



sion network.

What has been the result of the Left's hegemony? Within living memory this was still the free country described by Tocqueville 150 years ago, where families could make new lives without the interference of armies of bureaucrats. But, over one generation, government has doubled the amount of money it takes from us, has increasingly deprived us of control over our own lives, has turned our public spaces over to criminals and our public schools into factories of ignorance. It has driven us apart on the basis of race and even of sex and, in the name of tolerance, has made us intolerant.

Republican politicians, however, have been passing up the opportunity to represent our basically productive, conservative country against its parasitic, leftist government. In 1968, 1972, 1980, 1984, and 1988 the American people elected Republican presidents (and for six years during the 1980s, a Republican Senate) who asked for votes as defenders of society against government. Once elected, however, many Republicans promptly put on their tuxes and became concerned with "governance." Because they were in power, complaints against the modern state became complaints against themselves. The liberal agenda now had perfect cover.

Even today, conservatives cannot fully shed the illusion that "we" are the establishment, that the U.S. government is still the house of Washington and Lincoln, and that to speak ill of it is unpatriotic. Many other conservatives assume that big government is here to stay and that the only question is who will run it. They are wrong. Disdain for modern government is wise, patriotic - yes, even lovely.

Crashing Welfare States

Throughout the world, big government is in a crisis of legitimacy. In South America, there is a rush to privatize social security and medical care. The Japanese,

recognizing that "industrial policy," a code term for government planning, breeds corruption as well as inefficiency, are deregulating the economy. In Europe, welfare states that spend half of GNP or more are collapsing and dragging with them all the mainstream parties that have acted as managers rather than as representatives of the people - especially the conservative parties that (with the exception of the Thatcher government) aped the socialists. Voters have had little choice but to turn to extremist groups, or simply to turn their backs on government.

In our country, too, a spreading disaffection with government is looking for political expression. In 1992, Ross Perot was taken seriously as a presidential candidate because he expressed the popular discontent with big government far more clearly than either Republicans or Democrats. (To this day most of his followers either don't know or can't believe that Perot wants to raise taxes.) Yet, under Republican and Democratic administrations alike, America is bucking the world's trend and moving to more statism. Who will put a stop to it? The Democratic Party has no choice but to be the party of big government. If the Republican Party refuses to express the people's opposition, someone else will. Politics, like nature, abhors a vacuum.

Of, by, and for the People?

To begin with, big government has largely deprived us of self-government. We get to vote for senators, congressmen, and presidents. But we have less and less control over our lives because we have no control over the people who make the rules by which we live - about how we make and sell our products, which groups get what preferences, how we can use our land. These are the millions of bureaucrats who work for the IRS, the EPA, the FCC, the EEOC, BATF, the CPSC, OSHA, and the innumerable other alphabet-soup agencies. They develop an arrogance of power which leads to the delusion that they are

around the globe choose to immigrate to the United States of America over anyplace else. To suggest that they come to get on welfare is an insult to them and to America, and it is simply false. This is the only country in the history of mankind where people of different nationalities can become, in Abraham Lincoln's words, "flesh of the flesh and blood of the blood" of the Founders.

By following the Founding Fathers' beliefs in the equality of men before our Creator and in small government, America produced freedom, harmony, prosperity, and generosity. No other set of ideas and practices has ever come close to doing as well. And yet since the 1930s America's elites have foisted upon us ideas and practices that would have revolted our Founders. Big government has been their tool. They have almost succeeded. If we are to restore the house of Washington and Lincoln, we are going to have to learn to re-apply their model, the American model, to our reforms.

The American model is based on the sober truth that government is not inherently the friend of ordinary people, and that it is invariably partial to the well-connected. Hence the American model calls for small government primarily for the sake of justice and honesty, and secondarily for the sake of efficiency.

The biggest difference between the principle of government in America and anywhere else is that here the rulers must stick to clearly defined tasks, while ordinary people may do whatever they wish. We must make up our minds to put this principle into practice again, lest we lose the spirit that made us the envy of the world.

Most important, the American model is based on a certain kind of people - defined not by race but by virtue and by the willingness to take responsibility for our own lives. People fit to be Americans ask for blessings only from God. Because being Americans is not a matter of birth, we must practice it every day - lest we become something else. 🇺🇸

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ago, Argentina was second only to the United States in per-capita wealth. Then, its middle class listened to Juan Peron's siren song of entitlements. Taxes, regulations, and interest-group power soon reduced the country to genteel poverty, then to grinding poverty and food riots. Now it has changed course—it is even privatizing social security. We, meanwhile, are heading where Argentina was, pulled along in part by Hillary Clinton's imitation of Evita Peron.

The public educational system is also stripping us of civilization. Fifty years ago, the public schools were small and answered to parents. Today, they are huge and answer to judges and to bureaucrats whose techniques coddle student's egos while emphasizing political correctness. And so "grades," inflated wildly, have risen along with self-esteem. The real outcome? Almost half of adults to be functionally illiterate; they also show a drastic drop in the number of high achievers, stagnation or slow decline for the bulk of students, and disaster for those at the low end.

For most of our history, in cultural and social matters, government acted mostly by staying out of the way. When it did act, it acted in a way that fostered decency and responsibility. The laws protected marriage. Religion was honored throughout public life. Today, by contrast, the U.S. government professes neutrality on questions of morality while actively undermining the prevailing moral standards. While it is not for government to prescribe morality, a government without a moral base fosters a citizenry without responsibility and a nation devoid of civility. It is no wonder that under our government's current mindset—prohibiting us from questioning any alternative lifestyle; financing single women bearing children out of wedlock and the resultant idleness by their boyfriends; proscribing public reference to God; and imposing tax penalties for married couples—individual responsibility is disappearing.

While government intrudes into so many facets of our lives where it has no business, it fails to meet its most basic responsibilities. Our fundamental freedom from physical harm is no longer protected. Families do not dare let children out of their sight, lest they be taken and robbed, beaten, or worse. Older people and all women long ago lost the ability to move freely about the cities at night. Even by day, city streets are becoming gauntlets of burns who straddle the line between begging and mugging. The police? They will fine you for not wearing seatbelts, but when the riots came in Los Angeles, police, hesitant to act for fear of exacerbating the violence, left the law-abiding citizens to defend themselves.

"Taxes Are The Price We Pay for Civilization." So says an engraving on the IRS building in

Washington. On the contrary, today, taxes have become the price we pay to support people who deny our civilization. As government has grown, our civilization has declined. The Democratic Party wants government to grow even more, and, as witness the 1990 Bush budget agreement, leaders of the Republican Party have earned us the title of tax collectors for the welfare state.

The American people are reacting to these failures of government by trying to have as little to do with it as possible. In the most banal of matters, Federal Express, faxes, voice mail, E-mail, and telephones have long since replaced first-class mail. But are we going to be able to get away from state-organized medical care as easily as we've escaped the U.S. Post Office? People are building walls and gatehouses around residential areas. Inside, the streets are private property governed by such rules as the owners choose to make. The same goes for shopping malls, where there is, for example, no vagrancy, because the government's abolition of anti-vagrancy laws does not apply. This leads one to ask: Wouldn't it be nice if we Americans owned all the towns in which we live? Private schooling, like private policing, is gaining favor as families assume responsibility for the education of their children. Millions seek to cut taxes by taking part in the burgeoning "second economy." The IRS reports that "voluntary compliance" is down to 82 percent and dropping. But wouldn't it be nice if we were not forced to become a nation of chiselers? Private secession from rotten big governments is familiar to many Europeans and all too familiar to those who lived under Communism. But why not simply take back America's public space?

Restoring Our Country

How do we do that? Tinkering with this or that detail—"policy workmanship"—cannot make big government user-friendly. Nor will it do much good to "reinvent" government—that is to make its operations more slender and efficient. If one accepts the premise of big government, its clients will turn every reform into an excuse to grow. Nor, finally, can it do much good to make sure that big government is run by good people with the best intentions. Many of today's government employees are good people. The problem is precisely that government pays good people to do things that are inherently bad. There is no good, healthy way to run a system of entitlements, school monopolies, and national rules that pre-empt self-government. Nor is there a conservative or "responsible" or "businesslike" way to run a system that spends nearly half of GNP. Spending that much, doing

that much, has its own ruinous socialist dynamic. That is why we must cut.

Cut taxes - not mainly because they are bad for the economy, but in order to put the means of liberty back into people's hands. In the absence of war, federal taxes should take no more than about 10 percent of GNP. State and local burdens combined should probably not exceed the federal burden. In short, half of what we pay now should be the absolute maximum.

Almost as important, taxes should be simple. Special provisions in tax laws are so many tools by which the government rewards its friends and injects unfairness into our lives. A "flat tax" - equal percentages for all taxpayers, with no deductions - would avoid the current hypocrisy of nominal taxes indexed upward, while taxes after loopholes are actually indexed downward.

Stop thinking of entitlements as rights. Nowhere in the constitution does it say that anyone is "entitled" to the earnings of others. We must rid our nation of the idea of "entitlement." While government must help citizens in time of emergency, current programs, mandated by the federal government, foster dependency, not responsibility. We must revive the idea that public assistance should be local and temporary, not permanent. As federal taxes and the federal government's reach are cut, more revenues and authority can be assumed by state and local governments. Welfare can then be provided by local officials to those they recognize as needy. Also, we would make Social Security an option, not

an entitlement. It will eventually get rid of itself as people choose to invest their retirement funds in secure savings, rather than government promises.

Don't socialize medicine - privatize it. Medicare has already distorted, bureaucratized, and increased the cost of medical care. The Clinton health plan would extend the federal control of health care to all citizens, not just retirees. Instead of increasing federal taxes, bureaucracy, and power, why not allow all Americans to receive tax credits for the purchase of health insurance?

And why not give citizens the same right of choice that the Clintons now have as federal employees? They can choose from a range of competitive private insurance plans. All citizens deserve this option.

De-regulate America. Regulations on commerce should establish standards that are few, simple, and fair. Instead, regulation has become an arbitrary distortion and an engine of privilege as government agencies issue a never-ending stream of commands based only remotely on the original legislation. This can be changed by enforcing a Supreme Court decision of two generations ago (*Schechter v. U.S.*) that prohibited the delegation of Congress's legislative power. If Congress is forced to vote on the imposition of rules, they are likelier to be fewer and simpler.

End federal tyranny over state and local governments. Not only should we repeal all federal unfunded mandates on state and local governments, we should eliminate all federal "aid" except for national emergencies. The greatest burden on the states and their citizens is the financing of federal mandates. Legislators enjoy the greatest luxury in life, the ability to spend other people's money, but a corollary is the ability to require others to spend money they don't have on dubious priorities. We must impose a moratorium on such mandates. We should also pass a law, as specified by Article 3, Section 2 of the Constitution, restricting the federal court system's capacity to review decisions by state courts. This would restore flexibility that states and localities have lost, expanding diversity.

Restore personal responsibility. If we accept the notion that government is responsible for taking care of every individual need (real or imagined) and resolving every social crisis (real or created), we will not restore the civilization for which our taxes are supposed to pay. To restore personal responsibility, government must simply be gotten out of the way.

Abolish racial preferences. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 explicitly outlaws racial preferences; there is no way of making room for them

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under our Constitution without ultimately destroying it. Whether the practice in question is minority set-asides, race-norming in testing, or voting districts drawn to guarantee the election of minorities, affirmative action perverts the concept of equality and has none but evil consequences. Any government that is not strictly blind in matters of race is quite simply un-American.

Restore control of education to parents. Each level of government should simply give parents a voucher for precisely the sum of money that it spends per pupil. The parents can then spend that voucher at any school. The venom with which the Establishment is fighting this common-sense proposal should be proof enough that it is fighting for its own corrupt interests.

Curb crime. Over a century and a half ago, Tocqueville noted that crime flourished in Europe because the public there were spectators in the struggle between the criminals and the government, while in America there was little crime because criminals had to contend with an aroused and armed populace. Decent people were the government. Obviously, things have changed since then; it is time to change them back. Until that happens more and more ordinary Americans will take chances with the law by carrying weapons for the protection that the police do not provide. They should have the option of doing this lawfully – criminals, not lawful Americans, are the ones who should live in fear of life and limb.

Allow communities to set their own moral standards. The federal government cannot set moral standards, but it can step out of the way. Prayer has been banished from schools, abortion imposed, criminals empowered and lewdness has been made normal against the common sense of the country. Not even the most liberal politicians have dared do this through legislation. It has had to be done by the courts. The Supreme Court's

claim to be the final arbiter of the propriety of everything that happens in this country is ridiculous. We should begin by clipping the Court's wings, as the Constitution explicitly allows. If we do that, there won't be any need for federal laws defining lewd, obscene, or disruptive activities. People can do that all by themselves on the local level. The U.S. government must "pull back": not because of any agnosticism about what is decent, but because

the American people, as a whole, are much more decent than their government.

I do not mean to suggest that the diminution of government will cure all of America's ills. I propose however, that though not sufficient to their cure, the diminution of government is necessary.

The dominant issue of our time is whether the state will grow or be cut back. Today as the Clinton administration and a variety of interest groups together extend state control to everything from our doctors to our cars, while they force outrageous racial quotas and political correctness upon us, the American people have to tune in to Rush Limbaugh on AM radio to hear their pretentious

masters dissected and ridiculed. Where are the Republican leaders? Most of them just plain see themselves as rulers - exactly like the Democrats. Those who believe in principles now feel like outsiders. No wonder the elephant is on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

The American Idea

Our underlying problem is that the American liberal elite no longer has any faith in the American idea. As much of the world is throwing off communism and other forms of statism there is a lively debate among opinion leaders about whether any given country ought to follow the example of Singapore, Chile, or Taiwan. Few, least of all U.S. officials, suggest that America is the model for the world. And yet, ordinary people from

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above the law - cf. the recent assertion by the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, Jim Baca, that if Congress refused to enact a restriction on livestock grazing on public lands, he would "be implementing it administratively."

Unlike the visionary government of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln, we march ever closer to the administrative despotism of which Tocqueville warned:

"It covers the surface of society with a network of small complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent, guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting: such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to be nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd."

Time was when government in America meant mostly local government, but the federal judiciary, in the name of civil rights, has gone a long way toward making state and local governments into administrative subdivisions of the central government. People cannot banish porn shops or vagrants from their towns, or even set the speed limits on their states' roads. Judges have taken over school systems and dictated zoning ordinances and tax increases. They even strike down referenda approved by the whole people. Voting for local officials, then, is often meaningless because they are powerless, while voting for national officials is losing meaning because they are all running a system that is too big to control.

Much corruption comes from the ignorant and greedy hope that the government's guarantees of security mean we will get more than we have paid for. Wrong. Among the most blatantly false guarantees is President Clinton's claim that government-organized med-

ical benefits "can never be taken away." Of course they can! Throughout Europe, the government has long since taken "free" medical care away through ever-rising taxes, ever-rising user charges, and ever-lengthening waiting lines. In Canada you stand a greater chance of dying while waiting for a heart operation than you do of dying on the operating table. We should have learned our lesson from Social Security. The government now takes 15 percent of our income throughout our working lives in exchange for a promise that our benefits will "never be taken away." Then it spends the money. At retirement it gives us chicken feed, and then taxes that. How much will we have to pay to learn that government cannot create wealth, and that its attempts to guarantee benefits impoverish everyone?

But the most corrupting thing about entitlements is that when individuals look to the state to

perform functions that they or their families ought to perform, families decay and personal responsibility shrinks. Today some two in three black children and one in six white children are born out of wedlock. Not very many years ago, the illegitimacy rate among blacks was no higher than that among whites today, and that among whites was barely perceptible. These statistics should not be misconstrued, by the way; this is not a black problem, it is a systemic problem. The illegitimacy rate today in Sweden, a country with virtually no minority population but with every entitlement known to man, is almost equal to that of American blacks. The conclusions are inescapable: people, regardless of race, who are permitted by society to engage in whatever activity they choose without assuming responsibility for it, and who expect the state to perform the functions traditionally reserved for heads of households, will

see a decline in families and in civilization.

Will we go the way of Argentina? Sixty years

"People, regardless of race, who are permitted by society to engage in whatever activity they choose without assuming responsibility for it, and who expect the state to perform the functions traditionally reserved for heads of households, will see a decline in families and in civilization."

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"The Politics Stop Here"

Malcolm Wallop
Founder, Frontiers of Freedom

A former rancher, businessman, Army officer, and state legislator, Malcolm Wallop of Big Horn, Wyoming was elected to the United States Senate in 1976, in 1982, and again in 1988. He retired from public office in January of 1995 after a distinguished career as chairman of the Republican Senate Steering Committee, ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, member of the Select Committee on Intelligence, and member of the Senate Committees on Finance, the Armed Services, the Judiciary, the Environment, Public Works, and Small Business.



Currently, Mr. Wallop is involved with two projects. The first

is the Frontiers of Freedom Foundation, a non-profit organization he founded to help promote three main goals—a flat income tax, the reduction of federal regulation and bureaucracy, and the restoration of property rights. The second project, which is in development, is the Conservative Television Network (CTN). ▲

America is in danger of becoming a nation of favor-seekers and dependents, according to Malcolm Wallop. Her political leaders as well as her ordinary citizens must recover their once widely shared and deep commitment to personal responsibility and independence.

Mr. Wallop's remarks were delivered at Hillsdale's Shavano Institute for National Leadership seminar, "Taking on Big Government: Agenda for the 1990s" in Dallas on February 21, 1995.

The Politics Stop Here

Today government touches almost everything in America and harms almost everything it touches. Federal, state, and local governments together spend 42 out of every 100 dollars we earn. Those who do the taxing and spending have long since ceased to work for the people as a whole. Rather, they work for themselves and for their clients—the education industry, the welfare culture, public–employee unions, etc. Most Americans sense that our ever-rising taxes are feeding a machine hostile to our values. They ask: "Who represents us? Who's on our side?"

The Democratic Party, inescapably, represents the interests and values of those who live by the state. But as the New Republic recently pointed out, "The hegemony of the political Left in America did not begin with the Clinton Administration." In fact, Roosevelt's New Deal made the federal bureaucracy into a corps of millions who have been remaking America in accord with their material self–interest, social self–image, and collectivist ideology. Liberal government employees hire their own kind, buy schoolbooks written by their own kind, and fund hundreds of advocacy groups, endowments for the arts and humanities, and their own radio and televi-