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Morality and Genius

"Genius" has several meanings. A "certified genius" – a term I learned from Martin Kamen who was one – would be, for example, someone with a photographic memory who graduates from MIT at the age of 16 with a 4.0 grade average.

A more prevalent and far more important "genius" is of the Thomas Edison type – an intellect and a leader of men who, with the help of a few men whom he selected, taught, and led, made possible revolutionary advances in technology that greatly enriched us all.

Similar singular or handfuls of "geniuses" made possible the conquest of the air – from passenger planes to the SR-71, the manned trips to the moon, nuclear explosives, nuclear electric power, polio vaccine, sequencing of the human genome, assembly-line production, the microelectronics revolution, and many other seminal advances that have greatly improved the human condition.

Genius is not, of course, only extant in a few people. Hundreds of thousands of geniuses of varied abilities have worked to produce the miraculous civilization in which we are all privileged to live.

The people of the United States are now engaged in a great national debate – the outcome of which will decide the fate of a great nation and of the people of many other nations. This debate is – quite simply – a disagreement over whether individual men should live in freedom or in slavery. Those now in power in Washington prefer slavery – the rule of an oligarchical gaggle of socialist, fascist, and Marxist ideologues, themselves controlled by a ruling statist elite. Their opponents prefer freedom, with government providing primarily just physical security for the nation and a system of justice that referees the actions and interactions of free men.

Two ways of evaluating the merits of freedom or slavery are discussed – which one is "morally right," and which one "works best."

While America's Founding Fathers considered both, their most remembered writings take the moral high ground. They concluded that the fundamental right of freedom is given to man by his Creator along with the gift of life. "Moral rightness" flowing from God Himself was, to them, supreme. The fact that freedom also "works best" was fortunate but not the deciding argument.

For more than 200 years, the statists in America have fought to overcome this conclusion. For this reason, they have been virulent opponents of the Christian faith, which was the faith of the founders. Other faiths, such as the Muslim or the Hindu, are less opposed or are even promoted by statists because these oppose Christianity.

It is just not possible for government to enslave men whose allegiance is to a higher power than government – except when government adopts the mantle of religion, a possibility the Founders tried hard to guard against.

Freedom is morally right. So, if morals are the arbiter, slavery loses. To be sure, in the 18th century and before, people of all races were enslaved throughout the world. The British people and, not long after, the American people corrected this among themselves. They were able to correct it because they placed the higher value on

moral arguments.

A strategic victory in the current contest has, however, been won by the statists in that morality and faith have largely been banished from the debate. Most of the discussion is about what "works best." Morality is simple. What works best – cause and effect in human affairs – is, however, much more complex. It is easily misrepresented to ordinary people.

It would, I think, be helpful for Americans to think more about their geniuses. The great advances of our civilization required – first – the genius to show a new way, and – second – the industrial power of the United States to implement it. That industrial power was much higher because of American freedom, but understanding this is complex. Sometimes this industrial power was mobilized by government itself, as in the case of nuclear explosives and high-performance airplanes – in providing for national defense. More often, it was mobilized privately for profit.

Without genius, however, there would have been nothing for which to mobilize – and genius arises far more often in an atmosphere of freedom. Ideas can come to any well-prepared mind, but the courage and ability to pursue those ideas in a useful way – ideas that are, by definition, unusual – arises in free men. It is suppressed in slaves, so fewer unusual new ideas are pursued by them.

Under slavery, the direction of the group sinks to the lowest common denominator of the enslaving group and is, moreover, distorted by the perceived self interests of that group. When, at age 30, I found myself responsible for obtaining the funds for the research institute that Linus Pauling and I cofounded, I quickly learned the situation of new ideas. At first, I sought both government and private support. I soon learned the practical difference – my understanding of the moral difference came later.

The dead hands of government committees were largely indifferent to innovation. They followed primarily the fads of the day. It was free men who had earned the capital they controlled – whether the few who were relatively wealthy or the 50,000 whose donations averaged about \$20 each – who supported our work.

Nor is this just a financial phenomenon. Free minds think free thoughts. Free hands create new things. The minds, work ethics, leadership, dreams, and perseverance of the geniuses among us – great and small – require individual human freedom. Politically or economically enslaved people rarely combine these qualities.

Statists understand this very well. The suppression of genius is fine with them. They fear genius. Free men may change the world and endanger their special privileges. Statists promote the status quo. They prefer not to discuss "what might have been" – only how "what is" may be better controlled.

America still has her geniuses, but the taxation, regulation, and government-sponsored litigation of the statists have weakened them and deprived them of resources. The future of our country requires that we release them from this slavery – that we set them free.

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LE CHÂTELIER, LINDZEN, AND CHOI
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Richard Lindzen of MIT and coworkers and other scientists have long predicted that the temperature effect of higher atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide, CO₂, will actually be even less than the already low greenhouse heat-trapping effect of the weak greenhouse

gas CO₂ alone, much less the amplified effect predicted by United Nations reports – and the "global climate models" on which these reports are based. See "Environmental Effects of Increased Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide" by A. B. Robinson, N. E. Robinson, and W. Soon, *JAPS* 12 (2007) 79-90, Figure 18 and text, available from www.petitionproject.org for five peer-reviewed references to this work and to other data referenced below.

Now, in "On the Determination of Climate Feedbacks from

ERBE Data" by R. S. Lindzen and Y. S. Choi, *Geophysical Research Letters* 36, L16705, published August 26, 2009, Lindzen and Choi have presented experimental proof that the global climate models are wrong in an important aspect – an aspect that can largely explain the fact that the increases in atmospheric CO₂ have had such a small effect on Earth temperatures that this effect has never even been unequivocally observed.

First, consider the Earth as we know it and as our ancestors have known it for the past several thousand years. To this consideration, we must add proxy records that provide data extending hundreds of thousands of years in the past, such as ice-core records. Recognizing that these records of the distant past are less reliable than more recent records for all sorts of reasons, they still must be scientifically considered, with perhaps lesser weighting than those from more recent history.

Recent records provide us with a mental model of the Earth in which temperatures over the past several thousand years have varied in a range of about 3 to 4 °C, with current temperatures approximately in the middle of this range. Longer records over a period of several hundred thousand years show a temperature range of about 10 to 12 °C, with current temperatures in the upper part of that range – the lower part being associated with the "ice ages."

The 3 to 4 °C range has clearly not interfered with human activities. Man has lived fruitfully on the Earth throughout these fluctuations. Nor have the larger ranges of 10 to 12 °C significantly damaged the Earth. The Earth's environment is still fluctuating happily within this range and, fortunately for us, has been in a warm part of the range for quite some time.

Many physical systems achieve a state that is scientifically designated as "equilibrium." This does not mean that the system is not changing. As such a system fluctuates, however, the changes themselves trigger counteracting changes that tend to push the system back to a sort of average state. Moreover, when the system is changed by an outside influence, these counteracting changes push the system toward a new state that, while different, is as close as possible to the original state.

Equilibrium systems are the norm in nature. Systems that are not at equilibrium tend to change until they become trapped in an equilibrium or near equilibrium condition. These states are not eternal. On a planetary scale, however, the things that substantially perturb the system – such as the aging of a planet's sun – occur over such long periods that they are not relevant to human affairs.

About 120 years ago, the French chemist Henri Louis Le Châtelier discovered the principle that, when a chemical system at equilibrium is perturbed, the system tends to change so as to counteract the perturbation. We can intuitively see that this is reasonable. If a perturbation were not resisted in this way, the system would probably already have continued to change until it found a different, more inherently stable equilibrium state. Chemical systems so often obey this principle that it is taught in introductory chemistry courses, and has been named Le Châtelier's Principle.

Systems that obey Le Châtelier's Principle are inherently stable. They do not exhibit the so-called "tipping points" with which pseudo-scientists and other unprincipled self-interested people have been frightening the public.

Is the Earth such a system in chemical equilibrium? The overwhelming evidence indicates that yes, it is in equilibrium.

In exact scientific work such as equilibrium thermodynamics, a system is not described as in "equilibrium" unless it is perfectly closed – with no mass or other forms of energy moving in or out of it. Yet, many less perfect systems such as the Earth can be described as essentially in equilibrium – even over long time intervals.

That the Earth is affected by all sorts of things – solar fluctuations, orbital fluctuations, oceanic and other internal fluctuations, and other phenomena far more powerful than those resulting from human activities – is evident. Yet, it is also clear that, even when Earth fluctuates to extremes, it still returns to approximately the

same relatively benign state – a state that is suitable and beneficial for human life. The Earth's environmental system pushes back against change. It obeys Le Châtelier's Principle.

While this is observationally and experimentally evident, it is not understood in detail. Scientific understanding of the Earth's atmosphere is still in its infancy, so the detailed ways in which the Earth reacts to change are poorly understood.

The so-called "climate modelers" have taken improper advantage of this lack of knowledge. They have constructed detailed computer models of this poorly understood system and inserted their own estimates for various factors – estimates that are not justified by experimental observations. Driven by self-interest – the rewards offered by government and other special interests for results consistent with desired political policies – these estimates have been arranged to give the desired political results.

The most prominent of these estimates is described as "positive feedback." Positive feedback is the opposite of Le Châtelier's Principle. In positive feedback, a perturbation – in this case warming from the weak greenhouse gas CO₂ – is amplified by positive feedback. When the warming occurs, the Earth is hypothesized to respond by increasing the effect – by warming still more. This produces additional warming and more positive feedback. Soon a vicious cycle drives the temperature to very high levels.

In addition to the fact that there are no experimental or observational data to support this hypothesis, there are definitive data to show that it is wrong. During recent, historically documented times, the Earth's temperature has fluctuated in a 3 to 4 °C range – much larger than the increase possible for even the highest atmospheric CO₂ effect of about 10-fold less. CO₂'s greenhouse effect is caused by its absorption of electromagnetic radiation in a small spectral range. When all radiation in that range is absorbed, more CO₂ can have no further effect. Yet, regardless of this fluctuation of 3 to 4 °C, catastrophic warming – with strong and runaway positive feedbacks – has never occurred.

The global climate models obtain their positive feedback from hypothetical oceanic effects. They predict that oceanic water evaporation increases the atmospheric amount of the strong greenhouse gas water, thus amplifying the temperature change. Increased water, of course, also increases cooling cloud cover and has other effects.

Lindzen and Choi have examined the behavior of the Earth, using data from the Earth Radiation Budget Experiment, ERBE. ERBE equipment experimentally measures the radiation entering and leaving the Earth. This includes the entire energy range over which significant amounts of electromagnetic energy transmit heat to and from Earth. Lindzen and Choi have correlated this radiation with the temperature of the ocean.

It turns out that, as the ocean warms, the Earth sends more electromagnetic energy back into outer space – a strong negative feedback that is entirely in accord with Le Châtelier's Principle.

Lindzen and Choi compare this result with the 11 most prominent global climate models – those upon which the United Nations bases its "climate change" claims. In all cases, the models are not just quantitatively but also qualitatively in disagreement with the experimental and observational data.

Figure 1 adapted from Lindzen and Choi shows graphs of the net flux of outgoing long-wavelength radiation plus short-wavelength radiation vs. sea surface temperature. The graph in the upper left corner is the observational data, while the other graphs are from the 11 global climate models. In all 11 cases, the global climate models show a strong positive feedback for ocean temperature, as shown by the slopes of the eleven lines. The actual experimental data from the ERBE shows that the feedback is instead strongly negative.

As the ocean warms, the Earth radiates more net energy into outer space – thus having a cooling effect that pushes back against the warming.

Le Châtelier would be pleased – but not surprised. The Earth has had a long time to settle into its equilibrium-like state. If the Earth

people persist, great human suffering will be the result. Yet, the experimental result remains. Because America existed, men everywhere can see the fruits of freedom.

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INNOVATION TAX
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"The Innovation Tax," in *The Wall Street Journal*, Review and Outlook, September 18, 2009, p A22, reports that the current Max Baucus incarnation of the "health reform" bill levies a \$40 billion tax on medical devices. These include surgical equipment, diabetes testing supplies, replacement joints, pacemakers, stents, and MRI and CAT scanners. As the *Journal* points out, "Congress will tax health care to subsidize people to buy health care that new taxes and regulation make more expensive."

The important thing to these statisticians is that all medical care pass through their hands. This gives them the power to manipulate the American people through their medical care.

The \$40 billion is over an estimated 10 years. It is part of the \$800 billion 10-year estimated cost of socializing the medical care industry – a ridiculously low estimate of \$80 billion per year.

Still, the \$4 billion per year exceeds the \$3.7 billion in venture capital invested in medical devices in 2007 and is 40% of industry expenditures on product development in 2007.

The *Journal* reports that medical device manufacturers did not offer as much in concessions to socialized medicine as other medical industries, so Mr. Baucus punished them with higher taxes.

The hospital and pharmaceutical industries rushed to Washington to be part of the socialized medicine process in hopes of gaining special favors for their industries. These unprincipled companies deserve the worst that these government apparatchicks will arrange for them. Unfortunately, their executives will be rewarded.

The American people will pay the bill – in dollars and in less advanced medical devices, as capital to develop these devices is lost.

The Baucus bill also imposes, according to Teddy Davis, *ABC News*, September 16, 2009, a 35% tax on insurance companies for "high cost plans" – defined as those over \$8,000 per year. This is estimated by Baucus to be a \$200 billion tax. Since even coal miners in West Virginia have "high cost" plans through their employers, even they will pay this tax in passed-down losses.

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HEGELIAN OPTION
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The Hegelian dialectic by which Marxist policies are often advanced involves a "thesis" and "antithesis" – with the resulting "synthesis" favoring the Marxist solution. Two negatives compromise, with the result of course also negative.

"Terms of 'Endangerment' in *The Wall Street Journal*, September 3, 2009, shows how this is being done to pass the "cap and trade" energy tax and rationing bill.

Obama's Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, is proceeding on a path to declare carbon dioxide a threatening "pollutant" under the Clean Air Act. Legislators and their supporters are being told that "cap and trade" will be far less onerous than EPA regulation, so cap and trade must be passed to prevent this worse alternative.

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STARK RAVING MAD
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• "Public Option Lite" in *The Wall Street Journal*, September 17, 2009, p A22, reproduces an Obama campaign ad directed against Mrs. Clinton during the Democrat primaries. The campaign mailer includes a photograph of Mrs. Clinton and the bold face text:

"Hillary's health care plan forces everyone to buy insurance, even if you can't afford it . . . and you pay a penalty if you don't."

This is, of course, not the only reason Obama was nominated. He won many other votes, for example, with his antiwar promises to immediately end American involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan – which he has, of course, not done. This Obama anti-Hillary ad is,

however, of interest with respect to Obama's recent interview with George Stephanopoulos as reported in "Obama's Nontax Tax" in *The Wall Street Journal*, September 21, 2009, p A18.

During the interview, Stephanopoulos asked Obama about his support for a mandatory penalty as high as \$3,800 per year to be paid by anyone who fails to buy health insurance – precisely the policy that he blamed on Hillary during the primaries.

Obama acknowledged his support for this, but contended vigorously that Stephanopoulos should not refer to it as a tax.

Mr. Obama said, "No, that's not true, George. The – for us to say that you've got to take a responsibility to get health insurance is absolutely not a tax increase. What it's saying is, is that we're not going to have other people carrying your burdens for you anymore . . ."

"In other words," remarks the *Journal*, "like parents talking to their children, this levy – don't call it a tax – is for your own good."

Trying again, Stephanopoulos quoted to Obama from the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary's* definition of "tax," as "a charge, usually of money, imposed by authority on persons or property for public purposes."

Obama replied, "George, the fact that you looked up *Merriam's Dictionary*, the definition of tax increase, indicates to me that you're stretching a little bit right now . . ."

Stephanopoulos said, "But you reject that it's a tax increase?"

Obama replied, "I absolutely reject that notion."

As the journal summarizes, ". . . what doesn't count as a nontax under Mr. Obama's definition? All taxes can be justified in the name of providing some type of service, however wasteful."

The "cap and trade" energy tax, which *The Wall Street Journal* has called the largest tax increase in American history – now passed by the House and waiting for the Senate – is also not called a "tax" by Obama. He says that it is a "fine" paid by polluters – even though it will sharply raise fuel and other energy costs for all Americans as it is passed through from energy providers upon which it is imposed.

Obama beat Hillary with bogus promises that he has not kept. He won election in the same way – promising, for example, not to raise taxes on anyone making less than \$250,000 per year.

Bill Clinton, when cornered for sexual transgressions, tried to revise the dictionary. Obama carries this much farther to attempt to hide his policies. In the extraordinary arrogance that he exhibits in all public affairs, Obama apparently believes that he can revise the English language – without notice to his listeners – whenever he finds its definitions inconvenient, including the meaning of "tax."

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GOOD READING
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• "From Citizens to 'Stakeholders': The New American Constitution", by Angelo Codevilla in the *American Spectator*, September 2009, pp 24-33, begins with a quotation of Obama as candidate, "I'm going to get everybody concerned around a big table where all can express their views and their needs. And I'll express mine, and that will make sense of them all because I'll be president."

Codevilla describes the Administration's policy of making deals with "stakeholders" to pick "winners and losers" – with the rest of the citizenry disenfranchised and the Constitution ignored. Deal making and political bribery are now the primary paths to policy.

• *A Meaningful World* by Benjamin Wiker and Jonathan Witt, (2006) IVP Academic extolls the beautiful and very ordered world that science has revealed.

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