

Stagemanship or Statesmanship?

Where are the Stewards of Democracy, the Protectors of Capitalism and the Guardians of the Constitution?

I hope that in 2012 America's leaders will resolve to regain something they've lost over the last few years...their fiduciary responsibility to the three most sacred tasks we the people have entrusted to them:

1. to protect and preserve the Constitution
2. to provide for the common good and
3. to secure the defense of the Republic against all enemies both foreign and domestic

Many of us have entered the New Year, soberly, and with a renewed sense of purpose about restoring America's greatness in 2012. Some will choose the upcoming elections in November to remove the President, his advisors, his Czars, and his ideology and along with them some Congressional Representatives. Others, who are content with the status quo or believe that hope will change things, will vote to retain them. It's that simple, really. The current administration has already set the stage for the second phase of its *Great American Makeover*.

No longer just a cosmetic change using the miracle lotion of stagemanship, the Obama Administration seems intent on giving America a major facelift.

The wrinkles that have shaped Columbia's character and America's history will be removed, consigned to the 'before' side of the page. After the next major surgery, we will not recognize her. Her face will be tight, but her morals will sag behind her facade. Every administration has an agenda, just as every President, Senator and Congressman has a 'to do list' of action items they want accomplished.

No one should begrudge them that, but everyone should begrudge them the right to misrepresent who they are and what they want for our country before they're elected. Each candidate owes us the truth about how they will acquit the three sacred trusts I mentioned earlier. Before we discuss those trusts, we must be clear about one thing: there are only two ways to really effect change – by electing people of high moral character to office or through our established democratic process (the third way, revolution, is enshrined in our Constitution and is therefore part of the democratic process, strangely enough).

That said, let's examine how the current administration should be rated for its handling of all three. *Preserving and protecting the Constitution* simply means upholding and enforcing the law of the land.

What grade would you give the Administration for the Justice Department's refusal to prosecute a voter intimidation case against the Black Panthers for wielding billy clubs at a Philadelphia polling place in 2008? What about the 'Fast and Furious' gun-walking operation that has dogged Attorney General Eric Holder?

Then there's the 'Affordable Healthcare Act' commonly known as 'Obamacare.' Aside from the blitzkrieg tactics used to pass the bill (which many would call legislative thuggery), does the individual government mandate to buy health insurance under penalty of law bother anyone who's read the 10th Amendment? Apparently the Attorneys General of 27 U.S. states think so as their suit is now in the hands of the Supreme Court. We will see if the scales of justice are balanced if Justice Elena Kagan recuses herself from this case (she was an active participant with the Obama Administration in the formation of the Act).

Providing for the common good is high ground both parties claim to hold, and while each sees the 'shining city on the hill,' neither one really has a foolproof legislative GPS to find the right route. Both, however, have more than enough rhetoric about why we should stay their respective ideological course to reach the shining city's gates. Their paths could not be more divergent.

For the Democrats, the 'common good' is a euphemism for collectivism. Their city shines because it is constantly being polished by government workers and funded by American taxpayers. It is a city where maximum earnings levels are dictated by government and where wealth is distributed by government fiat. In their shining city, government always knows best.

The Republicans' city shines with the glow of free enterprise. You can tell by the billboards that announce your arrival with slogans like, "It's Your Shine, Keep It Bright" not "Your Shine is Mine." It's a city with a City Manager, not a community organizer Mayor. Their city is run like a business by businesslike people.

The answer to what the 'common good' is was purposely left open for debate by the Founding Fathers, though they were specific in which areas government should not be involved. Government ownership of private property and appropriation of assets were two of them. That segues nicely to the General Motors bailout and the strong-arm tactics used by the Administration to intimidate priority shareholders to give up their right to higher recompense for their securities.

Add to that the Government's intervention in our economic 'natural selection' by allowing the Treasury Secretary to choose which investment houses should live or die and you surely have another case for Constitutional aggression. *Preserving the Republic* sounds like a phrase straight out of the Minuteman handbook, but it is as relevant today as it was over two centuries ago.

One of the most widely-debated issues that calls the Administration's defense of our Republic into question is their seeming unwillingness to secure our southern border with Mexico. By filing suit against legislation passed by several states that would protect their citizenry from repeat illegal immigrant offenders, the Administration has turned away from its responsibility under the Constitution thereby putting law-abiding Americans at risk. *Protecting America* against all enemies, foreign and domestic will be the central issue of the current Administration's campaign strategy as it tries to shift the focus to its foreign policy *successes* (like the assassination of Osama bin Laden) and away from the economy.

The rhetoric will go something like this, "We can promote democracy without going to war. We can defuse potentially dangerous relationships by talking with our enemies. We must trust our institutions (like the U.N.) to represent our interests. We must not undermine foreign governments just to achieve democracy. The Bush Doctrine (of preemptive strikes) is dead. Long live the Obama Doctrine (of perpetual discourse). The jury may well be out on the efficacy of the Obama Doctrine (because talk is never done), but there is one area where we cannot afford to make any mistakes, and that is terrorism.

America may have had its fill of war, but it is not yet ready to let down its defenses against terrorism. While the Administration may wish to soften the dialogue through euphemization, it will fail. War is still war; it is not *overseas contingency operations*. Terrorism is still terrorism; it is not a *man-caused disaster*. We will not succeed in re-writing the rulebook by simply changing the terminology. Unless we fully understand how the game is being played and what motivates the other side to play the way they do, we will be the walking wounded on the field or worse yet, sidelined and helpless.

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