

The Obama Agenda:

Will Washington’s Liberal Lobbies Get A ‘New Deal’ or ‘Clinton’s Third Term’?

By John Gizzi

Summary: Happy campaign supporters of President-elect Barack Obama are packing their bags and buying airline tickets for Washington, eager for change and full of hope (for jobs). But many don’t know that liberal special interest groups are already in D.C. Their leaders have been brooding and scheming for eight long years. Now they are getting ready to leave their downtown think tanks and lobby shops and move into positions at federal government departments and agencies. What do they want, and will they get their way?

As President-elect Barack Obama begins to make announcements about his Cabinet nominations, the inevitable questions are being asked: Will Obama be a Franklin D. Roosevelt issuing a blizzard of executive orders and pushing Congress to legislate “100 Days” of historic policy changes? Will he confront the financial crisis by authorizing federal agencies to take even more control over the private economy? Will he revolutionize government policies over energy management, family life, and international affairs?

Or will Obama turn out to be more like Bill Clinton, quarrelling with Democrats in Congress and governing through centrist accommodation that leaves the liberals in his party frustrated?

“I don’t know what he’s going to do,” conservative pundit Bill O’Reilly said on ABC-TV’s “Good Morning America,” when asked about the shape of an Obama administration. He might be speaking for a lot of people. Ameri-



Team Obama: Barack Obama with his presidential transition chief John Podesta of the Center for American Progress (CAP) at the CAP Action Fund/Service Employees International Union’s presidential candidates’ forum on health care in Las Vegas, March 24, 2007.

can Spectator writer Philip Klein concluded: “Obama himself has given mixed signals throughout his career—and especially during the presidential campaign—as to whether he’s a principled liberal or a slick politician who would compromise progressive ideals for short-term political gain.”

Certainly Obama’s record in politics is very

<p>December 2008</p> <p>CONTENTS</p> <p>The Obama Agenda Page 1</p> <p>Briefly Noted Page 8</p>

Organization Trends

liberal. Klein noted that in December 2003, when he was a little-known state senator preparing to run for the U.S. Senate, Obama filled out a questionnaire from the “Independent Voters of Illinois—Independent Precinct Organization,” a nonprofit liberal reform group opposed to Chicago Democratic machine politics: “Obama vowed that as U.S. Senator, he would be ‘a champion for the progressive agenda’ and boasted that he had ‘demonstrated the backbone and passion to really fight for the progressive causes, even when the political winds are blowing in the other direction.’”

But Klein then ticked off complaints by left-of-center Democrats about Obama since he became a presidential candidate: He has cooled his rhetorical attacks on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); softened his demand for a 16-month timetable for withdrawing troops from Iraq; and supported the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which the Bush administration wanted to protect telecommunications companies that helped with government wiretapping of suspected terrorists. Last February, Obama even said the Second Amendment’s right to bear arms applied to individuals, not state militias.

“Barack Obama is not a progressive by

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“Barack Obama is not a progressive by any means,” according to Tim Carpenter of the Progressive Democrats of America, shown above with effigies of Vice President Dick Cheney and President George W. Bush.

any means,” said Tim Carpenter, national director of the Progressive Democrats of America, a left-wing group whose board includes Code Pink leaders Medea Benjamin and Jodi Evans, Students for a Democratic Society founder Tom Hayden, Representatives Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), and John Conyers (D-Mich.).

Some labor leaders also have voiced skepticism about an Obama presidency, although most now claim to be enthusiastic about his election. The suspicion that Obama did not understand the white working class is said to have been at the root of union endorsements of Hillary Clinton by Gerald McEntee, president of AFSCME, the public employees union whose 1.5 million members make it the largest union in the AFL-CIO.

Obama’s increasing reliance for economic advice on former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and other old Clinton hands also worries his supporters in organized labor. They believe that Rubin and company put far more emphasis on helping corporate America than on helping workers in the 1990s. When Obama had wrapped up the Democratic nomination and tapped close Rubin associate Jason Furman as his top economic adviser, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney was upset, telling reporters: “For years, we’ve expressed strong concerns about

corporate influence in the Democratic Party.” Added Sweeney, “our country’s economic policies have become so dominated by the Wall Street agenda—and that it is causing working families real pain—[and that] is a top issue we will be raising with Senator Obama.”

They Never Leave: Washington’s Liberal Lobbies

They say the invention of air-conditioning is responsible for the permanent government in Washington, D.C. Lawyers, lobbyists, bureaucrats and the news media never leave town. Certainly FDR didn’t worry much about liberal interest groups tracking his every move when he took office in 1933. Even Bill Clinton could evade constant scrutiny 60 years later. But in 2009 radical labor unions like SEIU and AFSCME and left-of-center groups ranging from Planned Parenthood and NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League) to MoveOn.org and the ACLU will be monitoring the new administration’s every move. The blogosphere and cable news will comment on the administration’s actions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Obama’s credibility from now on will depend on what everyone says about what he and his appointees do and say.

Obama’s first major appointment was Illinois congressman Rahm Emmanuel to be White

House chief of staff. With the selection of the profane, aggressive and partisan Democrat who represents Chicago's northwest side 5th district, the betting is strong that the new administration will move quickly to issue new executive orders reversing controversial executive orders George W. Bush issued eight years ago. These actions, commencing on January 20, will throw "red meat" to "progressive" Democrats.

Obama transition advisers have told the Washington Post the orders will "reverse White House policies on climate change, stem cell research, reproductive rights, and other issues." In August 2001, President Bush signed an executive order limiting federal funding of stem cell research. If Obama reverses this decision, issuing his own executive order mandating greater funding for stem cell research, he will placate abortion rights groups as well as scientific groups and bio-science companies that want federal funding for their research.

In addition, Obama is expected to rescind existing restrictions on U.S.-funded nonprofit international family planning groups that are legally prevented from counseling pregnant women about abortion. These restrictions—called the Mexico City Doctrine by right-to-life groups and the Global Gag rule by pro-abortion groups—were put in place by the Reagan administration, rescinded by Bill Clinton, and then restored by Bush.

Obama has said he plans to reverse the Bush administration's decision to deny California's authority to regulate carbon dioxide emissions. This is expected to be the forerunner of a new and far greater emphasis on climate change regulation. The Center for American Progress (CAP), the liberal think tank headed by Clinton White House chief of staff John Podesta, is expected to have tremendous influence with President Obama on issues such as the environment.

It's been announced that Podesta will co-chair the overall Obama transition team. Melody Barnes, CAP's executive vice president for policy, will co-chair the transition team that reviews the work of federal agencies. Barnes was former chief counsel to Sen. Edward Kennedy on the Senate Judiciary Committee. She will work with Lisa Brown, a former counsel to Vice President Al Gore

and executive director of the American Constitution Society, a lawyers' group that is the liberal counterpart to the conservative Federalist Society, and Don Gips, another former Gore adviser. (Announcements regarding the transition team and political appointments appear on www.change.gov, the website of the Obama transition team. Click on the "Learn" tab.)

In addition, CAP has announced publication of *Change for America: A Progressive Blueprint for the 44th President*, a 704-page book of policy recommendation modeled



AFL-CIO president John Sweeney

on The Heritage Foundation's 1980 book *Mandate for Leadership*. By offering specific timetables, suggestions for departmental reorganization, proposals for changes in law and budget requests, the book aims to be bedside reading for new Obama appointees to federal agencies, offering them a roadmap of things to do.

CAP's blueprint for the Obama environmental agenda includes empowering the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing federal cooperation with state-level climate-change programs, and fresh legislation providing the economy-destroying "cap and trade" plan for emissions control nationwide.

Two "red meat" issues can't be fixed by executive order but will take acts of Congress. They are restoration of the Fairness

Doctrine to require more time for "diverse" views on controversial opinions aired on the radio, and the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), whose "card check" provision will effectively end the secret ballot in union elections. EFCA is inarguably the premier cause before Congress for organized labor. "The top legislative priority" is how Bill Samuel, director of government affairs for the AFL-CIO, characterizes the measure.

In 1987 the Reagan administration scrapped the Fairness Doctrine, a 1949 FCC rule that required holders of broadcast licenses to be

balanced in presenting controversial opinions. Reagan FCC chairman Mark Fowler argued that the rule violated free speech rights under the First Amendment. But lately liberal Democrats have concluded that a revival of the Fairness Doctrine will serve their interests by discouraging radio station owners from allowing Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, and other mighty conservative voices from dominating the talk radio airwaves.

Earlier this year, at a press breakfast hosted by the Christian Science Monitor, I asked Speaker Pelosi about the Fairness Doctrine and Rep. Mike Pence's (R-Ind.) bill to outlaw it altogether. Pelosi replied that the sentiment "in our conference is in the opposite direction" and that Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.) had offered a bill to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine. When I then asked the Speaker if she supported revival of the Fairness Doc-

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trine, she replied without hesitation: “Yes.” (Human Events, June 25, 2008)

The National Association of Broadcasters, the trade organization that represents radio and television stations, opposes what’s been called the “Hush Rush” rule. But liberal groups like the Media Access Project and Media Matters for America have supported proposals like Rep. Maurice Hinchey’s (D-N.Y.) proposed Media Ownership Reform Act to limit corporate ownership of broadcast stations and reinstate the Fairness Doctrine.

As for the misnamed Employee Free Choice Act, it is highly unlikely that Obama will cross either Speaker Pelosi or AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, who will press for early passage of “card check” legislation. If passed, it appears a safe bet that the president will sign it into law. (See this month’s *Labor Watch* for a survey of labor’s wish list for the new administration.)

The Social Issues

Conservatives who focus on social and cultural issues worry about what Obama can and will do to reverse the advantages they gained on their issues during the Bush years.

“A ‘Freedom of Choice Act’ nullifying all state restrictions on abortions will be enacted,” predicts nationally-syndicated columnist Pat Buchanan. “America will become the most pro-abortion nation on earth.” Buchanan also predicts “special protections for gays will be written into all civil rights laws,” and that “homosexual marriages state judges have forced California, Massachusetts, and Connecticut to recognize, an Obama Congress or Obama court will require all 50 states to recognize.” Buchanan adds, “hiring and promotions based on race, sex, and sexual orientation until specified quotas are reached—will be rigorously enforced throughout the U.S. government and private sector.”

Paul Weyrich, chairman of the Free Congress Foundation, agrees. But his primary concern is over Obama appointments of federal judges and Supreme Court justices “who exercise a fluid, amorphous view of the Constitution, treating it as a flexible document upon which new interpretations can be imposed and in which new Constitutional rights can be found.”

Among those mentioned as possible Obama appointees to fill future vacancies on the Supreme Court are U.S. court of appeals judge Sonia Sotomayor, whose 1997 nomination to the second circuit sparked intense conservative opposition, and Elena Kagan, the first female dean of Harvard Law School. In 1999, President Clinton tried to name then associate White House counsel Kagan to the D.C. Court of Appeals but the nomination died in the Republican-controlled Senate Judiciary Committee. Both Sotomayor and Kagan are likely to have all-out backing from the U.S. Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and

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JAMES DELLINGER

Introduction by **Terrence Scanlon**
President, Capital Research Center

Understanding the Nonprofit World

Capital Research Center's new *Guide to Nonprofit Advocacy* surveys more than 100 key nonprofit public interest and advocacy organizations shaping U.S. politics and society today. Although the law prohibits 501(c)(3) nonprofits from lobbying and political spending, this year nonprofits are working aggressively through 501(c)(4) and 527 affiliates and umbrella groups to pass laws and elect candidates.

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the Alliance for Justice, the two groups that led the charge against Republican Supreme Court nominees from Robert Bork in 1987 to Samuel Alito in 2005. The Alliance for Justice, headed by veteran activist Nan Aron, notes that the Obama administration can fill 15 federal appeals court and 36 district court vacancies beginning on Jan. 20, 2009.

In trumpeting Obama's victory in November, People for the American Way recalled how he said "what makes a great Supreme Court justice...it's their conception of the Court. And part of the role of the Court is that it is going to protect people who may be vulnerable in the political process: the outsider, the minority, those who are vulnerable, those who don't have a lot of clout." The election of 2008, according to PFAW, "delivered a sweeping mandate for President-elect Obama to appoint federal judges who are committed to core constitutional values: justice, equality, and opportunity for all.. In the election, the public rejected the efforts of the right wing to stack the federal courts with ideological jurists like Justices Scalia and Alito often called 'strict constructionists.'"

It's The Economy, Stupid

During the campaign Obama successfully stole Republican rhetoric by calling for a middle-class tax cut and relief for beleaguered homeowners. He also endorsed proposals to give the federal government the power to renegotiate "underwater" mortgages with lenders and put a 90-day moratorium on foreclosures.

The far-left United for a Fair Economy was surprisingly lukewarm to Obama's tax plans, concluding his proposals don't go far enough in closing corporate loopholes and ending tax breaks for companies that move jobs overseas. "Obama does a bit better [than McCain]."

The economy offers any Democrat the greatest opportunity to take actions that at least appear to be bold and decisive. At his first post-election press conference, Obama gathered around him a team of economic advisers, ranging from czars of administrations past (Clinton's former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and Carter-appointed Federal Reserve Board chairman Paul Volcker) to business titans (Warren Buffett, Google CEO Eric Schmidt, Penny Pritzker of the Hyatt



Rep. Maurice Hinchey's proposed Media Ownership Reform Act would limit corporate ownership of broadcast stations and reinstate the Fairness Doctrine. Hinchey (right) is shown here with leftist commentator Bill Moyers (left) in 2005.

hotel family). While Obama made it clear that reviving the economy was a priority concern, he remained vague about what he would do, insisting that "We have only one president at a time."

Yet weeks before he takes office, Obama is lobbying for another "stimulus package" (a.k.a. economic bail-out) with an unknown price tag. Special interest lobbies are in a feeding frenzy demanding to be included.

The "Big Three" auto companies are most anxious for a full-blown federal rescue, and they are supported by the United Auto Workers, a key component in organized labor. Rust-belt area politicians argue that the federal government must protect the automakers, with one out of every 10 jobs in the U.S. dependent in some way on the auto industry.

"How much are we giving AIG? \$150 billion? And we're talking about \$25 billion for what has been the major industry of this country," Rep. Sander Levin (D-Mich.), a major voice for the auto industry in Congress, fumed to reporters, "If there's a will, there's a way.

Leftist groups argue that the Bush administration's bailout bill mainly helps the very companies responsible for the mortgage crisis. Jesse Jackson and the NAACP's Julian Bond want help for minorities and the poor. Bill Scher of the left-wing Campaign for America's Future advises the incoming administration to "prioritize massive public investment to get the economy back on track and de-prioritize short-term deficit reduction."

Already, the United Auto Workers has launched an all-out campaign in favor of the bailout. "Tell Congress: Save Autoworker Jobs!" blares an e-mail from the UAW to its Members. The e-mail urged members to call lawmakers and ask them to vote for loans "to prevent the liquidation of these companies and devastating consequences for millions of workers and retirees for our entire economy."

A host of groups will pressure an Obama administration for more "public investment" to stimulate the economy. Cities, construction companies and transportation planning firms are demanding investment in "infrastructure." During the campaign Obama endorsed

Organization Trends

a proposal to create a National Infrastructure Bank, an idea promoted by, guess who?—the American Society of Civil Engineers. Environmental groups say alternative energy development will simultaneously stimulate the economy *and* reduce global warming. The research group New Energy Finance argues that green energy is “a 21st century infrastructure play.” The AFL-CIO and its member unions say government job retraining programs will revive consumer spending and the economy by putting Americans back to work.

Conservative economists like Heritage Foundation budget analyst Brian Riedl respond that all these proposals focus on the demand side of the economy. But every dollar spent by the federal government is a dollar taken from the private sector. If \$1 trillion in deficit financing—the cost of the current Bush bailouts—hasn’t revived the economy, Riedl thinks further government stimulus bills are unlikely to do so. Indeed, some economists warn that government “stimulus” subsidies typically kick in too late and stay too long. They may retard recovery and inflate a “deficit bubble” waiting to pop.

“We have to be mindful of the deficit,” John J. Castellani, president of the Business Roundtable told Business Week recently. “What worries business especially is Obama’s populist campaign rhetoric, which often becomes stridently anti-corporate in tone. Given the Democrats’ resounding victory, the business community can easily imagine a scenario in which a Democratic Congress lets its zeal for reform go too far,” writes reporter Jane Sasseen.

...And Trade, Too!

Barack Obama’s announced positions on trade draw some of his best reviews from organized labor—and the biggest worries from the business community.

The unions have always argued that the 15-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and Mexico was costing American jobs while it let companies in Canada and Mexico exploit their own workers. Early in the campaign, Obama delighted the unions when he railed against NAFTA and called for it to be renegotiated. But Obama economic advisor Austan Goolsbee caused an uproar when he

allegedly told Canadian officials to regard Obama’s statements on trade before the Ohio primary as just campaign rhetoric. After Obama secured the Democratic nomination, he lowered and all but phased-out his anti-NAFTA rhetoric. Should it become clear that a President Obama will not try to upend or renegotiate NAFTA expect howls of outrage from groups like Joan Claybrook’s Public Citizen. The group, founded by Ralph Nader, has a watchdog website, www.becoming44.org, which is tracking the political appointments of the nation’s 44th president from a left-wing perspective.

However, it is also considered unlikely that an Obama administration will revive bilateral trade agreements with South Korea and Colombia. Both died in Congress last year, victims of strident opposition from labor leaders and Speaker Pelosi who claim workers are mistreated in those countries; that their environmental laws are weakly enforced; and that American companies don’t get adequate business access to those countries.

Clearly, the Obama administration cannot afford to take a hard-line protectionist stand. It is likely to take a middle path: offering tax breaks for domestic manufacturers, raising tariffs on foreign goods in selected industries, and compensating workers who lose their job as a result of foreign exports,

How Universal Will Health Care Be?

After the economy, health care is the issue that was most crucial to Obama’s big win in November. The Democratic hopeful sounded the call for universal health care. His plan is not that different from Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney’s state program. Like Romney’s plan, Obama’s covers the uninsured by putting the burden for coverage on employers. He has claimed an average of \$2,500 could be cut from individual premiums.

Noting that the percentage of Massachusetts’ uninsured is in single digits while nationwide it exceeds 40 million, one health care expert dubbed Obama’s vision of health care “Romney Heavy.”

Pushing Obama’s vision are major pillars of the liberal establishment: the Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, Families USA, the Center for American Pro-

gress, and the Progressive Policy Institute.

After the election, Families USA, put a petition on its website “urging President-elect Obama to make health care reform a priority so every American has affordable, high quality health insurance—no matter what job you have or if you have a pre-existing condition.” Like Bill and Hillary Clinton, Obama has ties to Families USA and has addressed the group. After the election, the group held a health care forum in which Michael Myers, staff director for the Senate, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee declared: “With the Obama victory, the question is no longer whether we’ll pursue comprehensive healthcare reform, but when and in what form.”

Democratic Senators Max Baucus (Mont.) and Edward Kennedy (Mass.) are now offering their own versions of universal health care. Dr. Merrill Matthews, Jr., director of the Council for Affordable Health Insurance, predicts that “Obama does not have to be specific. He can just step back and let Baucus and Kennedy work out the details.”

What Kind of World Leader?

As a candidate for president, Barack Obama made an unprecedented international tour, getting a near-endorsement in Paris from French president Nicolas Sarkozy, addressing throngs at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, and meeting as if he were already president with British prime minister Gordon Brown and Conservative Party leader David Cameron.

However, John McCain’s efforts to force a debate on Obama’s announced foreign policy positions—his increasingly qualified commitment on withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq, his promise to wage the war on terror in Afghanistan, vague talk of back-channel dealings with Iran and a harder line in Pakistan—were frustrated by the financial cataclysm in October, which gave Obama a “pass” on spelling out the details of his views. But as vice president-elect Joe Biden predicted during the campaign, Obama was quickly challenged by a hostile foreign leader. One day after the November 4 election, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev vowed to deploy missiles along his westernmost border in reaction to the Bush administration’s U.S. missile defense plan to protect Poland and

the Czech Republic. How will Obama, who has been critical of missile defense, respond to Russian saber-rattling? And will he make good on his pledge to increase the U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan?

National security groups worry about the major role that grassroots anti-war groups like MoveOn.org played in helping secure Obama's nomination over Hillary Clinton. In contrast to Clinton, who defended her vote for the Iraq war resolution, Obama denounced the war. He even declined to vote on a Senate resolution condemning MoveOn.org for its advertisements proclaiming General David Petraeus "General Betray Us." Now MoveOn is celebrating its victory.

But Obama's strongest supporters may be disappointed. On the day he was elected, Washington Post columnist Anne Applebaum (whose husband, Radek Sikorski, is Poland's foreign minister) warned readers against confusing Obama's campaign positions with his governing policies: "A President Obama would not be able to end the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, he would not be able to make the stock exchanges rise, and he would not be able to halt the recession right way. And that's only the short term disappointment. In the long term, foreigners, along with the American voters, will also discover that America is not about to give up on global capitalism and start "redistributing" the nation's wealth to others. Kenyans in particular will be disappointed."

One thing is clear: the Obama administration will have far more convivial relations than its predecessor with international organizations such as the United Nations. Congratulating Obama on his election, William H. Luers, president of the United Nations Association of the USA, recalled how the Illinois senator had written UNA-USA Board Member Josh Weston on June 24, 2008 promising "bold and effective leadership to reinvigorate the UN so it finally achieves the potential that Roosevelt envisioned." Luers vowed that his organization "has full confidence that [Obama] will bring about the progress and renewal the world organization deserves."

What Next?

On an election night panel hosted by the BBC's World Service, I was asked to comment on Barack Obama's foreign policy



Bill Scher of the Campaign for America's Future wants the incoming administration to spend, spend, spend.

leadership, particularly with regard to Africa. I responded that I believed he would pick up from where George W. Bush left off. Despite Bill Clinton's belated efforts to claim an interest in Africa, Bush has been more involved in Africa than any U.S. president.

Obama, I said, could be the president who picked up the phone and told Zimbabwe's corrupt strongman ruler Robert Mugabe that there was a U.S. plane waiting to fly him into exile, that he could keep his Swiss bank accounts, and that on the way out he should turn over the government to the genuine winner of the rigged 2008 presidential election, Morgan Tsvangirai.

The following day, I spoke to a BBC colleague who had covered both Obama and French president Nicolas Sarkozy. He disagreed. "If it was Sarkozy, I would agree with you," my colleague said, "Sarkozy does the bold and dramatic, like working to free Bulgarian medical workers in Libya or getting involved in a big way in the clash between Russia and Georgia. But Obama is not Sarkozy. He pulls back when something is too hot to handle or is going to cause him trouble. He is guarded, cautious, and careful."

My colleague may be right. Obama did tone down his anti-NAFTA rhetoric, created "wiggle room" on his 16-month timetable to pull troops out of Iraq, and (so far) has said little in detail about his plans for universal health care. Then again, candidate Franklin Roosevelt was similarly vague about his plans. But as president, he initiated a flurry

of government activism that, without an overall plan, became the New Deal.

It's difficult to recall now that Bill Clinton had an aggressive agenda favored by the Democratic Party's liberal interest groups: a record-high tax increase, universal health care putting one-seventh of the economy under government control, a federal crime control bill that included gun control, and gays in the military. But Clinton paid dearly for his mistakes in the 1994 mid-term elections as Democrats lost control of both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years.

How Barack Obama deals with Washington's entrenched liberal special interests will determine whether he governs as a left-wing progressive or moves to the center. And how those special interests deal with him will affect his success as president.

John Gizzi is the political editor for Human Events, a weekly Washington news journal.

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Briefly Noted

After a Senate probe found evidence of deceptive marketing, **AARP** (American Association of Retired Persons) and **UnitedHealth Group** have voluntarily suspended sales of several of their health insurance packages and brought in an independent investigator to examine the packages, the New York Times reports. Sen. **Charles E. Grassley** (R-Iowa) criticized the marketing of the insurance as misleading. “There’s no basic coverage of high medical costs. The products may leave consumers seriously in debt if they need intensive medical care.”

An old, incredibly solicitous letter on the website of Rep. **Barney Frank** (D-Mass.) again highlights how many powerful friends liberal philanthropist **George Soros** has in Washington. The Sept. 7, 2004, letter states that the signers have been “been particularly troubled by the McCarthyite attacks...on you by some American politicians.” Soros is, of course, the same practitioner of civil discourse who compared the Bush administration to the Nazis. Soros also implied that President **George W. Bush** is responsible for killing “thousands of innocent civilians,” and funded the sham study that vastly overstated casualties in Iraq. The letter is signed by Frank and others including Rep. **Rahm Emanuel** (D-Ill.), whom President-elect **Barack Obama** has selected to be his White House chief of staff.

Although Soros didn’t make the New Republic’s “O List,” two individuals associated with his Democracy Alliance, the secretive liberal billionaires’ club, did. The O List is the liberal magazine’s assessment of “the 30 people who matter most in Obama’s Washington.” The two are **John Podesta**, president of the **Center for American Progress** (CAP), and **Andy Stern**, president of the **Service Employees International Union** (SEIU). Podesta, who is the president-elect’s transition chief, does not appear to be a member of the Democracy Alliance but works with it, and SEIU is an institutional member. CAP was profiled in *Organization Trends*, May 2007.

The Supreme Court has ruled 5-4 in favor of the Navy being allowed to use high intensity sonar in war games. The **Natural Resources Defense Council** had sued the Navy to block this practice, arguing that the sonar was dangerous for whales and dolphins. The Navy argued that this was a matter of national security and that the war games should be allowed to continue unhindered.

Competitive Enterprise Institute’s Christopher Horner has a new book with a self-explanatory title: *Red Hot Lies: How Global Warming Alarmists Use Threats, Fraud, and Deception to Keep You Misinformed*. It was published by Regnery last month. Horner’s book, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Global Warming (and Environmentalism)*, was published last year.

Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice **Ruth McGregor** distributed a letter from the state’s **Hispanic Bar Association** to other judges and judicial employees demanding that the terms “illegal” and “aliens” not be used in state courtrooms. McGregor acknowledged in a response to the letter that the terms are “derogatory” but did not direct judges and court staff to prohibit their use. Judicial Watch president **Thomas Fitton** says McGregor’s decision to circulate the letter is tantamount to a ban. The association also wants to ban the terms “immigration crisis,” “open borders advocates,” and “anchor babies.”

After serving as chairman of the **NAACP** since 1998, **Julian Bond** announced he will not seek another term. It is time to “let a new generation of leaders” take over the group, he said. His current term runs out in February. Bond intends to remain a board member.