

REMEMBER WHEN I WROTE ?

Stephen L. Bakke – November 6, 2010

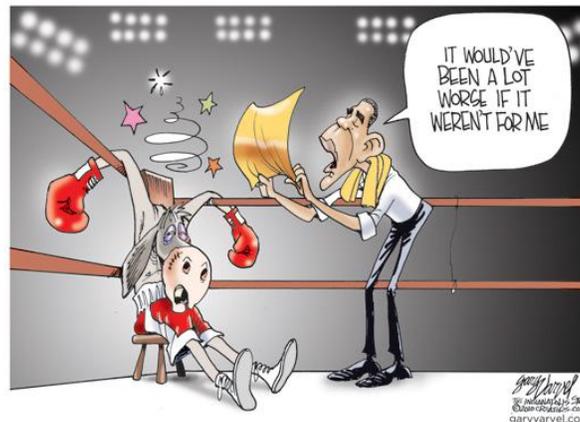
Mallard Fillmore by Bruce Tinsley



Following last Tuesday's election, our President put on a phony persona of looking a bit "mea culpa," but there was no such feeling inside. He said that he needed to do a better job, but then added that everyone else does too. He doesn't realize his personality, conduct, and his "so called successes" were the problem – and all those politicians who lost elections, actually "threw themselves under the bus" for him!

Obama contends that the public has misinterpreted the reason for his support of certain recent legislation. He now suggests they were not his original priorities, and that they were done only as a response to the crises caused by the previous administration. B.S.! Those legislative initiatives were virtually all included in his campaign promises. And remember the (for them unfortunate) slip of the tongue when Rahm Emanuel admitted "you never want a serious crisis to go to waste." Such incredible smugness!!

Obama said his policies weren't the problem, but rather, how he sold them and how they accomplished their radical legislation. In other words the American voters still "just don't understand." Such arrogance and narcissism! He, his administration, and their policies WERE the problem!



Obama talks about leaving obstructive politics behind, and working together to respond to the American people's unsatisfied desire for change. But HE was the one who recently implored his supporters to "punish our (his) enemies." How out of touch can you get?!

But the election is over, so what happens next? First, a look back.

Almost two years ago, I presented a report on liberal and conservative world views and thinking. It was an attempt to understand these very different world views and an attempt at summarizing some typical characteristics. Following in BLUE are [direct quotes](#) from that report. Don't look for much discussion here about specific political or legislative issues. Rather, this is a reminder of what I once wrote about liberal/leftist/progressive characteristics. Now, I ask as you read this, reflect on the last two years and consider the following question: **Can you think of ways these characteristics manifested themselves in Obama's administration, congressional initiatives – and are there ways these characteristics contributed to the recent election results?** In other words, evaluate how I did in identifying important, relevant liberal/leftist/progressive characteristics which would be observed in the Obama administration and the democrat-led Congress. **CONSIDER the following characteristics and concepts and how they may have emerged during the last two years:**

- **CONSIDER the propensity to expand the “role of government”:** [Conservative philosophy, in its purest form, believes in government's role as defined, or limited, by the U.S. Constitution. Liberals tend to have a broader concept of the role of government they consider the Constitution a “living, breathing document” – to be used in the context of international law, moral relativism, and moral equivalence 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](#)
- **CONSIDER the concept of “the government knows best”:** [People on the Left want the right to impose their idea of what is good for society on others. 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.](#)
- **CONSIDER intentions for our tax system:** [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 Conservatives typically accuse liberals of manipulating the economy in the wrong way and providing self-defeating incentives through tax policies.](#)
- **CONSIDER the interpretation of “Freedom of Religion”:** [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”** (In the discussions by the Founding Fathers regarding the First Amendment as contained in the Congressional Records from June 7 to September 25, 1789 nowhere is the term **“separation of church and state”** ever mentioned.

- **CONSIDER the embarrassment over the traditional riches of our national defense system:** Theirs (liberals’) 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. 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 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 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) would believe in strength through peace, and believe they can better influence the behavior of enemies by demonstrating our good intentions.
- **CONSIDER the apparent “preferred” status given to the United Nations:** Many on the Left embrace the idea that the **United Nations** (is) imbued with a moral authority not found in “nation-states” like ours. In his book, “The Audacity of Hope”, 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.”
- **CONSIDER the repression of the proud old concept of “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. The Left fears **nationalism** in general. 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.
- **CONSIDER the assault on “American Patriotism”:** Many on the Left are much more ambivalent about, and often hostile to, overt displays of **American**

Patriotism. The Left has caused the term “flag waving” to have a negative connotation.

- **CONSIDER the rejection of certain time honored values:** The French Revolution’s guiding principles were “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”. Some on the Left would be more comfortable with that than the **motto** of “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness”. Conservative writer Dennis Prager envisions a new “American Trinity” developing. (He suggests that) the traditional conservative “trinity” ... “E Pluribus Unum, Liberty, and In God We Trust” being replaced by “Multiculturalism” “Equality” and “Secularism”.
- **CONSIDER the confusion over “moral equivalences”:** 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 which led ultimately to a cozy philosophy of **moral equivalence** (more “live and let live”).
- **CONSIDER the advancement of “moral relativism”:** “**Moral relativism**” is the ability to determine right and wrong based on one’s feelings **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 Ethics and morality are therefore “relative” to “something” The Achilles’ heel of liberals is losing the ability to identify and confront evil. (Recall my recent comments on existentialist reactions!)
- **CONSIDER what an emphasis on “multiculturalism” has meant:** 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. (The left doesn’t believe) 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.
- **CONSIDER the proliferation of “political correctness”:** Conservatives are concerned that the traditional values of “freedom” and “truth” have been diminished at the altar of **political correctness** Therefore, the overall righteousness of a goal is more important than the absolute truth
- **CONSIDER the concept of “equality”:** 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. Equality for a person on the Right would emphasize the concept of equal opportunity.

- **CONSIDER the drift toward “secularism”:** 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”.
- **CONSIDER the importance of “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.
- **CONSIDER the apparent preference for the “European style”:** Some contend that the Left prefers **Europe’s quasi-pacifism, cradle-to-grave socialism, egalitarianism, and secularism** 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”.
- **CONSIDER the transformation of the role of national media outlets:** Most liberal reporters expand the **goal of news reporting** beyond just reporting news as objectively as possible. They believe reporters also want to promote social justice and the social transformation of society.
- **CONSIDER the changing role of the judiciary:** 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.
- **CONSIDER the apparent confusion about what is “good and evil”:** 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.
- **CONSIDER the ‘demagoguery’ during recent months: Terms liberals are accused of applying to 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.

My comments were made before Obama took office. These liberal/leftist/progressive attitudes and characteristics did indeed show themselves – profoundly so! – in just the first two years of the Obama administration. **I missed a few, but I give myself an A-!**

Now, the Republicans have the immense responsibility of truly listening to the voters of 2010 and delivering! Easier said than done!