



Protecting Falsehoods

BY ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune Media Services

“We’re not going to let our campaign be dictated by fact-checkers,” says Neil Newhouse, a Romney pollster. A half-dozen fact-checking organizations and websites have refuted Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan’s claims that President Obama removed the work requirement from the welfare law and will cut Medicare benefits by \$716 billion. *The New York Times* even reported that Romney has been “falsely charging” President Obama with removing the work requirement.

USA Today calls the Romney campaign’s claim that Obama has “funneled” money out of Medicare to pay for the federal health care law a “false line of attack” that’s directly contradicted by Medicare’s chief actuary. “Medicare’s money isn’t being taken away,” the paper concludes. Notwithstanding these refutations, the Romney campaign continues to make these charges. Most political campaigns are guilty of exaggeration. Some distort the truth. But rarely if ever has one resorted to such bald-faced lies — even after they’re shown to be lies.

Presumably the Romney campaign continues to make these and other false claims because they’re effective, swaying previous undecided voters Romney’s way. But this raises a more basic question: How can these false claims remain effective when they’ve been so overwhelmingly discredited by the media?

The answer is the Republican Party has developed three means of bypassing the mainstream media and its fact-checkers.

The first is by repeating big lies so often in TV spots — financed by a mountain of campaign money — that the public can no longer recall (if it ever knew) that the mainstream media and its fact-checkers have found them to be lies.

The money is the result of a series of court decisions and regulatory changes, beginning with the Supreme Court’s 2010 ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. Fully a quarter of the \$350 million amassed by super PACs through the end of July came from just 10 donors, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan group that tracks such spending. And most of that money is financing negative ads targeting President Obama and other Democrats.

Several hundred million more is being gathered by political groups masquerading as nonprofits, such as the U.S.



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Chamber of Commerce. Because of a loophole in IRS regulations that allows these donors to remain secret, big corporations and Wall Street banks can contribute as much as they want without even their own shareholders knowing how much or to whom.

The second means the GOP has developed to protect its mistruths is by discrediting the mainstream media — asserting that it’s run by “liberal elites” who can’t be trusted to tell the truth. “I am tired of the elite media protecting Barack Obama by attacking Republicans,” Newt Gingrich charged at a Republican debate last January, in what’s become a standard GOP attack line.

To be sure, the mainstream media hasn’t always called it correctly. Initially it bought the Bush administration’s claim there were “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq. But the mainstream media is at least committed to professional standards that separate truth from fiction, seek objective facts, correct errors and disseminate the truth.

The third means the GOP uses to protect itself is its own media outlets — led by Fox News, Rush Limbaugh and his yell-radio imitators, book publisher Regnery, and the editorial page of the

Wall Street Journal, along with a right-wing blogosphere. Even if these outlets don’t spread the lies directly, they can at least spread doubt about what’s true.

Together, these three mechanisms are creating a parallel Republican universe of Orwellian dimension — where anything can be asserted, where pollsters and political advisers are free to create whatever concoction of lies will help elect their candidate, and where “fact-checkers” are as irrelevant and intrusive as is the truth.

Whether all this helps the Republican Party in 2012 is of less consequence than the larger danger it poses to America. Democracy cannot thrive where truth becomes irrelevant. To the contrary, history teaches that this is where demagogues take root.

The Romney campaign has decided it won’t be dictated by fact-checkers. But a society without trusted arbiters of what is true and what is false is vulnerable to every lie imaginable.

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 “Beyond Outrage: What has gone wrong with our economy and our democracy, and how to fix it,” a Knopf release that came out in paperback Sept. 4.

The Rez Of The Story

The Medicine Wheel Revealed

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives). Immediately adjacent to the Veteran’s Clinic in front of the Indian Health Service Clinic here in Wagner, you will find yourself pleasantly drawn to the “Medicine Wheel” (chahadeska in our Dakota Language) that has been erected there — black, white, red and yellow.

This account of the purpose and meaning of this very sacred symbol among our people is by no means definitive or exhaustive, but I think it’s necessary because of its placement in the very center of our community. I am told you are welcome to visit this site, which may very well become historic in the not too distant future because of its cultural and religious significance to Native people.

First, let me say that this symbol is not only widespread among indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere but can also be found in various versions virtually all over the world. I have heard accounts of its existence among African people, among Asian people and European people as well. I have seen it painted on church walls in Italy and we are all familiar with the yin-yang symbol in the orient.

In Wyoming, there is an ancient Medicine Wheel site you can visit called Medicine Wheel National Monument by taking Wyoming Highway 14A, known as the Medicine Wheel Passage.

According to the Wyoming state Website (<http://www.wyomingtourism.org/overview/Medicine-Wheel-Passage/31250>), “The medicine wheel was constructed by Plains Indians between 300 to 800 years ago, and has been used and maintained by various groups since then. The central cairn is the oldest part, with excavations showing it extends below the wheel and has been buried by wind-blown dust. It may have supported a central pole. The star alignments are most accurate for around 1200 AD, since slight changes in the Earth’s orbit have caused perturbations [careful examinations] since. The solstice alignments remain accurate today. The Bighorn wheel is part of a much larger complex of interrelated archeological sites [sacred sites to Indian people] that represent 7,000 years of Native American adaptation to and use of the alpine landscape that surrounds Medicine Mountain. Numerous contemporary American Indian traditional use ceremonial staging areas, medicinal and ceremonial plant gathering



Vince TWO EAGLES

areas, sweat lodge sites, alters offering locales and fasting (vision quest) enclosures can be found nearby. Ethno historic, ethnographic, and archeological evidence demonstrates that the Medicine Wheel and the surrounding landscape constitute one of the most important and well preserved ancient Native American sacred site complexes in North America. Between 70 and 150 wheels have been identified in South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Alberta, and Saskatchewan.”

Thus it can be said that the “Chahadeska” has been around a long time.

This symbol of the circle separated into four equal parts with the colors indicated above represents many things because it is the way Dakota people understand the workings of the universe starting with the elements divided into Earth, Wind, Fire and Water. The four races of man hence the four colors: black, white, red, and yellow. Since the “Chahadeska” represents balance and therefore racial equality, there is no right or wrong order as to how the four colors are organized.

The symbol also represents the four parts of ourselves: the mental, emotional, physical and the spiritual — always remember the circle reminds us to keep things in balance and in harmony. The symbol also represents the four ages of the human life; infancy, childhood, adulthood and finally the status of elder.

It represents the quadruplets who survived the ‘Great flood’ from which all humans are descended from and how our pipestone came to be.

Being a prominent part of our community’s landscape, the symbol will serve as a reminder to us all that we are all brothers and sisters, and if we want to have a healthy (balanced) “village,” we need to promote the fact that “cultural diversity” is indeed an asset and not a liability.

Mother Earth is about maintaining a vast variety of life that seeks to be in balance. Who would we be to question or try to alter that? Doesn’t this in fact call all of us to our duty to get and stay plugged into those activities that promote a healthy community for everyone? Happiness is our legacy, all we have to do is reach out and claim it together. If this is what you remember when you drive by or stop to take picture of and with this “Medicine Wheel,” then it is certainly a welcome addition, don’t you think?

And now you know the rez of the story.
Doksha (later) ...

about our children and future generations. In the last few years though, we’ve all had to take a hard look at this legacy and wonder if our “golden years” aren’t going to be a bit tarnished. The government sends out statements of our work history every year and we look at all the years we have worked and then what we can expect and it seems a bit unbalanced. Then, of course at 65 Medicare will come out of that, or will it, no one seems to know. So then we’re

left with worrying about health insurance. Of course, if you have pre-existing conditions like cancer, heart disease, diabetes, etc., then you won’t even qualify or if you do, the premiums are going to take more than half of your social security largesse. I use that last word with tongue in cheek as we earned and are entitled to that. A well-known organization for seniors, AARP, is lobbying to keep these strong, but it’s a drop in the bucket compared to big insurance, who

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

The Myth Of ‘Energy Independence’

In keeping with a time-honored political tradition, Mitt Romney last week laid out his vision for America’s energy future, unveiling a regimen that he said would achieve “energy independence” by 2020. That notion sounds like a good idea. It also sounded good when Barack Obama talked about it in 2008, when both Al Gore and George W. Bush peddled it in 2000, and when other candidates from all parties have made such declarations in their stump speeches dating back to the 1970s, pushing everything from increased drilling to promoting more renewable energy options. So the goal isn’t new.

But the notion is not grounded in reality. It never has been. Such vows tap not so much into new energy reserves but into the realm of wishful thinking. For his part, Romney plans to achieve energy independence by opening up new gas and oil reserves, eliminating many federal regulations, cutting support for renewable energy, approving the Keystone pipeline and limiting the ability of environmentalist groups to file lawsuits. He claims his energy plan may help America “be an exporter of energy, considering all our resources.”

However, consider that America has just 3 percent of the world’s population but consumes 20 percent of the petroleum. To put it another way, the U.S. consumes 18.8 million barrels of oil a day while producing just 5.7 million barrels a day. It would be virtually impossible for the U.S. to make up that difference, even with massively expanded oil production.

But even if we did expand production to the lengths Romney proposes, there is no guarantee that any of the oil would be sold domestically. This is a hard truth most of us have been seeing in recent years. Our oil prices have spiked even though there is no shortage in supply. (We won’t even touch on the impact of oil speculators here.) Instead, most of the oil produced in the U.S. goes on the world market, where China and India are consuming oil in increasingly growing amounts, thus there’s profit to be made. Drilling for more oil here or (for example) letting a new Keystone pipeline flow through the heartland of America offer no guarantees whatsoever that the petroleum will be earmarked for U.S. use to be applied toward our quest for “independence.”

As far as America actually someday being an energy exporter, we already do that, at least in terms of oil. In fact, last year was the first time since 1949 that the U.S. exported more oil than we imported. The reason, again, was the gravity of the free market.

So, it would seem the only way the U.S. could possibly achieve “energy independence” is through a combination of stringent government policies, or even the nationalization of oil companies, to keep the oil we produce here, coupled with aggressive development of alternative and/or renewable resources and the enactment of many more — and more vigorous — regulations mandating increased energy efficiency in vehicles, homes and workplaces to cut our use of energy. None of this is very likely or realistic, no matter who is sitting in the White House next January.

The more practical approach would be to start diversifying our energy sources while gradually — and we’re probably talking decades — weaning this nation off its structural addiction to oil and cultivating a more energy-efficient culture. Someday, with a lot of work, we might achieve that mythic state of energy independence.

In the meantime, if Romney, Obama or any other politicians try to sell you again on their plans for “energy independence,” bear in mind that they’re hoping you won’t realize until after the election that reality simply isn’t in their corner.

kmh

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 5, the 249th day of 2012. There are 117 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History: On Sept. 5, 1972, terrorism struck the Munich Olympics as members of the Palestinian group Black September attacked the Israeli delegation; 11 Israelis, five guerrillas and a police officer were killed in the resulting siege.

On this date: In 1774, the first Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia.

In 1793, the Reign of Terror began during the French Revolution as the National Convention instituted harsh measures to repress counter-revolutionary activities.

In 1836, Sam Houston was elected president of the Republic of Texas.

In 1912, American avant-garde composer John Cage was born in Los Angeles.

In 1914, the First Battle of the Marne, resulting in a French-British victory over Germany, began during World War I.

In 1939, four days after war had broken out in Europe, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a proclamation declaring U.S. neutrality in the conflict.

In 1945, Japanese-American Iva Toguri D’Aquino, suspected of being wartime broadcaster “Tokyo Rose,” was arrested in Yokohama. (D’Aquino was later convicted of treason and served six years in prison; she was pardoned in 1977 by President Gerald R. Ford.)

In 1957, the novel “On the Road,” by Jack Kerouac, was first published by Viking Press.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed legislation making aircraft hijackings a federal crime.

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford escaped an attempt on his life by Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme, a disciple of Charles Manson, in Sacramento, Calif.

In 1986, four hijackers who had seized a Pan Am jumbo jet on the ground in Karachi, Pakistan, opened fire when the lights inside the plane failed; a total of 22 people were killed in the hijacking.

In 1997, Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II broke the royal reticence over Princess Diana’s death, delivering a televised address in which she called her former daughter-in-law “a remarkable person.” Mother Teresa died in Calcutta, India, at age 87; conductor Sir Georg Solti died in France at age 84.

Ten years ago: Afghan President

Hamid Karzai survived an assassination attempt in Kandahar, hours after an explosives-packed car tore through a Kabul market. Actor Cliff Gorman, who’d won a Tony for portraying comedian Lenny Bruce in the 1971 play “Lenny,” died in New York at age 65.

Five years ago: German officials announced that three militants from an Islamic group linked to al-Qaida were planning “imminent” bomb attacks against Americans in Germany when an elite anti-terrorist unit raided their small-town hideout. Fred Thompson announced on “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno” that he was running for the Republican presidential nomination; his candidacy lasted less than five months. Alicia Sacramone’s floor routine rallied the United States to the world women’s gymnastics title in Stuttgart, Germany.

One year ago: President Barack Obama used a boisterous Labor Day rally in Detroit to put congressional Republicans on the spot, challenging them to place the country’s interests above all else and vote to create jobs and put the economy back on a path toward growth. The prosecution’s first witness in the trial of ousted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Gen. Hussein Moussa, startled the court by testifying that police had not been ordered to fire on protesters in Cairo’s Tahrir Square, contradicting prosecutors’ central claim.

Today’s Birthdays: Former Federal Reserve Board chairman Paul A. Volcker is 85. Comedian-actor Bob Newhart is 83. Actress-singer Carol Lawrence is 80. Actor William Devane is 73. Actor George Lazenby is 73. Actress Raquel Welch is 72. Movie director Werner Herzog is 70. Singer Al Stewart is 67. Actor-director Dennis Dugan is 66. College Football Hall of Famer Jerry LeVias is 66. Singer Loudon Wainwright III is 66. “Cathy” cartoonist Cathy Guisewite is 62. Actor Michael Keaton is 61. Country musician Jamie Oldaker (The Tractors) is 61. Actress Debbie Turner-Larson (Film: Marta in “The Sound of Music”) is 56. Actress Kristian Alfonso is 49. Rhythm-and-blues singer Terry Ellis is 49. Rock musician Brad Wilk is 44. TV personality Dweezil Zappa is 43. Actress Rose McGowan is 39. Actor Andrew Ducote is 26. Actress Kat Graham is 26. Olympic gold medal figure skater Kim Yuna is 22. Actor Skandar Keynes is 21.

Thought for Today: “Ideas are one thing, and what happens is another.” — John Cage (1912-1992).

FROM THE BIBLE

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Romans 6:3. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis

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YOUR LETTERS

‘Praying For A Miracle’

Pam Koch, Fordyce, Neb

The very words, “baby boomers” indicates there are a lot of us, and that’s true. So it should go along, that if there are more, there will be more to go around. Right? I was always told that if you work hard and pay your taxes on time, which most of us have done, you can retire and you won’t have to worry.

I always thought I would have to worry