

December 5, 2011

Perhaps this election will have a brush with "Who lost Egypt?" [Mark Steyn](#) has the story.

*... The short 90-year history of independent Egypt is that it got worse. Mubarak's Egypt was worse than King Farouk's Egypt, and what follows from last week's vote will be worse still. If you're a Westernized urban woman, a Coptic Christian or an Israeli diplomat with the goons pounding the doors of your embassy, you already know that. The Kingdom of Egypt in the three decades before the 1952 coup was flawed and ramshackle and corrupt, but it was closer to a free-ish pluralist society than anything in the years since. In 1923, its Finance Minister was a man called Joseph Cattai, a Member of Parliament, and a Jew. Couldn't happen today. Mr. Cattai's grandson wrote to me recently from France, where the family now lives. In the unlikely event the forthcoming Muslim Brotherhood government wish to appoint a Jew as Finance Minister, there are very few left available. Indeed, Jews are so thin on the ground that those youthful idealists in Tahrir Square looking for Jews to club to a pulp have been forced to make do with sexually assaulting hapless gentiles like the CBS News reporter Lara Logan. It doesn't fit the narrative, so even Miss Logan's network colleagues preferred to look away. We have got used to the fact that Egypt is now a land without Jews. Soon it will be a land without Copts. We'll get used to that, too.*

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Writing in [Hot Air](#), [Tina Korbe](#) posts on the Cooperman open letter to the president.  
Dear Mr. President,

*It is with a great sense of disappointment that I write this. Like many others, I hoped that your election would bring a salutary change of direction to the country, despite what more than a few feared was an overly aggressive social agenda. And I cannot credibly blame you for the economic mess that you inherited, even if the policy response on your watch has been profligate and largely ineffectual. (You did not, after all, invent TARP.) I understand that when surrounded by cries of "the end of the world as we know it is nigh", even the strongest of minds may have a tendency to shoot first and aim later in a well-intended effort to stave off the predicted apocalypse.*

*But what I can justifiably hold you accountable for is you and your minions' role in setting the tenor of the rancorous debate now roiling us that smacks of what so many have characterized as "class warfare". Whether this reflects your principled belief that the eternal divide between the haves and have-nots is at the root of all the evils that afflict our society or just a cynical, populist appeal to his base by a president struggling in the polls is of little importance. What does matter*

*is that the divisive, polarizing tone of your rhetoric is cleaving a widening gulf, at this point as much visceral as philosophical, between the downtrodden and those best positioned to help them. It is a gulf that is at once counterproductive and freighted with dangerous historical precedents.*

**Jennifer Rubin** asks if Gingrich was a lobbyist.

*Mitt Romney has finally begun to engage Newt Gingrich. Yesterday, he went after Gingrich, if not by name, by [attacking him](#) as a creature of Washington. The timing couldn't have been better for Romney.*

*Today, the [New York Times](#) has a front-page piece documenting Gingrich's activities, which by any reasonable person's definition, constitute lobbying. This brings into focus the hypocrisy that is at the core of Gingrich's personality. His view of himself (Churchillian, "transformational," "historian") doesn't match his own track record, which is a history of milking the Washington lobbyist-legislator connection for great personal wealth.*

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Similar commentary from Contentions' **Jonathan Tobin**.

*In the years between his stepping down as Speaker of the House and running for the presidency, Newt Gingrich became a wealthy man. While no one I am aware of has alleged that he did anything illegal or even improper in amassing his fortune, as a [feature](#) in today's New York Times makes clear, his attempt to portray his Center for Health Transformation as a think tank rather than a lobbying firm is somewhat disingenuous.*

*Gingrich was not registered as a lobbyist, and his work on behalf of the Center's "members" — companies that paid up to \$200,000 to belong to the group in exchange for access to Gingrich and for his help in promoting their efforts — did not conform to the legal definition of lobbying in that he did not specifically write bills or advocate on behalf of legislation that would benefit his clients. But as the article makes clear, much of what he did do appears to be indistinguishable from the sort of tasks lobbyists routinely perform. ...*

**Streetwise Professor** highlights the irony of Russians once again aligned with the American left.

*... Hence, it is doing what comes naturally to Sovoks: propaganda. It is pulling out all the stops to discredit shale and fracking, not just in Europe, but elsewhere. The next time you hear anti-fracking flacking, it's fair to ask who's paying for it. No, not all the opposition is from Gazprom: some is from the well-intentioned, some from those who reflexively oppose any kind of energy*

*production. But knowing the way Gazprom works, no doubt some Gazprom money is funding anti-fracking lobbying, politicking, and information campaigns*

*But the enviro angle is really just too much. Sorry, but lectures on environmentalism from the direct descendent of the Soviet Ministry of Gas (the USSR being history's largest environmental catastrophe), and a company with a pretty poor environmental record to boot (witness the huge problems with leakage from Gazprom pipelines), are enough to challenge the strongest gag reflex.*

*But the fact that the company feels compelled to engage in such risible hypocrisy is actually encouraging news. The more Gazprom execs squeal about shale, the more you know that it is a threat to them.*

*So yet again: Gazprom gripes—music to my ears.*

True to form, the federal government has slowed down fracking, this time in Ohio. [Seth Mandel](#) who is running for the Ohio Senate seat writes for WSJ.

*On the same day two weeks ago, Ohioans saw the following diverging headlines:*

*In the Cleveland Plain Dealer: "Republic Steel to add 450 jobs to Lorain as oil and gas exploration booms." This story reported Republic Steel's announcement of new jobs in one of Ohio's hardest-hit counties, to manufacture products in support of the state's growing oil and gas industry.*

*In the Marion Star: "Ohio national forest halts sale of drilling rights." This story reported the U.S. Department of Agriculture's decision to suspend the auction of leases for oil and gas drilling on more than 3,000 acres of federal land in the most economically depressed region of Ohio.*

*You might be asking yourself: Why would Washington block drilling in Ohio at the same time that Ohio manufacturers are adding jobs to support the state's growing oil and gas exploration? Thousands of middle-class families and out-of-work Ohioans are asking that same question. ...*

[Tony Blankley](#) reviews a new China book.

*A just-released book, "[Bowling to Beijing](#)" by [Brett M. Decker](#) and [William C. Triplett II](#), will change forever the way you think about [China](#) - even if, like me, you already have the deepest worries about the Chinese threat. As I opened the book, I was expecting to find many useful examples of [Chinese military](#) and industrial efforts to get the better of the United States and the West.*

*Indeed, there are 100 pages of examples of the most remorseless Chinese successes at stealing the [military](#) and industrial secrets of the West and converting them into a growing menace - soon to be a leviathan - bent on domination and defeat of America. The authors itemize the sheer unprecedented magnitude of this effort. But the opening chapters deal with human rights abuses, and my first thought as I started reading was that I wanted to get right to the [military](#) and industrial examples.*

*But the authors were right to lead with 50 pages itemizing in grisly detail Chinese human rights abuses - for the profound reason that after reading those first 50 pages, the reader will be impassioned to resist Chinese domination not only on behalf of American interests, but for the sake of humanity.*

*Many people think America is in decline and mentally acquiesce to the thought that the rise of [China](#) is inevitable. Those 50 pages will stiffen your resolve to be part of the struggle never to let such a malignancy spread to the rest of the world - let alone to America. One of the authors, [Brett M. Decker](#), is a friend - and I have never been more proud of his (and his co-author's) accomplishment of providing such a deep moral vision in this carefully factual book. ...*

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## **Orange County Register** **[Arab Spring turning chilly for U.S.](#)** by Mark Steyn

I've been alarmed by the latest polls. No, not from Iowa and New Hampshire, although they're unnerving enough. It's the polls from Egypt. Foreign policy has not played a part in the U.S. presidential campaign, mainly because we're so broke that the electorate seems minded to take the view that if government is going to throw trillions of dollars down the toilet they'd rather it was an Al Gore-compliant Kohler model in Des Moines or Poughkeepsie than an outhouse in Waziristan. Alas, reality does not arrange its affairs quite so neatly, and the world that is arising in the second decade of the 21st century is increasingly inimical to American interests, and likely to prove even more expensive to boot.

In that sense, Egypt is instructive. Even in the giddy live-from-Tahrir-Square heyday of the "Arab Spring" and "Facebook Revolution," I was something of a skeptic. Back in February, I chanced to be on Fox News with Megyn Kelly within an hour or so of Mubarak's resignation. Over on CNN, Anderson Cooper was interviewing telegenic youthful idealists cooing about the flowering of a new democratic Egypt. Back on Fox, sourpuss Steyn was telling Megyn that this was "the unraveling of the American Middle East" and the emergence of a post-Western order in the region. In those days, I was so much of a pessimist I thought that in any election the Muslim Brotherhood would get a third of the votes and be the largest party in parliament. By the time the actual first results came through last week, the Brothers had racked up 40 percent of the vote – in Cairo and Alexandria, the big cities wherein, insofar as they exist, the secular Facebooking Anderson Cooper types reside. In second place were their principal rivals the Nour party, with up to 15 percent of the ballots. "Nour" translates into English as "the Even More Muslim Brotherhood."

As the writer Barry Rubin pointed out, if that's how the urban sophisticates vote, wait till you see the upcountry results. By the time the rural vote emerges from the Nile Delta and Sinai early next month, the hard-core Islamists will be sitting pretty. In the so-called "Facebook Revolution,"

two-thirds of the Arab world's largest nation is voting for the hard, cruel, bigoted, misogynistic song of Shariah.

The short 90-year history of independent Egypt is that it got worse. Mubarak's Egypt was worse than King Farouk's Egypt, and what follows from last week's vote will be worse still. If you're a Westernized urban woman, a Coptic Christian or an Israeli diplomat with the goons pounding the doors of your embassy, you already know that. The Kingdom of Egypt in the three decades before the 1952 coup was flawed and ramshackle and corrupt, but it was closer to a free-ish pluralist society than anything in the years since. In 1923, its Finance Minister was a man called Joseph Cattai, a Member of Parliament, and a Jew. Couldn't happen today. Mr. Cattai's grandson wrote to me recently from France, where the family now lives. In the unlikely event the forthcoming Muslim Brotherhood government wish to appoint a Jew as Finance Minister, there are very few left available. Indeed, Jews are so thin on the ground that those youthful idealists in Tahrir Square looking for Jews to club to a pulp have been forced to make do with sexually assaulting hapless gentiles like the CBS News reporter Lara Logan. It doesn't fit the narrative, so even Miss Logan's network colleagues preferred to look away. We have got used to the fact that Egypt is now a land without Jews. Soon it will be a land without Copts. We'll get used to that, too.

Since the collapse of the Warsaw Pact two decades ago we have lived in a supposedly "unipolar" world. Yet somehow it doesn't seem like that, does it? The term Facebook Revolution presumes that technology marches in the cause of modernity. But in Khartoum a few years ago a citywide panic that shaking hands with infidels caused your penis to vanish was spread by text messaging. In London, young Muslim men used their cell phones to share Islamist snuff videos of Westerners being beheaded in Iraq. In *les banlieues* of France, satellite TV and the Internet enable third-generation Muslims to lead ever more dis-assimilated, segregated lives, immersed in an electronic pan-Islamic culture, to a degree that would have been impossible for their grandparents. To assume that Western technology in and of itself advances the cause of Western views on liberty or women's rights or gay rights is delusional.

Consider, for example, the "good" news from Afghanistan. A 19-year-old woman sentenced to 12 years in jail for the heinous crime of being brutally raped by a cousin was graciously released by President Karzai on condition that she marry her rapist. A few weeks ago, you may recall, I mentioned that the last Christian church in the nation had been razed to the ground last year, as the State Department noted in its report on "international" religious freedom. But Afghanistan is not "international" at all. It is an American client state whose repugnant leader is kept alive only by the protection of Western arms. Say what you like about Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood but at least their barbarous theocratic tyranny doesn't require vast numbers of NATO troops to build it.

I am not a Ron Paul isolationist. The United States has two reasonably benign neighbors, and the result is that 50 percent of Mexico's population has moved north of the border and 100 percent of every bad Canadian idea, from multiculturalism to government health care, has moved south of the border. So much for Fortress America. The idea of a 19th century isolationist republic holding the entire planet at bay is absurd. Indeed, even in the real 19th century, it was only possible because global order was maintained by the Royal Navy and Pax Britannica. If Ron Paul gets his way, who's going to pick up the slack for global order this time?

Nevertheless, my friends on the right currently fretting about potentially drastic cuts at the Pentagon need to look at that poor 19-year-old woman's wedding to her cousin rapist and ponder what it represents: In Afghanistan, the problem is not that we have spent insufficient



money but that so much of it has been entirely wasted. History will be devastating in its indictment of us for our squandering of the "unipolar" moment. During those two decades, a China flush with American dollars has gobbled up global resources, a re-assertive Islam has used American military protection to advance its theocratic ambitions, the Mullahs in Tehran are going nuclear, knowing we lack the will to stop them, and even Russia is back in the game of geopolitical mischief-making. We are responsible for 43 percent of the planet's military spending. But if you spend on that scale without any strategic clarity or hardheaded calculation of your national interest, it is ultimately as decadent and useless as throwing money at Solyndra or Obamacare or any of the other domestic follies. A post-prosperity America will mean perforce a shrunken presence on the global stage. And we will not like the world we leave behind.

## Hot Air

### [Legendary investor to Obama: Is all this class warfare rhetoric really necessary?](#)

by Tina Korbe

Whew. I haven't read a letter this profoundly accurate since I read [Ali Akbar's Tea Party invitation to Morgan Freeman](#).

In New York City, Leon Cooperman is a legend, the quintessential self-made man. His parents were Polish immigrants, his father a humble, hard-working plumber. Cooperman became the first in his family to attend college — and, when he started work at Goldman Sachs, fresh out of business school at Columbia University, he had no money in the bank. He worked his way up to eventually run Goldman before he founded his own private investment firm, Omega Advisors. Today, he's worth \$1.8 billion — and has the philanthropic chops to prove it. He's given away more than he's ever spent on himself — and he has committed to the [Warren Buffett Giving Pledge](#), which means he has promised to give the majority of his wealth to philanthropy.

Over the years, Cooperman [has been inspired](#) by the wise words of men who have counseled charitable giving, from the Talmudic injunction "A man's net worth is measured not by what he earns but rather what he gives away" to Andrew Carnegie's oft-quoted reminder "He who dies rich, dies disgraced." But the investor has been less than inspired by the president's repeated condemnatory remarks about capitalism; by his repeated appeals to envy, one of the basest of human instincts; and by the thoughtless lashings he's administered to the American people out of his own political desperation ("lazy," "soft" and "bitter" we are!). What's more: Cooperman has taken the time to compose an open letter to the president to tell him just how disappointed he is.

In fervid, forceful, expressive prose, Cooperman excoriates the president for his lack of leadership. Here, a few excerpts, but the [letter](#) is absolutely, 100 percent worth a complete read:

"Dear Mr. President,

It is with a great sense of disappointment that I write this. Like many others, I hoped that your election would bring a salutary change of direction to the country, despite what more than a few feared was an overly aggressive social agenda. And I cannot credibly blame you for the economic mess that you inherited, even if the policy response on your watch has been profligate and largely ineffectual. (You did not, after all, invent TARP.) I understand that when surrounded

by cries of “the end of the world as we know it is nigh”, even the strongest of minds may have a tendency to shoot first and aim later in a well-intended effort to stave off the predicted apocalypse.

But what I can justifiably hold you accountable for is you and your minions’ role in setting the tenor of the rancorous debate now roiling us that smacks of what so many have characterized as “class warfare”. Whether this reflects your principled belief that the eternal divide between the haves and have-nots is at the root of all the evils that afflict our society or just a cynical, populist appeal to his base by a president struggling in the polls is of little importance. What does matter is that the divisive, polarizing tone of your rhetoric is cleaving a widening gulf, at this point as much visceral as philosophical, between the downtrodden and those best positioned to help them. It is a gulf that is at once counterproductive and freighted with dangerous historical precedents. And it is an approach to governing that owes more to desperate demagoguery than your Administration should feel comfortable with. ...

But what I do find objectionable is the highly politicized idiom in which this debate is being conducted. Now, I am not naive. I understand that in today’s America, this is how the business of governing typically gets done – a situation that, given the gravity of our problems, is as deplorable as it is seemingly ineluctable. But as President first and foremost and leader of your party second, you should endeavor to rise above the partisan fray and raise the level of discourse to one that is both more civil and more conciliatory, that seeks collaboration over confrontation. That is what “leading by example” means to most people.

Capitalism is not the source of our problems, as an economy or as a society, and capitalists are not the scourge that they are too often made out to be. As a group, we employ many millions of taxpaying people, pay their salaries, provide them with healthcare coverage, start new companies, found new industries, create new products, fill store shelves at Christmas, and keep the wheels of commerce and progress (and indeed of government, by generating the income whose taxation funds it) moving. To frame the debate as one of rich-and-entitled versus poor-and-dispossessed is to both miss the point and further inflame an already incendiary environment. It is also a naked, political pander to some of the basest human emotions – a strategy, as history teaches, that never ends well for anyone but totalitarians and anarchists.

With due respect, Mr. President, it’s time for you to throttle-down the partisan rhetoric and appeal to people’s better instincts, not their worst. ...

Sincerely,

Leon G. Cooperman"

I’m not even the president and I feel chastised by the letter. As many a kid has been wont to proclaim, “I can handle it when my dad is angry with me, but when he’s disappointed ... That’s the *worst*.” The searing disappointment that licks through this letter stings as anger never could.

Cooperman reminds me: It’s pretty easy to knock civility, especially as calls for it always seem to come at inopportune times or as a way of silencing the opposition — but it really doesn’t hurt anything to proceed from the assumption that the majority of folks want what’s best for the country and to appeal to that desire in them, rather than to accuse them of intentionally wanting what’s worst.

## Right Turn

### Was Gingrich a lobbyist? He sure comes off that way.

by Jennifer Rubin

Mitt Romney has finally begun to engage Newt Gingrich. Yesterday, he went after Gingrich, if not by name, by [attacking him](#) as a creature of Washington. The timing couldn't have been better for Romney.

Today, the [New York Times](#) has a front-page piece documenting Gingrich's activities, which by any reasonable person's definition, constitute lobbying. This brings into focus the hypocrisy that is at the core of Gingrich's personality. His view of himself (Churchillian, "transformational," "historian") doesn't match his own track record, which is a history of milking the Washington lobbyist-legislator connection for great personal wealth.

Federal law defines lobbying activity as "Lobbying contacts and any efforts in support of such contacts, including preparation or planning activities, research and other background work that is intended, at the time of its preparation, for use in contacts and coordination with the lobbying activities of others." And a lobbying contact is "Any oral, written or electronic communication to a covered official that is made on behalf of a client with regard to" congressmen and senators, among others.

Even before the Times story, there was ample evidence suggesting that Gingrich was engaged in this sort of lobbying activities. For example, [Bloomberg reported](#), former Freddie Mac officials "say the former House speaker was asked to build bridges to Capitol Hill Republicans and develop an argument on behalf of the company's public-private structure that would resonate with conservatives seeking to dismantle it." Sounds like preparation for use in a lobbying contact, doesn't it?

The [Washington Examiner's Tim Carney](#) expanded on the story, reporting: "A former employee of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, (the main industry lobby) told me Gingrich was being paid by someone in the industry at the time. A spokeswoman for Gingrich's health care consulting firm, Center for Health Transformation, told me that drug companies have been CHT clients. PhRMA confirmed in a statement that they had paid Gingrich. Bloomberg News cited sources from leading drug companies Astra-Zeneca and Pfizer saying that those companies had also hired Gingrich."

And what did he do? "Three former Republican congressional staffers told me that Gingrich was calling around Capitol Hill and visiting Republican congressmen in 2003 in an effort to convince conservatives to support a bill extending Medicare to include prescription-drug subsidies." That's lobbying. An attorney specializing in campaign laws told me on the phone today that this scenario, if accurate, is lobbying, plain and simple.

Now we get to the Times's story:

[Gingrich] pressed for passage of a federal bill to increase the use of electronic health records, collaborating with one of its co-sponsors, Representative Patrick J. Kennedy of Rhode Island, and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York, both Democrats. After appearing at a press briefing on the issue with Mrs. Clinton in 2005, he stated flatly on Fox News: "We're launching a bill." Mr. Gingrich's ability to reach leaders like Mrs. Clinton was a selling point for the center. A



PowerPoint presentation for prospective members advertised its “contacts at the highest levels” of federal and state government. Paying \$200,000 a year for the top-tier membership, it said, “increases your channels of input to decision makers” and grants “access to top transformational leadership across industry and government.”

That sure sounds like “lobbying” as well.

Meanwhile, the St. Petersburg Times in Florida [has posted audio](#) of Gingrich pitching legislators in that state. This activity isn’t covered by federal law, but if this is indicative of how Gingrich worked, it becomes hard to answer with a straight face that, in common parlance, Gingrich wasn’t “lobbying.”

Gingrich obviously didn’t want to register as a lobbyist and doesn’t think of himself in such terms. Naturally, his lawyers stood at the ready to help. But what’s the argument that all of this *isn’t* lobbying?

First, the Gingrich camp says he believed in his clients’ positions before he was hired. His lawyer tries out an improbable line on the Times:

In asserting that Mr. Gingrich has never engaged in lobbying, his aides say lawyers have thoroughly vetted all of his activities. Randy Evans, a Georgia lawyer who has represented Mr. Gingrich since his days as House speaker, said none of Mr. Gingrich’s clients paid him to adopt a position that he did not already have.

“That matters a lot,” Mr. Evans said, “because there was never a point where we identified a client’s position first and decided, ‘O.K., that’s where we’re going.’ His vision always came first.”

This is, as one campaign law expert put it, “not even good fiction.” Tony Fratto, a former Bush administration official and now a partner in his own consulting firm, scoffed at this rationale. “The Gingrich standard seems to be that it’s not lobbying because he was previously sympathetic to the policies for which he advocated. That’s a novel distinction but unfortunately not one recognized in the law.”

The next Gingrich justification, his lawyer says, is that he followed “□‘specific protocols and procedures’ that [his health-care outfit] designed to ensure he stayed within the law.” Well, where are those protocols and procedures, and what do they say? A Gingrich spokesman did not respond to my request for such documents, if they exist.

But this is all legal stuff, right? (It’s never a good idea to send your lawyer out to claim you’re not ethically challenged; People suspect that, if you need a lawyer to say it, you probably are.) The real issue is that Gingrich’s maneuvering with a high-priced lawyer to try to get around the rules for everyone else is precisely the sort of Washington-insider behavior that drives voters, especially Tea Partyers, nuts. Stepping back from the particulars of the law, Gingrich made millions and millions advocating for big government (e.g. Freddie Mac, ethanol, Big Pharma) and getting very rich doing so.

He somehow thinks that passes the smell test with average voters. But, really, what sort of legalistic nitpicking can conceal what he was up to? Gingrich’s tone-deafness was on full display yesterday when he said he couldn’t possibly have been lobbying sine he was getting [\\$60, 000 per speech](#). *Yowser.*

None of this is helpful to Gingrich's pitch that he's a brilliant innovator who will shake up Washington. In fact, he made a mint shaking down Washington, and in the meantime, doing damage to the cause of limited-government activists.

## Contentions

### Gingrich Was No Lobbyist, Just a Washington Influence Peddler

by Jonathan S. Tobin

In the years between his stepping down as Speaker of the House and running for the presidency, [Newt Gingrich](#) became a wealthy man. While no one I am aware of has alleged that he did anything illegal or even improper in amassing his fortune, as a [feature](#) in today's *New York Times* makes clear, his attempt to portray his Center for Health Transformation as a think tank rather than a lobbying firm is somewhat disingenuous.

Gingrich was not registered as a lobbyist, and his work on behalf of the Center's "members" — companies that paid up to \$200,000 to belong to the group in exchange for access to Gingrich and for his help in promoting their efforts — did not conform to the legal definition of lobbying in that he did not specifically write bills or advocate on behalf of legislation that would benefit his clients. But as the article makes clear, much of what he did do appears to be indistinguishable from the sort of tasks lobbyists routinely perform. Though Gingrich claims he never took money to support an idea that he didn't otherwise support, a close look at his activities leads to the conclusion that what he did was, if not lobbying, then a form of influence peddling that undermines his claims of being an outsider in Washington or a visionary historian/consultant.

It should be understood that despite the taint of illegitimacy that clings to the word lobbyist, there is really nothing wrong with what they do. Every citizen has a right to petition the government and seek to persuade legislators to do things that will benefit causes, groups or individuals. By banding together to create lobbying groups, both citizens and companies are able to make their voices heard. Lobbyists and less easily defined players like Gingrich and his Center make money by parlaying their expertise and access to official Washington that makes this process easier.

But the ability of some to pay for the services offered by Gingrich does tend to rub voters the wrong way. Moreover, Gingrich's current pose as a critic of the Washington establishment doesn't jive with the way in which he peddled access to the high and mighty in exchange for extravagant fees.

As the *Times* writes:

Mr. Gingrich's ability to reach leaders like Mrs. Clinton was a selling point for the Center. A PowerPoint presentation for prospective members advertised its "contacts at the highest levels" of federal and state government. Paying \$200,000 a year for the top-tier membership, it said, "increases your channels of input to decision makers" and grants "access to top transformational leadership across industry and government."

Again, there's nothing illegal about any of this, but it doesn't really sound like a think tank, does it?

Scrutiny of Gingrich's prosperous business is not a matter of muckraking or trying to create a scandal where none exists. But it does make it clear that the onetime Washington outsider who was seen as a bomb-throwing troublemaker by the Republican congressional leadership during his early years in Congress decades ago cashed in the same way many other ex-politicians have done once they left office. While Gingrich may say his goal now is to transform Washington, he spent a decade profiting as a run-of-the-mill D.C. insider who could help game the system for a price. Which means the only thing he's guilty of is hypocrisy.

## Streetwise Professor

### [What the Frack: Gazprom Goes Green](#)

by Craig Pirrong

Showing its deep, deep concern for the environment, [Gazprom is warning about the hazards of natural gas fracking](#):

But in a sign the phenomenon is in fact being taken seriously, the board of directors at the world's biggest gas producer, state-owned OAO Gazprom, this week highlighted environmental risks and the high costs of production in Europe.

"The production of shale gas is associated with significant environmental risks, in particular the hazard of surface and underground water contamination with chemicals applied in the production process," Gazprom said in the statement following the board meeting.

Now surely, this has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that expanded gas production, especially in Europe, would be devastating for Gazprom. The experience in the US shows how quickly the gas market can turn. In 2006, the consensus prediction was that the US was facing a low supply-high price gas future, and that the country would be a gas importer. Gas prices were well north of \$10/mmbtu. A few short years later, the US supply situation was turned on its head. Gas prices are now in the mid-\$3/mmbtu range, and the play of the day is to figure out how to export gas to Europe and Asia.

LNG sourced from the Middle East or the US is already a near-to-medium term threat to Gazprom, as the ongoing disconnect between gas prices and oil prices (which determine the price of Gazprom gas under its long term contracts) indicated. Even a modest increase in production in Europe would put even more pressure on the company. And as the US experience shows, that increase can take place extremely rapidly (though for a variety of reasons such speed is unlikely in Europe).

Hence, it is doing what comes naturally to Sovoks: propaganda. It is pulling out all the stops to discredit shale and fracking, not just in Europe, but elsewhere. The next time you hear anti-fracking flacking, it's fair to ask who's paying for it. No, not all the opposition is from Gazprom: some is from the well-intentioned, some from those who reflexively oppose any kind of energy production. But knowing the way Gazprom works, no doubt some Gazprom money is funding anti-fracking lobbying, politicking, and information campaigns

But the enviro angle is really just too much. Sorry, but lectures on environmentalism from the direct descendent of the Soviet Ministry of Gas (the USSR being history's largest environmental

catastrophe), and a company with a pretty poor environmental record to boot (witness the huge problems with leakage from Gazprom pipelines), are enough to challenge the strongest gag reflex.

But the fact that the company feels compelled to engage in such risible hypocrisy is actually encouraging news. The more Gazprom execs squeal about shale, the more you know that it is a threat to them.

So yet again: Gazprom gripes—music to my ears.

**WSJ**

### **Washington Targets Ohio Shale Gas**

***By one estimate, the administration has killed more than 200,000 jobs.***

by Josh Mandel

On the same day two weeks ago, Ohioans saw the following diverging headlines:

In the Cleveland Plain Dealer: "Republic Steel to add 450 jobs to Lorain as oil and gas exploration booms." This story reported Republic Steel's announcement of new jobs in one of Ohio's hardest-hit counties, to manufacture products in support of the state's growing oil and gas industry.

In the Marion Star: "Ohio national forest halts sale of drilling rights." This story reported the U.S. Department of Agriculture's decision to suspend the auction of leases for oil and gas drilling on more than 3,000 acres of federal land in the most economically depressed region of Ohio.

You might be asking yourself: Why would Washington block drilling in Ohio at the same time that Ohio manufacturers are adding jobs to support the state's growing oil and gas exploration? Thousands of middle-class families and out-of-work Ohioans are asking that same question.

Perhaps the most accurate answer is found in a statement by the president of the Laborers' International Union of North America after the Obama administration's recent decision to delay the Keystone XL pipeline. "The administration chose to support environmentalists over jobs," Terry O'Sullivan said. "Job-killers win, American workers lose."

One might think that American anger with the Keystone decision would have made the White House avoid blocking more jobs. Yet, on Nov. 15, five days after it delayed Keystone, the administration again sided with radical special interests over blue-collar workers.



*The new Vallourec seamless pipe mill can be seen rising up on the horizon in the industrial valley of Girard, Ohio in September, 2011.*

The Ohio leases would have included parcels in three counties badly hurting for jobs. Two of the counties, Perry and Gallia, have unemployment rates above the national average, at 10.7% and 9.8%, respectively. Nearby Pike and Meigs counties, from which energy production would have drawn workers, have unemployment rates as high as 15.1% and 13.2%, respectively.

Adding to the public outrage here is the position taken by Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown, who this week announced his support of the federal government's job-killing decision. Even though the vilification of Ohio's abundant coal, oil and gas disproportionately hurts jobs and energy prices here, Mr. Brown has chosen to side with Washington bureaucrats and fringe extremists in the attacks on our natural resources.

Aggressive and responsible exploration of Ohio's Utica shale, combined with continued mining of more than 20 million tons of coal here every year, can revolutionize Ohio's economy. A September study for the Ohio Oil & Gas Energy Education Program found that production in the Utica shale formation has the potential to create more than 200,000 Ohio jobs by the year 2015.

Beyond employing men and women on the rigs, this exploration will produce new jobs for construction workers, truck drivers, hardware-store clerks, hotel maids, restaurant servers and many other laborers who provide goods and services to exploration operations. In its most powerful possible effect, the Utica shale will create thousands of new manufacturing jobs in Ohio.

Along with Republic Steel, U.S. Steel has also announced new jobs and expansion in Ohio, in its case to meet demand for steel piping created by shale exploration. Vallourec & Mannesmann plans to build a plant in Youngstown, breathing new life into the heart of the rust belt. The Canton-based steel manufacturer Timken recently said that its planned expansion is motivated in part by strong sales to oil and gas companies, which make up 20% of the company's sales.



Exploration in the Utica shale could also mean cheaper utility bills for consumers. A Pennsylvania State University study published in July found that natural gas prices there dropped by 12.6% in 2010, saving consumers \$633 million. The U.S. Energy Information Administration says that summer 2011 natural gas prices in the Northeast were 2%-15% lower because of increased shale production.

Shale exploration occurs safely and responsibly. Ohio has rigorous, common-sense regulations that are based upon bipartisan legislation signed by former Democratic Gov. Ted Strickland. The national Ground Water Protection Council issued a study in August that said, "Ohio has implemented more detailed notification, inspection, record keeping and reporting requirements in response to the national debate on the process of hydraulic fracturing." A January examination by the State Review of Oil & Natural Gas Environmental Regulations concluded that Ohio's regulatory system is "well-managed, professional and meeting its program objectives."

Ohio and the rest of the country face a fork in the road. Down one path lies economic stagnation, a continued slide in American manufacturing, and European-style permanent unemployment. The other path brings us away from recession and back toward America's place as the world's undeniable industrial leader. To get there, we need Washington to stop blocking proven jobs in coal, oil and gas—and allow us to maximize these resources for economic strength and national security.

*Mr. Mandel is the treasurer of Ohio and a Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in 2012.*

## **Washington Times**

### **[Chapter and verse on China's moral predations](#)**

by Tony Blankley

BOWING TO BEIJING:

HOW [BARACK OBAMA](#) IS HASTENING AMERICA'S DECLINE AND USHERING A CENTURY OF CHINESE DOMINATION

By [Brett M. Decker](#) and [William C. Triplett II](#)

Regnery, \$27.95, 256 pages

Reviewed by Tony Blankley

A just-released book, "[Bowling to Beijing](#)" by [Brett M. Decker](#) and [William C. Triplett II](#), will change forever the way you think about [China](#) - even if, like me, you already have the deepest worries about the Chinese threat. As I opened the book, I was expecting to find many useful examples of [Chinese military](#) and industrial efforts to get the better of the United States and the West.

Indeed, there are 100 pages of examples of the most remorseless Chinese successes at stealing the [military](#) and industrial secrets of the West and converting them into a growing menace - soon to be a leviathan - bent on domination and defeat of America. The authors itemize the sheer unprecedented magnitude of this effort. But the opening chapters deal with



human rights abuses, and my first thought as I started reading was that I wanted to get right to the [military](#) and industrial examples.

But the authors were right to lead with 50 pages itemizing in grisly detail Chinese human rights abuses - for the profound reason that after reading those first 50 pages, the reader will be impassioned to resist Chinese domination not only on behalf of American interests, but for the sake of humanity.

Many people think America is in decline and mentally acquiesce to the thought that the rise of [China](#) is inevitable. Those 50 pages will stiffen your resolve to be part of the struggle never to let such a malignancy spread to the rest of the world - let alone to America. One of the authors, [Brett M. Decker](#), is a friend - and I have never been more proud of his (and his co-author's) accomplishment of providing such a deep moral vision in this carefully factual book.

In an astounding narrative, [Brett](#) and [Mr. Triplett](#) have refuted the growing authoritarian temptation for too many privileged people around the world, expressed by [Thomas L. Friedman](#), senior New York Times foreign-policy columnist, who wrote recently: "One-party autocracy certainly has its drawbacks. But when it is led by a reasonably enlightened group of people, as [China](#) is today, it can also have great advantages. That one party can just impose the politically difficult but critically important policies needed to move a society forward in the 21st century."

The authors do not mention [Mr. Friedman](#). In those first 50 pages, they focus their compelling narrative on a strictly factual expose of the moral horror being brought down on the Chinese people by their ever-more-powerful leadership.

The authors carefully delineate the reversal in the past decade of the previous, modest Chinese movement toward rule of law and a small hint at decency. It had been the hope of everyone from Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger onward that as [China](#) came into the world and embraced capitalism, it would become "a modern, progressive society that [would] eventually bring the communist state in line with the rest of the civilized world." That was the moral foundation for "engaging" with [China](#). It also was a convenient rationalization for trying to make a fortune in the vast Chinese market.

But, grimly, the authors explicate the sad fact that the engagement was a false dawn. In the past decade, it has gotten worse and worse as the Chinese leadership has consolidated its power. Oligarchic "princelings" - the 200 to 300 descendants of the founders of the Communist Party - have gained a stranglehold on both the business and the government of [China](#). They are using the incomprehensibly vast power that comes with that total control to buy off the business class, exploit the working class and peasants and prepare [China](#) to replace America as the world's dominant nation.

Once you have read the searing first 50 pages of this book, the hope that [China](#) is becoming a "decent," liberal society is no longer morally available to you. I mention [Mr. Friedman](#) because of his claim that Chinese leaders are a "reasonably enlightened group of people." The authors' narrative shows [Mr. Friedman](#)'s words to be not merely fatuous but uniquely immoral.

Whatever one thinks about the influence of Western civilization on the broader world over the past half-millennium, it can be said that the West has lived out a "reasonably enlightened" view of humanity. It would be very different under Chinese domination. Here is just one of hundreds

of examples offered by the authors of the moral pit that [China](#) has become: “It is routine for children as young as nine years old and for the mentally handicapped to be sold to sweatshops where they work around the clock in slave-like conditions. Tragically, child labor is most common in toy factories. Other workers initially take jobs voluntarily but then are padlocked in dormitories and forced to work up to 18 hours a day in a subhuman environment.” Those cheap toys found on American shopping shelves come at a horribly high price.

The authors systematically assess the evil intents and consequences of the communist government from child labor to environmental damage to the selection and murder of prisoners for their body parts. After a particularly riveting narrative of the Chinese regime’s religious intolerance, the authors conclude with Pope Benedict XVI’s soul-rending observation: “In [China](#), Christ is living out His Passion.”

Just as the authors are ferocious toward the Chinese regime, they are equally tough on the Washington establishment that helps the Chinese. The authors name names and present chapter and verse of how [China](#) - and its American allies - penetrate U.S. business and compromise government secrets. The failure of our government even to begin to resist the Chinese threat is aptly described as a bipartisan failure of both vision and will - if not patriotism. But it is fair to say that President [Obama](#), in particular, will not enjoy reading this book, although he would vastly benefit from it, as would the country if he were to act on the authors’ advice.



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SORRY--WE'RE  
SAVING THE LIFE  
BOATS FOR US.



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IT'S A MYSTERY! NO  
ONE KNOWS WHY THEY'RE  
ASSEMBLED HERE...WHAT THEY  
STAND FOR...OR WHAT  
THEIR MESSAGE IS.

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