings across the Nile from Luxor in Egypt. Suddenly from the hills came a group of Islamists. They shot, disemboweled and decapitated the tourists". And don't forget the first attack on the World Trade Center – and on and on. The majority of terrorist events occurred prior to the presidency of George W. Bush.

Conservative commentator and writer Larry Elder recently wrote: "Republicans believe what they see, and Democrats see what they believe". That's a little tough and perhaps a bit more clever than fair.

Global Warming Debate – Why Liberal vs. Conservative?

The politics of climate change lines up like this: those advocating certain catastrophe requiring dramatic action now are predominantly liberal – while those for more caution in predictions and reactions are predominantly conservative.

While the apparent political polarization of this issue is important, I have struggled to find a satisfactory explanation. I have gleaned information from politicians, columnists, scientists, and friends. Some of my comments are legitimate, others perhaps are “a bit of a reach”. I found a very few sources to guide me, and I must give credit to the careful observations of columnist Dennis Prager as being most influential.

One of the most prominent participants in the climate change debate is the IPCC – i.e. “Inter**GOVERNMENTAL** Panel on Climate Change”. It has politics at its core. And the U.N. is obviously political – it couldn’t be anything else. Subtle underlying political/economic agendas certainly are part of the debate. Consider the disturbing quote by Maurice Strong, founder of the U.N. Eco-Summit and an Undersecretary General: “Isn’t the only hope for the planet that the industrial civilizations collapse? Isn’t it our responsibility to bring about?”

Complicating the political question is the fact that neither Presidents Bill Clinton nor George W. Bush sent the Kyoto treaty to the Senate for ratification. And a bi-partisan Senate resolution disapproved the notion of joining the Kyoto treaty by 93-0 late in Clinton’s presidency. I recently viewed a video of the announcement, made by Al Gore, stating we would not be ratifying it as it stood. Mr. Gore said something approximately like “no way, no how” to describe the U.S. official position. The reason for the overwhelming opposition then was the incredibly high cost to our economy, and the fact that it was not uniformly enforced – developing countries weren’t to be held to a level of compliance. Nothing has changed in that regard – we just have more information confirming the negative impact on our economy, and the repeated refusal of developing countries like China to be subject to compliance. And, in the opinion of many, more information is available suggesting science is telling us there is more to learn. Many more experts are concluding that the predicted impact of global warming has been incorrect. Then why the polarization along liberal and conservative lines?

Here are some factors I consider relevant to explain the political polarization:

- Kyoto and early support for dramatic ecological changes were born in liberal circles in Europe. There is very little debate that their bias is anti-industrialization, and since CO₂ had long been discussed for its greenhouse effect, industrialized countries provide a logical target. The intense and quite sincere criticism of many of the leading industrialized economies was predictable. Al Gore was adopted as one of the spokespersons, and it developed from there.
- I believe the basis for this polarity also has its origin in the Bush victory over Al Gore. The characters were in place for the drama – Bush vs. Gore. The intense

resentment over the Bush victory led to intense liberal dislike of him and everything he stood for. President Bush seemed opposed to aggressively addressing global warming, and because the more politically conservative tended to trust him more than the others, they tended to support the cautious approach. Those who by then intensely disliked Bush (predominantly liberals) rallied ever more strongly toward the developing theories of Al Gore and other alarmists. Soon the alarmists were hard to stop because of their ever increasing emotional investment in the cause – complex as it was. I believe some of the recent increases in news reports of conflicting scientific opinion have been ignored or are unnoticed by this emotionally committed group.

- Liberal leaning alarmists (I keep using this term for lack of a better one) had plenty of encouragement from the media. This shouldn't be surprising since the media tends to be liberal, in my opinion, and alarmist reports accelerated with relatively little presentation of competing information. This wasn't very surprising since the alarmist agenda was supported by climate models which are comparatively easy to explain and comprehend. Much of the competing information tended to be very complex historical measurements and climate theories without very eloquent spokespersons – until recently anyway. We are now receiving reports which more effectively compete with the alarmists.
- Another reason for political polarity is the basic difference in philosophy of the two political camps. Both groups are socially conscious, but their programs contrast dramatically. The Right tends to be more aggressive in fighting certain human evils such as communism and Islamic totalitarianism. The Left avoids directly and aggressively confronting those human evils. Rather, the Left would want to concentrate its attention on socioeconomic inequality, environmental problems, and the wrong deeds of traditional capitalism. To the Left, global warming meets all three of these criteria of evil.
- Both groups have an appreciation for nature, but the Left tends to have a way of revering it – sometimes almost worshiping it. Once convinced your conservative adversaries are not doing what you are convinced is best for nature, it's a natural extension to become a devoted follower of Al Gore on this issue.
- I believe those on the Left tend to view their ideological adversaries as basically bad people, i.e. people with bad intentions (e.g. corporate profit), while those on the Right tend to view their adversaries as wrong, perhaps even dangerous, but not usually as bad. Consider the statement by Ellen Goodman comparing global warming “deniers” with Holocaust “deniers”. And Al Gore recently compared those supporting a cautious approach with WWII Britons who were isolationists and doubtful of the true Nazi threat. To make these statements is to ascribe equally nefarious motives to competing theories of global warming, its consequences, and the best solutions. Sadly, I believe Ms. Goodman has trivialized Holocaust denial. I believe these opinions represent a dangerous

vilification of decent people – those who dare to debate the predictions of the alarmists.

This is as close as I've been able to come to an explanation of this division.

Professions

Liberal reporters, judges, professors and others have been accused of/praised for exhibiting extreme bias. But why? Critics believe that liberal professionals see their profession as a means to an end, not an end in itself. That end is the social transformation of society, meaning the promoting of “social justice” as liberals understand that term.

Conservatives believe that most liberal reporters expand the goal of news reporting beyond just to reporting news as objectively as possible. They believe reporters also want to promote social justice and the social transformation of society. I read a recent quote from a highly placed person at a major newspaper that essentially expressed that it part of their job to make ethical judgments when deciding how to frame a report. Will this evaluation now trump reporting only the sober facts of a story?

Conservatives would contend that for most liberal judges, one purpose of being a judge is to promote social justice and transform society. That's why liberal judges are more likely to be judicial activists than are conservative judges. Most liberal judges don't see their roles as merely adjudicating a dispute according to the law. They see their role as correcting society's economic and social inequalities.

The same applies to many professors and high school teachers as well, outside of the natural sciences and math. According to some liberals, teachers in the liberal arts should use their classroom to produce young people who wish to engage in society-transforming work. And even the natural sciences are slowly moving in the same direction

Conservatives would say that a reporter should report, a judge should render a just verdict, and a professor's task is to teach – all without an agenda.

Why Do They Act Like That?

Compassion – Liberals are said to rule from a reference point of compassion, not principle. Conservatives contend they themselves have a higher regard for historical principle, whatever the issue. Liberals would counter that compassion is in itself one of the very highest principles.

Laws vs. Morality – There is evidence that one of the most important differences between the Left and Right is their attitudes toward law. Before reading the source material I would not have pieced this theory together. According to one theory, the Left thinks legally and the Right thinks morally. In fact, one prominent conservative writer says that

too often the Left and secularists venerate, if not worship, law. They put their faith in law – both national and (especially?) international law.

Consider the war in Iraq. The Left's chief argument against the war, before it began, was that without U.N. sanction, attacking Iraq violated international law. At that point, for most of those on the Left, the rightness or wrongness of toppling Saddam Hussein's regime was determined by their definition of its legality – i.e. Was it authorized by the U.N. Security Council? International law thus provides a clear example of the Left/Right divide. To the Left, international sanction is the major determinate for rightness or wrongness. To the Right, an action is good or bad irrespective of the votes of the world's nations. They judge it by a code of morality different from international law. I wouldn't have expected that analysis or conclusion.

Citing another contemporary example, the Left throughout the world opposed Israel's 1981 air strike razing Saddam Hussein's nuclear reactor, thereby destroying his ability to manufacture nuclear weapons. Among major American newspapers, only the conservative Wall Street Journal supported the strike. There was massive liberal outrage as to Israel's violation of international law. It seemed to be unimportant to liberals that the action destroyed a nuclear weapons facility of the world's leading mass murderer. All that mattered was international law or sanctions – legality, under international standards, mattered most. For many conservatives, what mattered most was their opinion of the morality of the act.

One conservative theory is that the Left, which is largely secular, regards morality not as absolute, but as relative. If so, this inevitably leads to moral confusion and no one likes to be morally confused. So instead of moral absolutes, the Left holds legal absolutes. The Left is accused of lacking the self-control apparatus of a religion, and as a result wants to pass more and more laws which control people - so say some on the Right. This is an attempt to understand the Left's alleged preoccupation with controlling courts, passing laws, filing lawsuits, and naming judges. Notice the similarity to the discussion about moral relativism elsewhere in this report.

Political Correctness – Conservatives are concerned that the traditional values of “freedom” and “truth” have been diminished at the altar of political correctness (PC). If so, the growth of PC is also related to another concept previously discussed – good intentions being the important thing, without regard for the result. Therefore, the overall righteousness of a goal is more important than the absolute truth. A conservative might even complain that the combination of political correctness and multiculturalism is the scourge of patriotism.

Age and Maturity – There is research that indicates as people age they are more likely to identify themselves as conservative, or at least “becoming less liberal”. Does it necessarily follow that adopting more conservative values and principles is a sign of maturity? While I believe older is consistent with conservative, I wouldn't presume it implies more maturity.....or would I?

Who's the Victim?

Liberals are accused by conservatives of prolonging an unneeded affirmative action program, particularly at universities. Conservatives cite evidence that its continuation hurts minorities more than it helps. Concern for educational opportunities for minorities and society's other victims certainly endures more with liberals than conservatives.

Here is an example of two very different reactions and explanations regarding the same event. It's based on actual observations. The issue is how to appropriately deal with graffiti vandals. Reactions to this problem by the cultural Left generally ranged from support to indifference. Some on the Left have described graffiti as "urban art" and the vandals as "artists". Liberals generally regard graffiti in far less negative ways than do conservatives. One reason for this is that for many on the Left it is difficult to condemn the poor and minorities. And, one theory I found believes that conservatives tend to view our civilization as more fragile than the left views it. Conservatives are more paranoid perhaps. It seems that to the conservative, graffiti is an assault on civilization; to the liberal, graffiti is the result of civilization's assault on those who paint the graffiti. On the Right, society is viewed and the vandal's victim; on the Left, the vandal is viewed as society's victim.

Who's The Enemy?

Conservatives sometimes feel that the Left has actually abandoned the "war against evil". I prefer to think that the Left has simply redefined their concept of evil. I believe the liberal concept of good and evil has changed in the wake of new concepts – particularly moral equivalence and moral relativism. What was once a group that led the resistance to communism and other cruel totalitarian regimes, has become isolationist and apply a moral equivalency measurement to other cultures. What was once a group that was staunchly law and order has become much more "understanding" of the underprivileged "societal victims" who more often commit crimes.

Perhaps, as one prominent conservative postulates, human evil in the world is so great that many liberals chose to either ignore it, or to focus their concerns elsewhere. One of the main evils which the Left fights against is "inequality" as they define it. Another "new evil" is carbon dioxide emission which liberals have stated as being a greater evil and more of a threat than any human evil, such as cruel totalitarian cultures. Whatever the reason, I believe conservatives tend to be more practical and protective about what they consider as evil. As a result, they tend to recognize what they perceive as evilness in the world more quickly than do liberals. Liberals are more idealistic and seem to exhibit more naiveté about the conservatives' concept of evil.

In any case, the Right and Left have very different definitions of what constitutes good and evil.

Karl Who?

We have heard that “9/11” was the result of a group of men reacting to their situation in their homelands and the world economy. Even though these individuals came primarily from wealthy homes, we still hear a very different story. Liberals contend that “9/11” was the result of international repression and poverty. There is a liberal mantra that “poverty, repression, and imperialism is the cause of international crime” and that it has manifested itself in an international uprising against the U.S. and its allies. Could this be true? As Barack Obama stated during his campaign: “In Europe, the view that America is part of what has gone wrong in our world, rather than a force to help make it right, has become all too common”. Conservatives would agree with this statement, but would have gone on to tell those in Europe how wrong such a perception is.

It seems that some on the Left believe that the situation these young Muslim men found themselves in actually caused their actions. And the concept of “bitterness” surfaced in Barack Obama’s campaign. He suggested that it causes Americans to cling to guns and religion because of frustration with economic and social conditions. It can be inferred from that that people need to find something to assist them in achieving a measure of contentment and an ability to “cope”. Compare this to Karl Marx’s proclamation: “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of a soulless condition. It is the opium of the people.” One of Marx’s central themes was that one’s economic status or circumstance determines beliefs and actions.

What Do They Think About Each Other?

A recent survey conducted by the University of Michigan’s American National Election Studies gives some indication of what liberals and conservatives think about each other. On a scale of 0 (absolutely the worst possible) to 100 (Mount Rushmore adoration), both groups were asked to rate each other. Those who described themselves as “conservative” or “extremely conservative” gave liberals an average score of 39. Those describing themselves as “liberal” or “extremely liberal” gave conservatives a similar score – 38.

In the 1998 poll, when asked to apply the scale to then-President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, “extreme conservatives” gave them both a rating of 45. In the most recent poll, when “extreme liberals” were asked to apply the same scale to President Bush and Vice President Cheney, the result was a score of 15 and 16 respectively. And 60 percent of these “extreme liberals” gave them both a score of “0”. In other words, six out of ten Americans on the far left found that no evil, heinous person in the world could be worthy of more hatred than Bush and Cheney. For a little perspective, the “then-alive” Saddam Hussein received an average score of 8 from all Americans. This seems to indicate that liberals are harder on conservatives than the reverse.

While I find the previous information surprising, it is consistent with other studies about the tone and terminology used when describing each other. When describing

conservatives, liberals often use the adjectives “evil” (from Bill Clinton and Howard Dean), “Reichstag-like” (from John Dingell), “supremacist” (from George Soros), “dunce” (referring to President Reagan) or “dumb as a stump” (referring to George Bush and “bad people”). One researcher found that conservatives tend to use negative but less emotionally charged adjectives such as “dangerous”, “confused”, “misdirected”, “well intentioned”, “naïve”, “scary” and “wrong”.

Some of liberals’ most emotionally charged words are, according to critics, conveniently undefined – e.g. social justice, living wage, price gouging, or fragile environment. The following are terms liberals are accused of applying to virtually every idea or action with which they differ: racist, sexist, homophobic, islamophobic, imperialist, bigoted, intolerant, and xenophobic. Liberals have been accused of using these words to attack the motives of non-liberals and thereby morally dismiss the non-liberal person. Some of these words make it easy to be a liberal – with further deep thought being unnecessary. They know they oppose racism, imperialism and bigotry, and that they are for peace, tolerance and the environment. These words make liberals feel good – by opposing conservative ideas and policies, they are automatically opposing racism, bigotry, imperialism, etc. Conversely, here is a list of one-word descriptions of what liberals support: peace, fairness, tolerance, poor, disenfranchised, and the environment.

While I am hesitant to buy into all of the above conservative arguments, I find the term “phobic” very interesting. It seems to be used as a liberal dismissal of ideological opponents. It combines instant moral dismissal with instant psychological analysis. If you do not support society redefining marriage you are “homophobic”, and further discussion or thought is unnecessary. If you seek to retain English as America’s unifying language, you are not only “racist”, you are, as New York Times editorial describes you, “xenophobic” and, a new term, “Latinophobic”.

A published report in “Psychological Bulletin” described conservatism as a psychological disorder characterized by: fear, aggression, dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, uncertainty avoidance They need “cognitive disclosure” and “terror management”. Ouch! That isn’t polite criticism intended to invite debate on the merits.

Are Conservatives Selfish “Pr....ks”?

It’s a central dogma of the Left that conservatives are inherently selfish. Stingy, unfeeling and selfish are common terms used for decades by the Left to describe the Right. There has been legitimate research done to address this question – at least as it regards charitable contributions and volunteerism. The largest project was taken on by Arthur C. Brooks, a Syracuse University Professor of public administration.

The study found that four forces are primarily responsible for making people charitable: religion, skepticism about government involvement in their economic life, strong families, and personal entrepreneurship. It concludes that, very generally, these

determining forces are in sync with political conservatives and have “reverse polarity” relative to political liberals.

These determining forces act upon the political spectrum with the following results, according to the study:

- Conservative families give 30 percent more in absolute dollars than liberal families even though (and here I was surprised) liberal families earned six percent more than conservative families. Registered Republicans are more likely than Democrats to give at all – 90 to 83 percent.
- Conservative Americans also donate more of their time to charities than liberals.
- Religious Americans are more charitable than non-religious Americans irrespective of their politics.
- The more liberal you are, particularly for the secular Left, the less likely you are to donate your money or time to charity. The secular conservatives, a very small group, also ranked very low in their charitable giving – again the correlation to religion. The churchgoer is nearly twice as likely as the secularist to give money to charities in a given year. And the amount given is an unbelievable multiple of 100 times higher than the secularist.
- Examining income categories, poorest Americans give the highest percentage of their income to charity, second is the wealthy, and last is the middle class.
- If liberals and moderates gave blood at the same rate as conservatives, the blood supply of the U.S. would jump about 45 percent
- The least charitable of all groups measured were young liberals – as regards money, time or blood – so much for the much exalted young idealism.
- Comparing the U.S. charitable giving to western Europe, differences are huge. The report states that the reason lies in European attitudes toward God and state. Europeans have largely turned their backs on the former and consider the latter the answer to everything.

Professor Brooks admits that his findings were the opposite of what he expected – so much so that he actually checked the results to make sure there were no mistakes.

Are Liberals as Happy as They Look?

Considerable research has been done as to which of the political extremes is most happy and fulfilled. Not surprisingly, the Left and Right have different visions of what it means to have or achieve happiness – and how the state fits into the process.

A study by the Pew Research Center in 2006 found that 47 percent of conservative Republicans in the U.S. described themselves as “very happy”, while only 28 percent of liberal Democrats indicated such cheer. Not to be outdone, another study had to check it out and at least attempt to explain this unexpected result. The study, published in the June 2008 issue of the journal *Psychological Science*, surprisingly confirmed the 2006 study’s conclusion. But they stated that conservatives also scored highest on measures of

rationalization, which gauge a person's tendency to justify, or explain away, inequalities. They state that if your beliefs don't justify gaps in status, you could be left frustrated and disheartened. The researchers write: "Our research suggests that inequality takes a greater psychological toll on liberals than on conservatives, apparently because liberals lack ideological rationalizations that would help them frame inequality in a positive (or at least neutral) light". Does that explain it? Recall the discussion of what is perceived as unequal earlier in this report. There it was pointed out that research indicates that liberals often infer that opportunities are unequal merely from the existence of unequal outcomes – even when opportunities are equal. This debate is something like "Point/Counterpoint" in an unending loop – and it's far from over.

Syracuse University Professor Arthur C. Brooks (refer to the "charitable giving" discussion presented earlier) did comprehensive research on happiness of Americans. First of all, Professor Brooks found that conservatives emphasize more traditional values than do liberals – e.g. marriage, family, freedom, and hard work. As with his earlier research, there were many surprises:

- 44 percent of conservatives described themselves as happy. That compared to just 25 percent of all liberals. This "happiness gap" has maintained itself to some degree over 35 years of polling.
- Conservatives are more likely than liberals to go to church or synagogue regularly – 46 to 16 percent.
- Religious people are more likely to describe themselves as happy than secularists.
- Conservatives are twice as likely to be churchgoing as liberals.
- When religious and political differences are combined, the results are striking. Secular liberals are as likely to say they are "not too happy" as to say they are "very happy" – each at 22 percent. Religious conservatives are ten times more likely to report being very happy than not too happy – 50 to 5 percent.
- Interestingly, when the groups are narrowed to what is described as "hard-core" liberals and conservatives, it was found that both categories were among the happiest in the study.
- Income has virtually no effect on happiness.
- Two thirds of conservatives are married, compared with one third for liberals.
- Married people are twice as likely as singles to say they're happy.
- Parents are more likely to be happy than non-parents.
- Married people are the happiest of all.
- Conservatives are more optimistic than liberals. Perhaps, as was pointed out in the earlier study discussed in this section, liberals are indeed affected by their focus on the perceived injustices of our system.

END OF UNITY? OR MAYBE NOT?

Until recently it was easy for me to reach the conclusion that, while the U.S. is politically polarized, there was still one America. I believed Americans had a fairly consistent vision of what the country should be, and were just having a healthy debate about how to

get there. I now have doubts. Not only do we have two very different views of who America is, we also have two very different visions of where we should go and what we should be as a country. I believe that the Right wants an America very different in substance than the one desired by the Left. I also believe most on both sides are sincere in their beliefs and want America to be the best that it can be.

There are several theories that try to look through the current differences and point to several trends that could eventually bring us closer together. Here are some conservatives' observations about why the two groups might converge philosophically in the future:

- First is the “wealth effect” as suggested by conservative organizer Grover Norquist. The ever-increasing number of Americans who own equity interests in U.S. and international businesses argues against an ever-widening separation of the top and bottom economic strata. There is evidence that the “rich, richer/poor poorer” argument is mostly a myth. This points to a potential for the Left to become more “in tune” with the Right – perhaps sometime.
- Another trend is the ever weakening power of the labor unions. This could have the effect of weakening the Left – maybe eventually.
- Conservative media’s rise may improve the Right’s influence – maybe eventually.
- The liberal influence at colleges and universities couldn’t get stronger, so there is only one direction for change to occur – to the Right – but in the distant future.
- The growth of home schooling, now up to a surprising 4 percent of school age children, bodes well for conservatives – but the children must first get older.
- Some believe American Catholics are trending toward more conservative positions. And the growing percentage of other conservative groups such as the Mormon population could have an effect – but only well into the future.
- And the meteoric growth of the American Hispanic population in all likelihood will continue. I was surprised to find that Hispanics are considered by many to be a conservative group. Maybe so, as long as the conservatives don’t continue to “blow it” with this group as they have done in the past. But it all takes time!

The above are clearly conservative opinions – perhaps with some basis in fact. But some would say they are just “grasping at straws”. There is a totally different list that would give encouragement to liberals. But it’s just too soon to tell if there will be movement one way or the other – things need to “shake out first”. It seems to me that calls for unity among Americans that totally or quickly transcends Left and Right, may be either naïve or disingenuous. We can all come together eventually, but have we now reached the point that true unity will exist only when one group prevails over the other? I think the Left thinks so. Most on the Right probably do not. So who’s right?

America remains the greatest country in the world. It needs to be fixed where broken, but not changed. Those who want to change it will make it worse. Perhaps much worse”.

– Dennis Prager –

The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself.

– Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan –

You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

– Abraham Lincoln –

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The following is a list of what I consider the primary sources of information for completing this project. This is not intended to be a detailed bibliography or list of notes and references which would be adequate for publication or other wide use of this report. I have given specific attribution to very few quotes and statistics. Therefore this report, as with most of my reports, is in a state of “technical plagiarism”. This report is not intended for publication. The following lists are merely intended to relay the nature, extent, and sincerity of my effort to become personally more knowledgeable. At a minimum, I hope these lists lend a level of credibility to the information provided. The items below are listed in no particular order.

Books – eight of these were read – for the balance I reviewed comprehensive excerpts, summaries and reviews – the status is indicated if book was not read:

- *Moral Politics – How Liberals and Conservatives Think* by George Lakoff
- *A Conflict of Visions* by Thomas Sowell – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Why We’re Liberals - A Political Handbook for Post-Bush America* by Eric Alterman
- *Liberal Fascism – The Secret History of the American Left from Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning* by Jonah Goldberg
- *Smear Tactics – The Liberal Campaign to Defame America* by Brad Miner
- *Dude, Where’s My Country* by Michael Moore
- *Neo Conservatism – Why We Need It* by Douglas Murray
- *Who Really Cares? – America’s Charity Divide, Who Gives, Who Doesn’t, and Why It Matters* by Arthur C. Brooks
- *The Enemy at Home – The Cultural Left and Its Responsibility for 9/11* by Dinesh D’Souza
- *A Conservative History of the American Left* by Daniel J. Flynn – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *The Conservative Mind* by Russell Kirk – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Makers and Takers* by Peter Schweizer – excerpts, summaries, and reviews

- *Conservatives Betrayed – How George W. Bush and Other big Government Republicans Hijacked the Conservative Cause* by Richard A. Viguerie – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Why the Left Hates America – Exposing the Lies That Have Obscured Our Nations’s Greatness* by Daniel J. Flynn – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Do as I Say (Not As I Do) – Profiles in Liberal Hypocrisy* by Peter Schweizer – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *The Worst Person in the World – And 202 Strong Contenders* by Keith Olbermann – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *48 Liberal Lies About American History (That You Probably Learned in School)* by Larry Schweikart – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Gross National Happiness* by Arthur C. Brooks – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Soulless – Ann Coulter and the Right-Wing Church of Hate* by Susan Estrich – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Conservative Comebacks to Liberal Lies* by Gregg Jackson – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Camelot and the Cultural Revolution: How the Assassination of John F. Kennedy shattered American Liberalism* by James Piereson – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *The Conscience of a Liberal – Reclaiming the Compassionate Agenda* by Paul Krugman – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *The Tyranny of Tolerance – A sitting Judge Breaks the Code of Silence to Expose the Liberal Judicial Assault* by Judge Robert H. Dierker – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Leave Us Alone – Getting the Government’s Hands Off Our Money* – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Lies (And the Lying Liars Who Tell Them) – A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right* by Al Franken – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *The Truth (With Jokes)* by Al Franken – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *Ten Books That Screwed Up the World (and Five Others That Didn’t Help)* by Professor Benjamin Wiker, Ph. D. – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *The 10 Big Lies About America: Combating Destructive Distortment About Our Nation* by Michael Medved – excerpts, summaries, and reviews
- *The Tyranny of Liberalism: Understanding and Overcoming Administered Freedom, Inquisitorial Tolerance, and Equality By Command* by James Kalb – excerpts, summaries, and reviews

Websites, Online Newsletters, and Publications – many monitored regularly, others monitored mostly/specifically for this or similar projects only:

Daily Kos
 Drudge Report
 Liberal Voices
 moveon.org

American Thinker
 Jewish World Review
 Liberal Oasis
 National Review

American Enterprise Institute
 Institute of Economic Affairs
 Manhattan Institute
 Newt Gingrich

Conservative Book Service	Wall Street Journal	The Economist
Politico.com	RealClearPolitics	Roll Call Newspaper
The American Prospect	The American Spectator	The Cato Institute
The Heartland Institute	The Heritage Foundation	The Huffington Post
The Nation	The New Republic	The Progressive Magazine
The Weekly Standard	Townhall.com	New York Times
Newsweek	The Atlantic	

**Writers, Columnists, Commentators, Economists, Educators, Scientists, Reporters
Editorial Sources, and Government Officials Whose Material Was Used/Reviewed -**

often multiple items for each, most relatively brief - some are experts and others clearly are journalists or commentators:

Dennis Prager	Thomas Sowell	Walter Williams
Charles Krauthammer	Newt Gingrich	George Will
Glenn Beck	Anthony Bradley	Larry Elder
John Stossel	Jonah Goldberg	Cal Thomas
Michael Barone	David Limbaugh	Paul Greenberg
Tony Blankley	Victor David Hanson	David Weinbaum
Jeff Jacoby	Mark Steyn	Mona Charen
Bob Tyrrell	Rich Lowry	Evan Thomas
Katrina Vanden Heuvel	Michael Gerson	Frank J. Gaffney, Jr.
Clarence Page	Robert Robb	Greg Crosby
Bill O'Reilly	Pat Sajak	Rocco DiPippo
Linda Chavez	Steve Chapman	Diana West
Jeanna Bryner	Dean Barnett	Johnathan Gurwitz
Rod Dreher	David Mamet	David Reinhard
Leonard Pitts	Michael R. Wigley	David Broder
Tom Purcell	David Strom	Robert Reich
Debra J. Saunders	Jack Kelly	Jeanna Bryner