

TRANSNATIONALISM

What was Obama thinking?

Olympics fiasco is one thing, undermining the Constitution is quite another

By Frank J. Gaffney Jr.

In the wake of the debacle of Chicago's rejection as the Olympic venue for the 2016 summer games, the question probably occurred to most Americans: What was President Obama thinking when he dramatically personalized the U.S. bid by joining his wife in Copenhagen to appeal for the selection of his adopted city?

Apparently, the answer lies with the hubris that has characterized Mr. Obama's ascendancy. To be sure, most politicians have outsized egos. It is not just an occupational hazard; it seems to be a necessary character defect for many of those willing to submit themselves to the often nasty bump and grind of elective politics.

Still, Mr. Obama has long seemed to be in a class of his own when it comes to his self-confidence, seemingly born of a charmed life of extraordinary opportunities and, by and large, a lack of accountability for his actions. In this case, his arrogance appears to have caused him and his handlers to believe that when he took the unprecedented step of having an American president show up in person to lobby the International Olympic Committee, his rock-star status would assure Chicago's selection.

It is clear that in the aftermath of the IOC's decision to eliminate America's Windy City in the first round of voting and instead select Rio de Janeiro, this rejection was not only a stunning personal failure for "the One" (a title Mr. Obama's admirers seem to have embraced as much as his critics). It amounts to a repudiation of

the United States, contributing — whether intentionally in this instance or not — to the sort of diminishing of our country that I have described previously as one of three elements of the Obama Doctrine. (The other two are the undermining of our allies and emboldening of our enemies.)

A far more important exercise in "What was Obama thinking?" arises from another of his recent, dubious diplomatic initiatives: Last week, the United States joined Egypt in sponsoring a resolution in the U.N. Human Rights Council — the odious anti-Western, anti-U.S. and anti-Israel organization that the Obama administration recently had this country rejoin. For the first time, America has taken a leading role in promoting an international threat to its citizens' constitutional right to freedom of speech.

As the incalculably important JihadWatch.org's Robert Spencer reported over the weekend: The resolution "calls on states to condemn and criminalize 'any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.'"

Mr. Spencer adds: "It also condemns 'negative stereotyping of religions and racial groups,' which is of course an oblique reference to accurate reporting about the jihad doctrine and Islamic supremacism — which is always the focus of whining by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and other groups about negative 'stereotyping' of Islam."

Writing on the left-wing HuffingtonPost.com, blogger Eugene Volokh expresses deep

concern about the extent to which such a resolution could translate into a mortal threat to the U.S. Constitution's foundational guarantee of freedom of expression:

"I'm worried that the Executive Branch's endorsement of speech-restrictive 'international human rights' norms will affect how the courts interpret the First Amendment, so that over time, 'an international norm against hate speech . . . [would] supply a basis for prohibiting [hate speech], the First Amendment notwithstanding.' And that worry stems not just from my fevered imagination, but from the views of [professor] Peter Spiro, a noted legal academic who is a supporter of this tendency. That's not fear-mongering on his part, but hope (hope-mongering?) and prediction. So anything that an administration does to endorse international speech-restrictive norms might well have an effect on our own constitutional rights as well."

Again, the

question occurs: "What is Obama thinking?" The fact that his policies are tracking with those of the Muslim Brotherhood and others seeking to promote the supremacist and seditious program authoritative Islam calls Shariah is not news (at least to readers of this column).

What is news, and deeply troubling at that, is that Mr. Obama and his administration are formalizing this ominous alignment in international forums like the Human Rights Council. According to the past

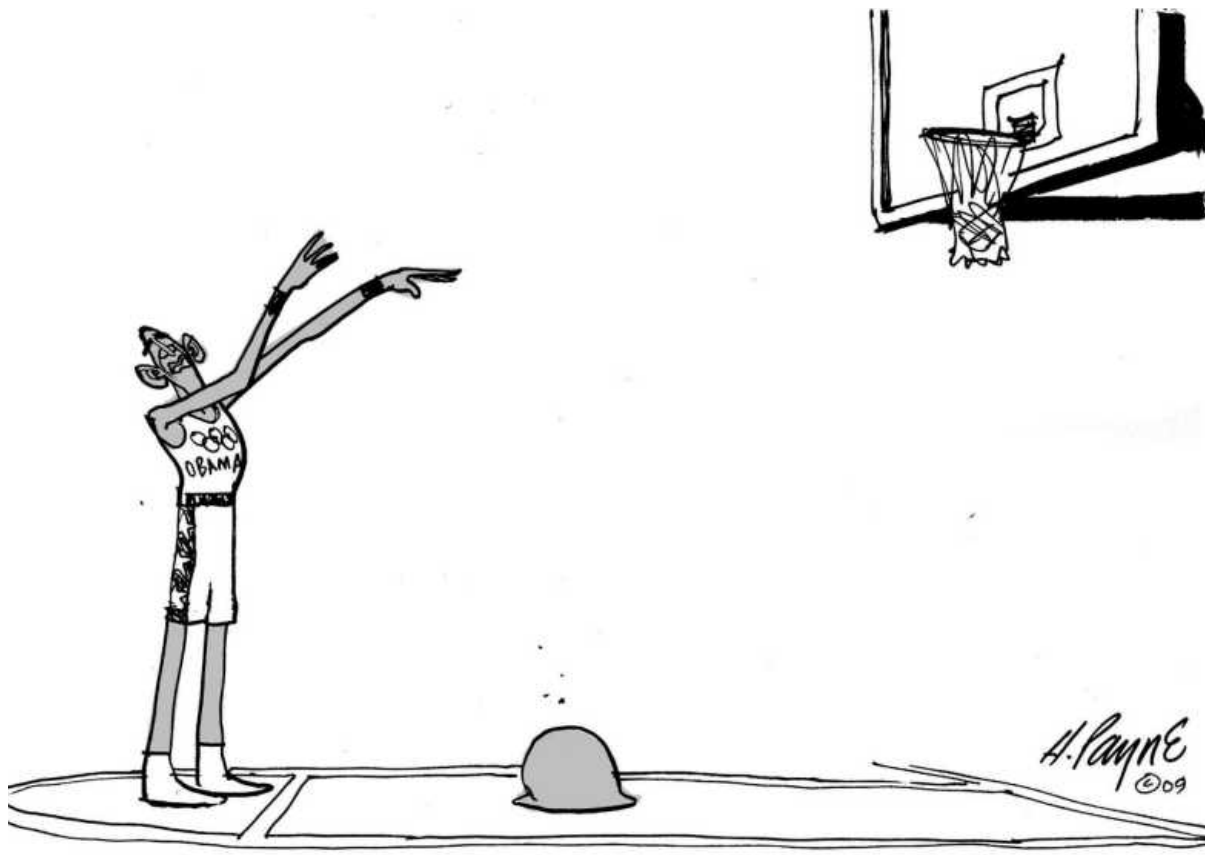
writings of Harold Koh, the former Yale Law School dean who is the U.S. government's top authority on international law and its application domestically, "norms" like the new Human Rights Council resolution should supercede U.S. laws and even the Constitution.

The Ethics and Public Policy Center's extraordinary Ed Whalen cites a 2004 essay by Mr. Koh, titled "International Law as Part of Our Law" as approvingly setting forth the transnationalist view that "domestic courts must play a key role in coordinating U.S. domestic constitutional rules with rules of foreign and international law, not simply to promote American aims, but to advance the broader development of a well-functioning international judicial system." Toward this end, Mr. Koh thinks that in several circumstances, it is "ap-

propriate for the Supreme Court to construe our Constitution in light of foreign and international law."

The conclusion seems inescapable: In yet another expression of the president's arrogance, he and his administration are in the process of willfully promoting an agenda at odds not just with the Constitution but with the larger national interest. Unlike the Chicago Olympics fiasco, however, in the case of "hate speech," it is the American people and Congress that must repudiate him.

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AMERICAN DREAM

Unraveling at the seams

Gloom and doom and Moore is less

By Arnaud de Borchgrave

"The American dream fell apart at the seams," Willie Nelson sang on CNN as he described the plight of small farmers going bust.

Almost everything and everyone is fighting for survival in an economy that continues to defy wallops of government stimulus. Brick-and-mortar bookstore chains are also fighting for survival as the Kindle, evidently named to evoke the crackling ignition of knowledge, with its 240,000 book titles, plus the iPod Touch, iPhone and Amazon.com, keep pushing intellectual and literary life into an electronic cocoon of \$9.99 books. Tough economic times are good for book sales.

Google is making its vast online library of more than 1.5 million public-domain books available for mobile phones such as T-Mobile G1, powered by Google's Android software. And the bricks-and-mortar bookstores, oozing red ink but still on top of a \$24 billion book market, are launching the world's largest online bookstores. E-book sales have soared to 29 million, or \$9 billion in sales.

Amazon is still expected to generate \$35 million profits on revenues of \$420 million this year — and more than \$700 million on \$4 billion in revenues by 2014. Barnes & Noble is expanding its e-book service with an online store that is selling more than 200,000 e-book titles for laptop computers and mobile devices.

This new world is a bonanza for the prophets of doom and gloom that are beginning to read like a chronicle of our current predicament. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. sounds delusional when he says all's A-OK with Plan A and there is no need for Plan B. The Afghan war would seem to be ripe for Plan C. While "We are Doomed: Reclaiming Conservative Pessimism," by John Derbyshire, is a bit of a stretch, "Culture of Corruption," by Michelle Malkin, and "Exploiting Chaos" by Jeremy Gutsche, have the ring of authenticity. "Catastrophe," by Dick Morris, a liberal-turned-conservative icon, gives all away on the cover:

"How Obama, Congress and 'The Special Interests Are Transforming . . . 'A Slump Into a Crash. 'Freedom Into Socialism, 'And a Disaster Into a 'CATASTROPHE'"

Leftist filmmaker Michael Moore is back in action with another view of the same catastrophe. His latest pitchforks-and-torches movie against what he portrays as corporate fascism in "Capitalism: A Love Story," packing theaters coast to coast and getting much favorable airtime for Mr. Moore on CNN's "Situation Room," ABC's "Nightline" and "Good Morning America," NBC's "The Jay Leno Show" and the rest of the dominant media culture — and much hostility from Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck and Sean Hannity — savages the post-Cold War capitalist order. No longer fearful of communism, the capitalism of the post-World War II era with

ticed since the 1980s as systemic failures. When late-night comedians see Standard & Poor's as "your life in a nutshell," a "financial planner" as "the guy whose phone has been disconnected," and the "P/E ratio as the percentage of investors wetting their pants as the market keeps crashing," Mr. Moore is gaining on his right-wing detractors.

Mr. Moore's naive nostalgia for the 1950s and '60s evokes Hopalong Cassidy, an era when the highest badge of honor was obedience to parents and the virtues of studying hard, with no ambiguity or confusion about heroism and what it represented. Conservative pundits are spinning the movie as a call to socialism or communism. But that misses the point. These sound bites are more sound than bite. Ignored were an orgy of risky trading and the fraudulent deception of investors that unleashed a global financial meltdown.

The target is what we have allowed capitalism to become since the fall of communism. For those who are not astigmatically impaired, from Enron to Bernard Madoff, greed and corruption subverted democratic capitalism. No one said anything when one Wall Street giant put \$16.7 billion aside for year-end bonuses in 2006 — for the best performers. One top trader turned down a \$70 million bonus and resigned. He said he was insulted. He was worth more. He went out and formed his own hedge fund. Made \$300 million the first year. And not a peep from conservative talk-show hosts. Because that was free enterprise at work, not the harbinger of out-of-control greed.

Outlandish compensation packages; the ranks of billionaires from 350 before Sept. 11, 2001, to more than 1,000, propelled by hedge funds and derivatives (once described in congressional testimony as "global time bombs"); predatory, worthless subprime mortgages that were sliced and diced and sold good as gold the world over before they became "toxic assets"; the erosion of the middle classes into the ranks of the poor; six jobless persons for each available job. But the gravediggers of democratic capitalism aren't done yet.

The \$26 trillion life insurance market is ripe for plucking a la subprime mortgage sleight of hand. For the next big bubble, scam artists are buying, bundling, packaging, securitiz-

ing and selling "stranger-owned" life insurance policies that ill and elderly people sell for cash. Instead of denouncing Mr. Moore's indictment of predatory capitalism, it would behoove right-wing talk show hosts to take the lead in exposing large-scale theft masquerading as solid business

practice.

"We're in the throes of an animalistic, carnivorous culture of greed, power and paranoia." Who said that? Self-made billionaire Pete Peterson, who funded a \$1 billion foundation of the same name and whose new book, "The Education of an American Dreamer" is climb-

ing the charts. As a former chief executive officer of the defunct Lehman Brothers, he knows whereof he speaks.

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