



Erasing George W. Bush

BY ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune Media Services

As Bill Clinton is resurrected by the Democrats, George W. Bush is being erased by the GOP – as if an entire eight years of American history hadn’t happened.

While Clinton stumps for President Obama, Mitt Romney has gone out of his way not to mention the name of the president who came after Clinton and before Obama.

Former President Clinton will have a starring role at the Democratic National Convention. Former President George W. Bush won’t even be at the Republican one – the first time a national party has not given the stage at its convention to its most recent occupant of the Oval Office who successfully ran for re-election.

The GOP is counting on America’s notoriously short-term memory to blot out the last time the nation put a Republican into the Oval Office, on the reasonable assumption that such a memory might cause voters to avoid making the same mistake twice. As whoever-it-was once said, “Fool me once ...” (and then mangled the rest).

Republicans want to obliterate any trace of the administration that told America there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and led us into a devastating war; ignored New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina; turned a \$5 trillion projected budget surplus into a \$6 trillion deficit; gave the largest tax cut in a generation to the richest Americans in history; handed out a mountain of corporate welfare to the oil and gas industry, pharmaceutical companies, and military contractors like Halliburton (uniquely benefiting the then-vice president); whose officials turned a blind eye to Wall Street shenanigans that led to the worst financial calamity since the Great Crash of 1929 and then persuaded Congress to bail out the Street with the largest taxpayer-funded giveaway of all time.

Mitt Romney, in particular, wants to erase any memory



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of George W. Bush because the former president’s record would undermine Romney’s claim that Obama’s policies were bad for the economy and exploded the size of government.

Besides, the resemblances between Bush and Romney are too close for comfort. Both were born into wealth, sons of prominent politicians who themselves ran for president; both are closely tied to the nation’s corporate and financial elites, and eager to do their bidding; both are socially awkward and, as candidates, tightly scripted for fear of saying something they shouldn’t; and both presented themselves to the nation devoid of any consistent policies or principles that might give some clue as to what they actually believe.

They are both men who ran or are running for the presidency for no clear reason other than to surpass their fathers or achieve the aims and ambitions of their wealthy patrons.

Small wonder the GOP wants us to forget our last Republican president and his administration.

It also helps explain why Romney chose Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) as a running mate. Ryan has made his name as someone ready to slash government spending, in profound contrast to George W. Bush, who signed every spending bill that came his way. Ryan is also a full generation apart from W, seemingly representing an even sharper break with the Republicans who busted the budget.

While Romney and the GOP want to erase the memory of W, Obama and the Democrats have every reason to want America to recall and celebrate the Clinton years, when the American economy soared.

Robert B. Reich, Chancellor’s Professor of Public Policy at the University of California and former U.S. Secretary of Labor, is the author of the newly released “Beyond Outrage: What has gone wrong with our economy and our democracy, and how to fix it,” a Knopf e-book original.

The Rez of the Story

Thoughts On A Warming World

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives),

Much of the conversation in Indian Country these days among most folks in our neck of the woods centers on the weather. The weather is always on the table as a topic of discussion, but it seems lately that there is more talk about global warming, especially with the weird drought we are currently experiencing and the almost non-existent winter we had this past year. I even noticed there are fewer birds out and about this summer.

I must confess that I am one of those who have never kept accurate (or any) records about the weather to document any patterns or trends, but there are folks who have. One of those is a writer for National Geographic by the name of Rick Murray who tells us:

Due to unusual heavy rains that fell on Nashville, Tenn., in May 2010, the Cumberland River didn’t stop rising until it reached 52 feet above flood stage. “There’s been a change in the weather. Extreme events like the Nashville flood — described by officials as a once-in-a-millennium occurrence — are happening more frequently than they used to.

“And it’s not just heavy rains that are making headlines. During the past decade, we’ve also seen severe droughts in places like Texas, Australia and Russia, as well as in East Africa, where tens of thousands have taken refuge in camps. Deadly heat waves have hit Europe, and record numbers of tornadoes have ripped across the United States. In the U.S. last year a record 14 events caused a billion dollars or more of damage each, far exceeding the previous record of nine such disasters in 2008.

“What’s going on? Are these extreme events signals of a human-made shift in Earth’s climate? Or are we just going through a stretch of bad luck?

“Something else is happening too: The Earth is steadily getting warmer, with significantly more moisture in the atmosphere. Decades of observations from the summit of Mauna Loa in Hawaii, as well as from thousands of other weather stations, satellites, ships, buoys, deep-ocean probes, and balloons, show that a long-term buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is trapping heat and warming up the land, oceans, and atmosphere ... some places, [most] notably the Arctic, are warming up faster than others. ... [and] scientist expect the weather to change substantially. The warmer the atmosphere, the more potential for record-breaking heat



Vince TWO EAGLES

waves. In the U.S. high-temperature records are being set these days twice as often as low-temperature ones; around the world 19 countries set national records in 2010.

“As moisture in the atmosphere has increased, rainfall has intensified. The amount of rain falling in intense downpours—the heaviest one percent of rain events—has increased by nearly 20 percent during the past century in the U.S. ‘You’re getting more rain from a given storm now than you would have 30 or 40 years ago,’ says Gerald Meehl, a senior scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. Global warming, he says, has changed the odds for extreme weather.

“‘Picture a baseball player on steroids,’ Meehl goes on. ‘This baseball player steps up to the plate and hits a home run. It’s impossible to say if he hit the home run because of the steroids, or whether he would have hit it anyway. The drugs just made it more likely.’

“‘It’s the same with weather, Meehl says. Greenhouse gases are the steroids of the climate system. ‘By adding just a little bit more carbon dioxide to the climate, it makes things a little bit warmer and shifts the odds toward these more extreme events,’ he says. ‘What was once a rare event will become less rare.’

Experts say that “... disasters are like heart attacks. When your doctor advises you about how to avoid a heart attack, he doesn’t say, ‘Well, you need to exercise, but it’s OK to keep smoking.’” The smart approach to extreme weather is to attack all the risk factors, by designing crops that can survive drought, building buildings that can resist flood and high winds, policies that discourage people from building in dangerous places — and of course, by cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

“We know that warming of the Earth’s surface is putting more moisture in the atmosphere. We’ve measured it. The satellites see it,” Jay Gulledge says. So the chances for extreme weather are going nowhere but up.

“We need to face that reality,” says climatologist Michael Oppenheimer of Princeton University, who helped write a recent report on extreme weather for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

We know it is always best to face the future with courage and knowledge so that our collective actions will reveal the best of us all. In the meantime, let’s take care of each other as good relatives must.

And now you know the rez of the story.

Doksha (later) ...

In 1945 at the height of World War II, the top marginal income tax bracket was 94 percent, from 1946 to 1981 it was never less than 70 percent. From 82 to 86 it was 50 percent. Since 2003 it has been held steady at 35 percent. Ryan’s plan would eliminate taxes on capital gains, on dividend income and on interest income, it would then tax everyone at one of two rates — 10 percent for joint filers with income up to \$100,000 a year; 25 percent on income above that level.

Ask yourself this: With the country already nearly \$16 trillion in debt, does the Ryan plan appear that it will decrease the debt or add to it? And, which way is that the uncollected revenue going to be trickling down or up? And, would this be good for the country?

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

Is Education Key To S.D. Prison Issue?

South Dakota seems imprisoned these days by a prison problem.

The issue, as discussed Monday by the state Corrections Commission while meeting in Springfield, is that this state is running out of prison space. If current projections hold, we will likely need a new women’s prison in five years and another men’s prison in about a decade.

That’s law and order for you, right? But new prisons will mean much more of a burden on South Dakota taxpayers. With current projected growth, the estimated cost of housing prisoners in 10 years could be \$224 million annually, up from the \$102 million being spent this year.

It should also be noted that South Dakota’s current incarceration rate is higher than any of our neighboring states, even though the crime rate is similar.

So, here’s the metaphorical holding cell in which we find ourselves: How do we address this issue that is growing quickly into a very expensive problem for the state?

Doing nothing is, well, not an answer, and that’s putting it kindly.

Building the prisons is an option no one really wants to embrace, but pending any other solutions, South Dakota may have no other choice.

Fewer arrests? That’s a start, but simply arresting fewer people is a rather ludicrous suggestion.

Fewer crimes? Now we may be getting somewhere ...

It would seem that the most practical approach to addressing prison overcrowding in this state is to address the factors that eventually motivate crimes before they turn into something serious and, as a consequence, expensive.

And that would seem to take us to, among other things, increased funding for education that could steer potential felons into other, better directions.

Boosting education spending may draw some criticism — for whatever reason — but research indicates it is a very practical investment. According to a study a few years ago by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 68 percent of all state prisoners in the country did not have high school diplomas. While graduating from high school is no guarantee that a kid will avoid prison, the study suggests it certainly improved the odds.

Expanding education would help expand opportunities, especially on the Native American reservations where crime rates are much higher.

It would also be a good idea to invest in education within a prison, such as offering methods to achieve GED diplomas or to teach vocational or industrial arts. This would impact the recidivism rate of inmates, thus also helping to trim down our overall prison population.

South Dakota has to do something not only to address the prison cost issue but also to reverse the trend of exploding prison numbers. The state prison population has grown by 500 percent in the last 30 years, and with that, costs have skyrocketed.

So, it could be said that whatever we are doing in terms of law enforcement, prosecution and punishment is apparently working — for better and for worse.

A new approach is needed, and investing in education to correct the problem before it blossoms into a prison issue would make a great deal of sense.

“We need to be smarter on crime, rather than tougher on crime,” State Sen. Craig Tieszen noted during Monday’s meeting.

Investing in education may well be one of those smarter approaches. It cannot be the only answer, but it would at least make for a promising, practical start.

kmh

OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. (During political campaigns, letters related to the campaign may be limited to 150 words.) Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

■ Only signed letters with writer’s full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 29, the 242nd day of 2012. There are 124 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On Aug. 29, 1952, 4’33” (“Four Minutes, Thirty-three Seconds”), a three-movement composition by avant-garde composer John Cage, had its premiere in Woodstock, N.Y., as pianist David Tudor sat at a piano and, for a total of four minutes and 33 seconds, played... nothing. (According to Cage, the “music” consisted of the setting’s background noises, including the sounds of the increasingly restive audience.)

On this date: In 1533, the last Incan King of Peru, Atahualpa, was executed on orders of Spanish conqueror Francisco Pizarro.

In 1862, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing began operations at the United States Treasury.

In 1877, the second president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Brigham Young, died in Salt Lake City, Utah, at age 76.

In 1943, responding to a clampdown by Nazi occupiers, Denmark managed to scuttle most of its naval ships.

In 1944, 15,000 American troops marched down the Champs Elysees in Paris as the French capital continued to celebrate its liberation from the Nazis.

In 1957, the Senate gave final congressional approval to a Civil Rights Act after South Carolina Sen. Strom Thurmond (then a Democrat) ended a filibuster that had lasted 24 hours.

In 1958, pop superstar Michael Jackson was born in Gary, Ind.

In 1962, Malvin R. Goode began covering the United Nations for ABC-TV, becoming network television’s first black reporter.

In 1972, swimmer Mark Spitz of the United States won the third of his seven gold medals at the Munich Olympics, finishing first in the 200-meter freestyle.

In 1982, Academy Award-winning actress Ingrid Bergman died in London on her 67th birthday.

In 1987, Academy Award-winning actor Lee Marvin died in Tucson, Ariz., at age 63.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast near Buras, La., bringing floods that devastated New Orleans. More than 1,800 people in the region died.

Ten years ago: A judge in Norwalk, Conn., sentenced Michael Skakel to 20 years to life in prison for bludgeoning his teenage neighbor, Martha Moxley, with a golf club in 1975 after hearing the Kennedy cousin tearfully proclaim his innocence.

Five years ago: Fellow Republicans called on Idaho Sen. Larry Craig to resign and party leaders pushed him from senior committee posts as fallout continued over his arrest at a Minneapolis airport restroom and guilty plea to disorderly conduct. Prayers, protests and a lingering disgust with the government’s response to Hurricane Katrina marked the disaster’s second anniversary in New Orleans. Taliban militants in Afghanistan released 12 South Korean captives, part of a deal with Seoul to free all 19 hostages. Richard Jewell, the former security guard who was wrongly linked to the 1996 Olympic bombing, was found dead in his west Georgia home; he was 44.

One year ago: In a sign Moammar Gadhafi had lost grip on his country, his wife and three of his children fled Libya to neighboring Algeria. Grammy-winning blues musician David “Honey Boy” Edwards, believed to be the oldest surviving Delta bluesman, died in his Chicago home at age 96.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor-director Lord Richard Attenborough is 89. Movie director William Friedkin is 77. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., is 76. Actor Elliott Gould is 74. Movie director Joel Schumacher is 73. Former White House Press Secretary James Brady is 72. TV personality Robin Leach is 71. Actor Ray Wise is 65. Actress Deborah Van Valkenburgh is 60. White House Chief of Staff Jacob Lew is 57. Dancer-choreographer Mark Morris is 56. Country musician Dan Truman (Diamond Rio) is 56. Actress Rebecca DeMornay is 53. Singer MeShell NdegeOcello is 43. Rhythm-and-blues singer Carl Martin (Shai) is 42. Actress Carla Gugino is 41. Rock musician Kyle Cook (Matchbox Twenty) is 37. Actor John Hensley is 35. Rock musician David Desrosiers (Simple Plan) is 32. Rapper A+ is 30. Actress Jennifer Landon is 29. Actor Jeffrey Licon is 27. Actress-singer Lea Michele (TV: “Glee”) is 26. Rock singer Liam Payne (One Direction) is 19.

Thought for Today: “Whom the gods wish to destroy they first call promising.” — Cyril Connolly, British journalist-writer (1903-1974).

FROM THE BIBLE

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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