

National News

Democrat 'Centrists' Promote John McCain

Sen. Joseph Lieberman's Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), carries two articles in the current issue of its magazine *Blueprint*, by right-wing ideologues: Marshall Wittmann, of the Hudson Institute and its Bull Moose Party project; and Tod Lindberg, of the Hoover Institution, recent editorial page editor of the *Washington Times*. Both DLC pieces praise Republican Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) as the new Teddy Roosevelt. They portray "TR," at some length, as a progressive hero, against the reactionary President William McKinley.

The Lindberg piece praises McCain's "rogue state rollback" policy, and Attorney General John Ashcroft's "Freedom Corps" (which includes the blockwatch and mass FBI-informants programs). It demands overwhelming government "energy" in the nation's "new task" of fighting terrorism.

The Hudson Institute is a "conservative think-tank" sponsored by the Pulliam family of Indiana. Eugene Pulliam (grandfather of Dan Quayle) was a newspaper-man promoter of Teddy Roosevelt and J.P. Morgan against the McKinley wing of the Republican party.

At the end of his piece boosting McCain, who is now being promoted as a "Bull Moose" Presidential third candidate, Wittmann warns President Bush, "The war has brought out his [Bush's] inner TR, but he needs to leave his inner McKinley behind."

401(k)s and the Illusion of Wealth

"In the long economic expansions of the 1980s and 90s, the wealth of middle Americans seemed to rise," writes *New York Times* financial columnist Louis Uchitelle. "Their stock portfolios and home ownership gave them the appearance of growing richer. But

now it turns out that net worth went down, not up."

According to a study by New York University economist Edward N. Wolff, the main culprit is shrinking pensions, but rising debt associated with mortgages and home equity loans also took their toll.

"I think the 401(k) is a real scam," says Wolff. He says that people look at the balances in their "401(k)" private pension plans, and think they've made a lot of money, not realizing that their company-paid pensions are disappearing. But had they put their money in those company-paid pensions, they would still be better off, than by investing their money in a 401(k).

By Wolff's calculations, the median wealth for households in which the major breadwinner is between 47 and 64 years old, has declined by 13.5% from 1983 to 1998, the last year for which data are available.

Internet Kills Game Player, 21

A young "Sony Online" video-game player committed suicide last Thanksgiving in Hudson, Wisconsin while playing a game called "EverQuest," to which he was addicted. This is a gaming "guild," which has 430,000 registered players worldwide, large numbers of whom play 20 hours per week or more. The virtual-reality game is nicknamed "EverCrack" by players, because of its addictive potential.

The incident was made public only on May 25 by the boy's mother, who founded a group called Online Gamers Anonymous. Shawn Woolsey was found sitting before his computer screen next to a .22 caliber rifle, with which police say he shot himself. The police said that he had been playing the game for nine days straight. His apartment was cluttered with pizza boxes and chicken bones.

EverQuest is one of the most popular "Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games." The game especially attracts teenagers, who, according to doctors, are

"depressed and insecure." The players form teams or "guilds" worldwide "in a never-ending journey to earn points and slay monsters." Peer pressure is a key element, which dissuades an individual from logging off, because it may hurt the guild's chances of winning. If a player wants to quit a session without losing points, the process can take hours.

The vice-president of Sony Online responded to the suicide, saying the game is just another form of "entertainment."

Outrage Over Suicide Bomber Video Game

The newest killer-video game to hit the market in Great Britain, is called "Kaboom!" Players assume the role of a suicide bomber, and try to kill as many people as possible. The London *Sunday Telegraph* wrote on May 26: "'Kaboom!' has been copied onto thousands of computers across Britain, and is circulating freely on the Internet. Players move their suicide bomber along a busy street, to get as close as possible to the maximum number of innocent civilians. At the opportune moment, they click on their mouse, and the terrorist opens his coat, to reveal grenades strapped to his body, then explodes in a shower of bloody limbs. Scoring is broken down into tallies of dead or injured men, women, and children. Players are already posting their scores on the Internet, with comments such as: 'Seven dead with one blast was my best. Fantasy fulfillment at its best.' Other suggestions include: 'Let's get more realistic. Bring some police and buses in. I wish you could kill more people.'"

The game's author is an anonymous 23-year-old from Houston, who uses the alias "Fabulous999," who says, on his website: "You'll start in Israel, and work your way across Europe, and end up in America. Each country will have missions, such as injure three women or kill two children without injuring any adults."

According to the *Sunday Telegraph*, "Kaboom!" first appeared, on the website

CALIFORNIA'S housing bubble is still inflating. According to the Association of Realtors on May 28, the median price of an existing single-family home in the state jumped 26.1% in April, compared to a year ago, to a record \$321,950. In the San Francisco Bay Area (but excluding Napa and Sonoma Counties), only 23% of people could afford the median price of \$530,000 for an existing single-family home—the highest in the country—according to a CAR survey done in April.

A U.S. SOLDIER was arrested on May 25 for attempting to bomb a power plant. In an odd story, coming amid so many terror alerts, a soldier from Fort Stewart was arrested by Jacksonville, Florida police. Dressed totally in black, he had armed himself, and then planted explosives at a Florida Power and Light plant, but he was stopped while speeding away from the plant. Sgt. Derek Peterson, 27, is being held on \$5 million bond.

PAKISTANI immigrants being detained over alleged Florida bomb threats argued that an FBI informant, identified only as “Mohammad,” had incited them, according to Associated Press. Imran Mandhai, 19, and Shueyb Mossa Jokhan, 24, were ordered held without bail on May 28 by a Fort Lauderdale magistrate, who had reviewed transcripts of conversations the two had had with the informant in March-April 2001, in which they discussed possible bombings of electrical transformers, a National Guard armory, and attacks on Jewish residents in south Florida.

HOMELESSNESS is rising in the Washington, D.C. area, compared to last year, especially among the fully employed, and among children, according to the Metropolitan Council of Governments. Homelessness is now evenly divided between the city and its (mostly “wealthy”) suburbs. Rising housing costs, the ongoing economic depression, and fragmented services for people suffering mental illness and addiction, were cited as reasons.

newsgrounds.com. It has registered more than 750,000 “views.” Tom Fulp, the creator of the newsgroups site, and of games such as “Assassin” and “Club a Seal,” refuses to remove “Kaboom!” insisting that “newsgroups will continue to protect the freedom to make extreme games.”

There have been various denunciations, including from British Jewish community leader Lord Janner, who called it “grotesque, unacceptable, and uncivilized.” Fiona Macaulay, a spokeswoman for the Board of Deputies of British Jews, called it “obscene,” adding, “We will be investigating if it contravenes legislation covering incitement to violence, and reporting the site to Internet watchdog agencies.”

Death Agony of Energy Pirates

As *EIR* repeatedly observed, the “energy-pirate” trading business which exploded out of nowhere with the advent of gas and electricity deregulation in the United States, producing Fortune 500 leaders out of unknown companies, was not viable without high and rising energy prices; and even then, it was not nearly as profitable as claimed.

When the decisions were made in mid-2001 to take certain energy-regulatory steps which checked the rise of energy prices, in order to undercut LaRouche’s leadership of the growing public outrage, one effect was to blow out the pirates. Enron, which had apparently bet the farm on its ability to keep prices high through market manipulation, was the first to go. Following Enron down the slippery slope toward oblivion are the remaining pirates, including AES, Dynegy, Reliant Resources, CMS Energy, and Mirant.

The market capitalization of AES has fallen from a peak of \$27.3 billion to \$3.6 billion; Dynegy, which nine months ago was priming itself to buy up failing Enron, has seen its capitalization fall from \$18.9 billion to \$3.6 billion; Reliant Resources from \$10.7 billion to \$2.9 billion (and parent Reli-

ant Energy from \$14.8 billion to \$5.3 billion); Mirant from \$16 billion to \$4 billion; and Williams from \$21.9 billion to \$8.8 billion. The recent management shake-ups at Dynegy, Reliant, and CMS Energy are indicative of this continuing collapse.

Dynegy’s Chairman and CEO Charles Watson was forced to resign on May 27, amid a Securities and Exchange Commission inquiry into something called Project Alpha, an off-balance-sheet entity which Dynegy created to conceal debt. There are also charges that it engaged in sham energy trades in order to falsely boost its revenue.

Virginia Governor Endorses Republican

Virginia’s Governor, Democrat Mark Warner, effectively endorsed Republican John Warner’s Senate re-election, on the “Ask the Governor” program on Washington’s WTOP radio station on May 28.

Asked why there is no party opposition to the Republican Senator, Mark Warner answered: “John Warner is a tough challenge; he represents well Virginia, and fights very, very hard on a number of critical issues. That being said, no one has stepped forward who I believe is going to mount a credible campaign.” Asked if anyone would have a chance, Mark Warner said, “It’s a very uphill battle. To take on an incumbent Senator, or Congressman, unless you put in a lot of groundwork and build a base. It’s always a challenge to take on an incumbent, even more if you’re trying to start five months out with no name recognition.”

Governor Warner’s cross-party “endorsement” came on the eve of the Democratic Party’s final opportunity to nominate a candidate, and with LaRouche Democrat Nancy Spannaus actively seeking the party’s nomination against Senator Warner. It tends to confirm rumors that Governor Warner has made a deal (as did his predecessor, Democrat Doug Wilder) with the Senator—and doesn’t want anyone to run against him.