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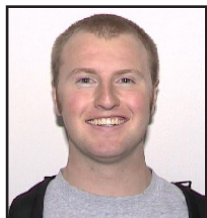


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Informants and the American Police State

Max Stoneman



“What we find is that when SWAT teams go out, shootings go down.”

-John Gnagey, National Tactical Officers Association

In the 1960s, LA County police began an experiment to train certain officers with special weapons and tactics that would be vital in confrontations with well-armed, entrenched criminals. These officers were in essence the first SWAT team, a paramilitary unit deployed within a police department. The idea spread to police departments across the country and SWAT teams were used primarily in hostage and bank robbery situations. As of 2006, SWAT teams are deployed 40,000 times a year, to crisis situations involving hostages, terrorism and the threat of force against American or foreign dignitaries.

However, an increasing number of SWAT deployments are not for the reasons listed above at all. Many times, to retain funding for the expensive maintenance of SWAT units, police departments deploy them to serve search and arrest warrants to non-hostile suspects and individuals. In many of these cases, those being served react defensively

to what they assume is an unlawful entry into their home. What follows is a bloodbath: SWAT teams and other similarly trained units across the nation react with deadly force, often killing or paralyzing suspects who are caught in the situation.



In *Overkill: The Rise of Paramilitary Police Raids in America*, author Radley Balko argues that these SWAT raids inflict upon innocent civilians and bystanders “the terror of having their homes invaded while they’re sleeping, usually by teams of heavily armed paramilitary units dressed not as police officers but as soldiers.” The idea of police invading

a family’s home is chilling. It is ever more chilling considering the staggering number of deaths and injuries inflicted on civilians during these raids.

In general, the information that leads to these raids is faulty at best. Often, paid informants who are drug users or dealers themselves point

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Evolution and Education: Not the Viewpoint You’re Expecting

Intelligent design of education policy could stimulate the ongoing evolution of better schools

Abe Gong



In his article last week, “The Broken Economics of Utah’s Public Education”, Jonathan Neville launched a sweeping criticism of Utah’s new voucher law and the public education system in general. He

makes it clear that he has little patience for “half measures and talking.” What he doesn’t say is what he would do better.

Neville isn’t alone in his frustration. Politicians, educators and wonks have been aware of – and baffled by – the inefficiencies of public education ever since the famous “Coleman report” to Congress in 1966. We’ve made piecemeal progress in some areas, but the holy grail of systemic reform remains elusive. We’re treading water internationally, the racial “achievement gap” is as wide as ever, and innovations in education have been scarce and sporadically implemented. By

most indications the system is still “broken,” partly because participants in the reform process have rarely stopped to think about the Big Picture of education.

This article is about Big Picture. In the first half, I frame Neville’s ideas in the context of the two contemporary political movements that are attempting to solve the problems of public education. In the second half, I conclude with some ideas on how those movements will have to come together to “fix” public education.

Accountability vs. School Choice

In the last few decades, two broad approaches to education reform have been developed: “accountability” and “school choice.” Proponents of the first approach (including the bipartisan supporters of No Child Left Behind) argue that unmotivated or incompetent authorities in local school districts are incapable of systemic improvement. Therefore, the best approach is for states and the federal government to take a firmer hand in curriculum and testing, often using high-stakes tests to measure and incentivize

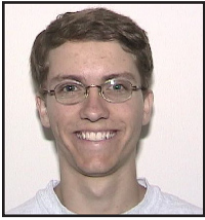
improvement. In essence, the accountability camp argues for more centralization of the education system, citing the efficiency and success of highly-centralized programs in countries like France, Australia and Singapore.

In contrast, advocates of school choice argue that the school system should be less centralized, putting market pressure on schools by letting students and parents choose among educational options. The extreme version of this argument (advocated by the late Milton Friedman) is to completely “marketize” the school system by giving all children an equal tax credit for schooling, and letting the various school systems duke it out in a competitive laissez faire brawl. More moderate versions of school choice include voucher programs like Utah’s, inter- and intra-district attendance options, and charter schools. Liberals tend to be suspicious of this system, conceding that it might improve efficiency, but at the cost of introducing fundamentalist curricula,

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Saying One Thing and Doing Another

Carl Brinton



As Dr. Raphael Patai posits in his book, *The Arab Mind*, “the adult Arab makes statements which express threats, demands, or intentions which he does not intend to carry out but which, once uttered, relax emotional tension, give psychological relief and at the same time reduce the pressure to engage in any act aimed at realizing the verbalized goal ... Once the intention of doing something is verbalized, this verbal formulation itself leaves in the mind of the speaker the impression that he has done something about the issue at hand, which in turn psychologically reduces the importance of following it up by actually translating the stated intention into action...” Indeed, this is at the very core of our misunderstanding of many Middle Eastern nations. Albeit differing in many ways from Arab culture, Persian culture is similar in this regard. This would explain the seeming discrepancy between Iranian President Ahmadinejad’s bombastic rhetoric and comparatively tame actions. Saying something like “wipe Israel off the map” then following up with a speech at the UN that says that Iran and Israel can peacefully coexist doesn’t otherwise make sense.

In fact, even the phrase “Israel should be wiped off the map” is a misunderstanding in and of itself. As Juan Cole, a University of Michigan Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History said, the most correct Persian translation of the phrase Ahmadinejad used is “this regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time.” Iran’s Foreign Minister, Manouchehr Mottaki supported this translation, saying in a speech (in English) given to the European Parliament, “How is it possible to remove a country from the map? He is talking about the regime. We do not recognise legally this regime.” This view is held by many of the countries and peoples in that region, not just those singled out as members of the “axis of evil.”

A further misunderstanding comes from the assumption that Ahmadinejad’s belligerent speech, denials of the Holocaust, and support for continued uranium enrichment are representative of the Iranian people. Remember, even in a democracy, the government may misrepresent the people (Bush’s approval ratings hovering below 40% ought to prove that). What’s more, Iran can hardly even be termed a democracy. According to Juan Cole, hardliner popularity in Iran has sunk to 15%, showing that most of the people in Iran do not share Ahmadinejad’s views. In fact, an even larger portion of the educated

and socioeconomically higher class people in Iran disagree with him. He gained power mainly through political manoeuvring and the promise of a better economy, which, when it didn’t happen, became a liability.

But think how it adds to the confusion when the US, which claims it is not planning any military action in Iran, recently conducted military exercises in the Persian Gulf (unrelated to military action in Iraq) and recently leaked plans for widespread airstrikes in Iran. This is not only impolite by Middle Eastern standards, but downright belligerent by any country’s standards.

The potential reasons for using airstrikes against Iran are even more disconcerting, especially given the administration’s casus belli for attacking Iraq, which ended up being based on false and faulty intelligence, the American public should not trust the administration to make the judgment call on what action to take against Iran. Thus far, it has chosen to ostracise and threaten Iran, and given the continued enrichment of uranium by Iran and the continuing downward spiral of American popularity in the world, those tactics have not worked.

Considering all these actions, it seems time for regime change, and I don’t mean in Iran.

Carl is from New York City, New York majoring in Asian Studies and Economics.

CHECK IT OUT

Upcoming Events on Campus

Global Awareness Lecture

“Panama: Social Challenges, Political Responsibilities, and Economic Opportunities,” His Excellency Federico A. Humbert, Panamanian ambassador to the U.S.,
Wednesday, 14 March, 12:00 pm, 238 HRCB

International Relations Lecture

“Challenges to Democratization in Latin America: Evidence from the AmericasBarometer 2006,” Mitchell A. Seligson, Centennial Professor of Political Science and Fellow of the Center for the Americas, Vanderbilt University,
Thursday, 15 March, 11:00 am, 238 HRCB

Asian Studies Lecture

“Jewish and Japanese Responses to Atrocity,” Alan Tansman, chair, Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, University of California—Berkeley,
Thursday, 15 March, 11:00 am–12:00 pm, B094 JFSB

International Relations Lecture

“Securing American Diplomacy Worldwide: Life as a Special Agent,” Frederick R. Stolper, special agent, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, and executive deputy director, Overseas Security Advisory Council,
Friday, 16 March, 11:00 am, 238 HRCB

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Bush's Abortion Hypocrisy

Kenneth Buu



On August 21, 2006 at a news conference in the temporary press room across from the White House, pro-life leaders were furious and disillusioned, while pro-choice activists rejoiced to witness President

Bush flip-flop positions concerning abortion. President Bush announced his support for the Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Andrew von Eschenbach's plan to approve sales of the Plan B pills without a prescription. The Plan B pill is the morning-after abortion pill that acts to kill the embryo after conception and is easily available over the counter.

Like most decisions in Washington, Bush's decision was all about petty politics. President Bush nomination of Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach to run the Food and Drug Administration was vigorously opposed by pro-choice politicians, including Senators Hillary Clinton and Patty Murray, who pledged to refuse to confirm Bush's nominee until the Plan B was approved.

Not surprisingly, on August 21st, President Bush declared support for the pill and on August 24th the pill was approved.

Some of President's biggest supporters turned against him. The Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America and the American Life League criticized the President and the FDA for sacrificing "women's health in the name of politics."

Even Senator Tom Coburn (R-Oklahoma), an obstetrician by trade, acknowledged the flaws of the FDA's decision for women's health. He said, "The Bush administration's policy on the morning

after pill should be based on protecting the health of women, not their nominees... This decision has nothing to do with science or FDA rules but has everything to do with politics."

The President attempted to change the issue by saying, "I believe that Plan B ought to require a prescription for minors. That's what I believe." Yet, he ignores the ethical dimensions of the debate and tries to turn it into a discussion of what age is appropriate for women to buy a morning-after pill, aborting the consequences of irresponsible sexual activity. Under Bush's plan, minors will need prescription, however, the Plan B manufacturer and many pro-choice organizations favor the complete elimination of age restriction. This is despite the fact that medical and policy experts recognize that there are many harmful consequences to Plan B, especially as age decreases.

In the White House on July 19, 2006, President Bush addressed a crowd of parents and children who were adopted while still an embryo, and defended his decision to veto a bill to fund stem cell research by the destruction of human embryos. He described that each human embryo is a "unique human life with inherent dignity and matchless value", that they aren't "spare parts," and that they remind us that "we all begin our lives as a small collection of cells". He boldly declared that "America must never abandon our fundamental values". Despite all his efforts and rhetoric about respecting all forms of human life including embryos with "inherent dignity and matchless value", his support for a Plan B pill that clearly annihilates the embryo after conception demonstrates solid hypocrisy.

Ken is from La Crescenta, California majoring in Computer Science.

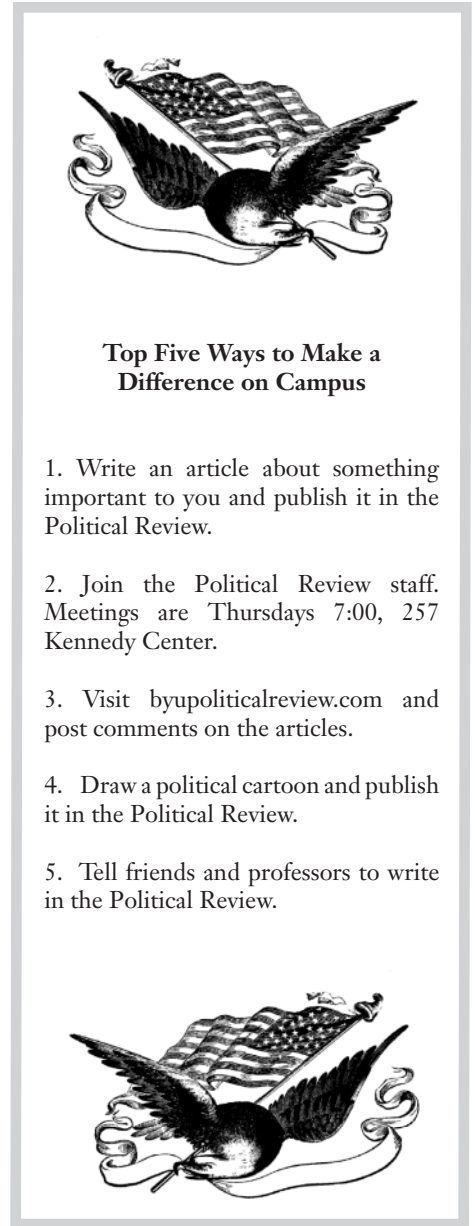
Swat Teams

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the finger to rivals and get free revenge, paid for by the state. This information is anonymous, making falsification of events, names and places that much easier. This was the case in Florida, where a man suspected of selling marijuana (but with no criminal history of violence or drug-dealing), was shot 10 times in the chest, head and abdomen by a SWAT team sent in to search his apartment. The police department said that the suspect was armed. However, this particular suspect had a concealed weapons permit and that early morning raid was very likely perceived by the suspect as a criminal entry. A former circuit judge named Eleanor Shockett put it this way, "What the hell were they doing with a SWAT team? To break into someone's house at six in the morning, possibly awaken someone from a deep sleep, someone who has a concealed weapons permit? What did they expect to happen?"

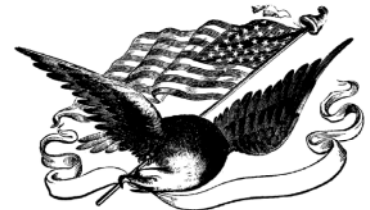
Balko's argument is critical: Are bad policies

turning otherwise routine law enforcement situations into volatile ones with the use of excessive paramilitary force? The numbers indicate that this is the case. In many of the tragic circumstances where an innocent bystander is killed or permanently disabled (Google these names for more information: Danny Castillo Jr., Shay Neace, Katherine Johnston, Salvatore Culosi, Charles Irwin Potts and Anthony Diotaiuto), the raids are often botched by poor information garnered from suspect informants, or the officers do not follow the protocol of announcing themselves before entering a residence. These "no-knock" raids give the impression of urban warfare in situations that do not warrant such tactics at all and often result in civilian casualties. Even if a unit does announce its presence, there has been a steep increase in "wrong door raids," where persons are injured and unnecessarily terrorized because poor information or planning



Top Five Ways to Make a Difference on Campus

1. Write an article about something important to you and publish it in the Political Review.
2. Join the Political Review staff. Meetings are Thursdays 7:00, 257 Kennedy Center.
3. Visit byupoliticalreview.com and post comments on the articles.
4. Draw a political cartoon and publish it in the Political Review.
5. Tell friends and professors to write in the Political Review.



on the part of the police force led them to raid the wrong address.

Ultimately, the question comes down to policy. Will law enforcement agencies and police departments continue to perform high risk, military-style raids with "zero margin for error, relying on informants of questionable repute, where the wrong address, bad timing or bad information can – and frequently does – result in tragedy?" However simple this question should be, the answer is a continuing trend of SWAT-style raids occurring in rural, suburban and exurban locations with disastrous results. In the words of Dr Peter Kraska, an expert in police militarization, "the problem is that when you talk about the war on this and the war on that, and police officers see themselves as soldiers, then the civilian becomes the enemy."

Max is from Provo, Utah majoring in Middle East Studies and Arabic.

The Real Fight for Liberty and Freedom

James Cragun



Through the threat of violent attacks on civilians, terrorists have incited fear in nations around the world. This threat is a political weapon, used to spread terror and thus indirectly control the populace. Although we should be ever careful to guard our nation against terrorist attacks, we must at the same time be careful not to unwittingly allow terrorists to accomplish their objective. If fear is allowed to consume our nation, the cost will be great to our freedoms.

Unfortunately however, there are some among our leaders who don't truly wish to combat terrorism. Many among the so-called neoconservative movement actually want us to be afraid. They use the fear that violent attacks provide to control the American people; to keep themselves in power and to convince Americans to give up their liberties. In a sense, they themselves are actually terrorists.

These neo-cons promote fear and they use it. They use manipulative, fear-inducing rhetoric to convince the public that terrorists will destroy our freedom and our way of life. "If we don't support the President, then the enemy will sense our division. If we don't give him full rein, the terrorists will win." Though not a direct quote, this could be considered a summary of some of

their arguments, as could the following: "If we leave Iraq, Al Qaeda will take over the country. The terrorists will find a safe haven in Iraq, and they will use it as a training ground and as a base to take over the world."

Let's consider the extreme assertion that, should the US withdraw, Al Qaeda will take over Iraq. Al Qaeda cannot "win" in Iraq; they simply don't have the numbers to do so. Sunni-hating Shiite militias are easily the dominant force in Iraq, absent the U.S. military. Each one of these armies numbers in the tens of thousands, and they are anything but reluctant to slaughter Sunnis in their country, whether they be militant insurgents, or innocent Sunni civilians. It would be infeasible for Sunni extremists to gain the upper hand in Iraq, much less Al Qaeda.

Yet ironically, on other fronts, the terrorists are winning. Neo-cons are quick to assert that the terrorists want to use terror as a tool to destroy our freedoms and our way of life, and they are succeeding. They have succeeded in spreading fear throughout our once great nation. They've convinced many of us that if we don't turn our democracy into a freedom-less fascist nation of forced "unity," the terrorists will win.

Dangerous amounts of power are being placed in the hands of the Executive branch. Admittedly, the average American citizen has not seen a significant decline in his quality of life. The point, rather, is that the President has been given such power that he could, if he so desired, restrict the

freedoms of any persons he chose. Consider the tragically mislabelled "Patriot Act." How can one logically use patriotism as an excuse to dismantle the basic freedoms that make our country great? I am a Patriot because I cherish the liberties that my country stands for. If the systems for guaranteeing such freedoms are dismantled, what will be left for me to love about my country?

One problem with our country today is that too many people are "proud to be an American", rather than grateful to be an American. Pride is not a virtue. We have an amazing history full of brave heroes who fought to obtain freedom from tyranny and oppression. Proud Americans of today like to think of themselves just like those courageous revolutionaries of old. President Bush recently visited Mount Vernon to pay respect to former President George Washington on Presidents' Day. While there, he spoke of the American Revolution and compared it analogously to what he called "a new war to defend our liberty and our people and our way of life." I don't buy it.

Although I admire and respect the brave men and women who answer the call of their nation to serve in the armed forces, those who are sending our troops into harm's way are not the noble freedom-defenders that they fancy themselves to be. We are not fighting for our liberty in Iraq. The real fight for our liberties is happening here in the homeland, right under our noses.

James is a former BYU student who majored in Music Performance.

Education and Evolution

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deemphasizing civics and citizenship, and greatly increasing inequality and classism.

Counterbalancing both of these movements are the entrenched interests of teachers unions, accreditation programs and local educational authorities. These groups bring important interests and views to the table, but sometimes (some would say "always") limit the politically feasible options for reform.

The Big Picture of Education Reform

In my opinion, neither the state-centric accountability camp, nor the market-dependent school choice faction has the whole solution for education reform. I'm convinced that centralized

accountability can never provide an engine for sustainable innovation in education, because of the limits of standardized tests and the ponderous pace of government. The needs of education are too complicated, too dynamic, and too subjective to be supplied centrally.

However, blithe marketization of schools isn't the answer either, because education is about shared values just as much as individual cognitive skills. The inevitable civic decisions about what and how to teach should involve government, because education is at the heart of our process for creating social consensus and shaping national identity.

What we need is a system that brings school choice and accountability together in a way that decentralizes innovation but centralizes decisions about community values. When this happens, it

will be a new kind of fusion, not quite like any other market or branch of government we've seen before. It won't happen by accident either, so keep your eyes open for the few proposals that take into account all the needs of education.

On the Utah voucher system: for the time being, I tend to lean towards school choice, because U.S. schools are hurting badly for practical tests of new ideas. However, empirical evidence suggests that vouchers are one of the least effective means of accomplishing that goal. In general, I agree with Jonathan: for all the talk, Utah's voucher program is a half measure not likely to accomplish anything substantial.

Abe is a BYU graduate currently studying Public Policy at Michigan University.



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Discuss Current Events every Thursday
6:00 238 HRCB (Kennedy Center)

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