

# No Longer the Opposition, GOP Must Offer a Vision

By Pete du Pont

**T**o paraphrase retired Vice Adm. James Stockdale's question in the 1992 vice presidential debate, "Who are we, and why are we here?"

Republicans must answer that question soon, for the solid gains they posted in the November elections have put them in control of Congress. And America will want to know who they are, and what they stand for, and why they are here.

Once, they knew the answers. In the 1980s, they were Reagan Republicans. The message of lower taxes, increased personal freedom and restrained government swept them into the White House in three consecutive elections, helped carry the Senate for the first time in a generation, narrowed the Democratic majority in the House, and propelled hundreds of Republicans to power at the state and local levels.

But in the 1990s, the revolution faltered. The 1990 budget deal and President Bush's abandonment of his pledge against tax increases deprived the Republican Party of its fundamental message and the trust of its constituencies. The party forgot what it was and what it stood for. Ushered out by a stalled economy and a third-party candidate, the Republicans once again were in the wilderness. The emerging Republican majority, first spotted a decade earlier by pseudo-Republican political analyst Kevin Phillips, became a majority without a cause.

Republicans entered the 1994 midterm elections buoyed by the failures of the Clinton presidency and unprecedented cynicism toward the Democratic Congress. But Republicans will be mistaken if they read their success on election day as a mandate for Republican leadership, just as Bill Clinton was woefully mistaken to read his 43-percent plurality as a mandate to return the country to the welfare-state policies of the sixties.

To regain the confidence of the conservative majority and earn the right to govern, Republicans must offer a vision that builds upon the basic beliefs of the majority of Americans: distrust of an expanding welfare state and confidence in the strength of personal freedom and individual initiative. The GOP must offer information-age concepts that transfer power from government collectives to individuals and families, proposals that increase liberty and opportunity around the kitchen table. For example:

- *A constitutional spending restraint — a governor on the engine of collectivism — to limit the power of government to intrude into individuals' lives.*

**Republicans should tap Americans' distrust of a growing welfare state and confidence in the strength of personal freedom and individual initiative.**

In 1887, the 100th anniversary of the Constitution, the federal government spent 3 percent of gross national product. In 1937, it spent only 9 percent. Today it consumes 24 percent and it's still growing.

The Republicans of the 1980s had it half right: Taxes were too high and needed to be reduced. But Republicans in the nineties must offer concrete plans to limit and reduce the encroachment of the welfare state on the daily lives of Americans. A constitutional amendment, not just to balance the budget, but to limit the size of federal spending to a fixed percentage of the gross national product (absent an emergency and supermajority vote

in the Congress), makes sense to most people in America. Government would become smaller and less intrusive.

- *A flat tax, not just tax reduction, to transfer economic power from the government to the individual and increase the rewards for work and earning.*

Texas Republican Rep. Dick Armey's flat tax would exempt the first \$36,000 of income for a family of four from taxation and tax everything else at a flat rate of 17 percent. Investors and inventors, businesses and laborers would pay equal rates. Loopholes would be gone. An individual's tax return could be sent in on a postcard. Individuals would have more power and the government less.

- *A civil-rights initiative ending preferences based on race, sex, religion or origin.*

Americans should be "judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Martin Luther King Jr. said it, but Washington seems to have forgotten it. Nothing has been more detrimental to the tranquility of society than the emergence of rights for hyphenated victims. Treating citizens differently because of their race, sex, creed or national origin is antithetical to everything for which America stands. It breeds deep suspicion of the legitimate successes of others and provides a never-ending crutch discouraging individual effort.

Quotas, bilingual education and contract preferences have no place in an equal society. It's time for Republicans to have the courage to say so.

- *Customized education allowing parents to choose the school best for their children, with school taxes following the child to the school of choice.*

The welfare state continues to pour billions of dollars into a centralized, bureaucratic education system that would make Lenin proud, and performance continues to decline. The one-



size-fits-all education system forced upon Americans by the best and brightest of the educational establishment has become an impossible burden upon American children in the increasingly competitive world market.

Industrial-age schools subjecting, in Alvin Toffler's words, "the raw material [children] to standardized instruction and routine inspection," must be replaced with information-age opportunities. Families instead of government would have the freedom to choose.

•*Medical savings accounts giving individuals the money to pay their own medical bills and the responsibility for leading healthy lives.*

The savings accounts, backed up by catastrophic illness insurance, would be funded by employers, individuals or, for the poor or unemployed, by the government. Money not used for health care would accumulate tax-free until retirement, when it could be withdrawn by retirees.

Consider the contrast between a collective, nationalized health care system, as proposed by President Clinton, and individually chosen doctor-patient relationships. On one hand, nationalized health decisions would be made uniformly for all Americans — male and female, young and old, well and sick — by a Washington bureaucracy, unseen, unknowing and insulated by distance and understanding from the medical needs of

your family. On the other hand are medical services provided by one's own doctor and paid for by one's own medical savings account.

Legislation creating medical savings accounts should be the health care reform of 1995. The result would be less government and more individual liberty.

•*A retirement option better than Social Security.*

Social Security is neither solvent nor fair — and young Americans know it. Soon after the turn of the century, elderly-entitlement programs will spend more than they take in, and since there is no trust fund to pay the difference, payroll taxes will begin to escalate until today's young workers will be paying half their incomes in payroll taxes just to fund benefits already enacted into law. This will mean negative returns for many of today's Social Security contributors.

*BusinessWeek* concluded that today's young worker earning a \$20,000 salary will see only a 90-percent return of his or her contributions. At a \$57,000 salary, the return will be only 60 percent. In the land of liberty, individuals should not be forced by law to participate in a government program that guarantees they will lose their retirement savings.

Allowing individuals a self-investment alternative would remove this penalty. In addition, retirement money invested in market accounts could pro-

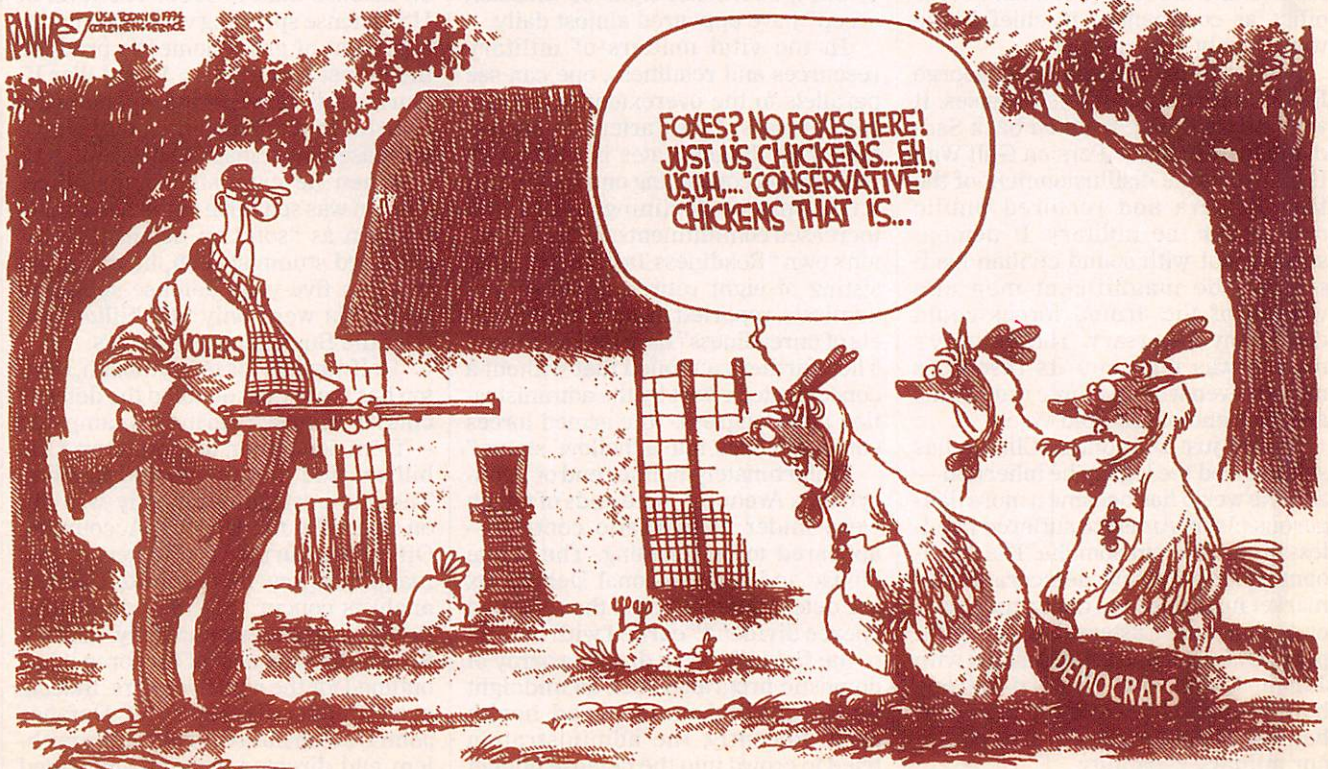
vide two to three times the retirement income offered by Social Security. Moreover, reduced benefits paid to those choosing private accounts would sufficiently reduce the burden on the Social Security system so that it would be able to finance benefits for people opting to stay in it. People would have the liberty to choose.

•*An end to welfare as we know it.*  
Clinton said it, but he didn't mean it. As welfare dependency continues into a fourth generation, 30 percent of all births are illegitimate and government policies continue to destroy families and penalize work. It is time to replace welfare — not with workfare, but with work.

The individual responsibility of doing a job, earning a living and striving for improvement are at the core of a healthy society and are crucial to restoring opportunity and self-respect to underclass Americans. For all able to work, individually earned paychecks must replace centrally dispensed welfare checks.

•*A new strategy for the war on poverty, transferring assistance for the poor from the government in Washington to local communities.*

A dollar-for-dollar tax credit for contributions to charitable or local government health, education or welfare programs would replace \$250 billion in federal spending with community-based assistance. Since the Salvation Army is more effective than Uncle





Sam, administrative savings would mean more money reaching the poor, and government would shrink.

Call it the liberty vision, concepts based upon personal freedom and individual responsibility. It will ring true to most Americans, and if boldly seized by November's new Republican legions it will reinvigorate the revolution begun in 1980.

So Republicans should answer: Who are we? Commonsense people wedded to the Constitution's goal of "secur[ing] the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." Why are we here? To expand liberty for every American family.

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## Military Goals Will Produce 'Hollow' Force

By Dick Cheney

**O**n Jan. 20, 1993, Bill Clinton was given an opportunity any of his predecessors would have envied. He became the first president to take office as commander in chief of the world's only superpower.

Under Ronald Reagan and George Bush, America rebuilt its defenses. It won the Cold War. It rolled back Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf War. It banished the disillusionment of the Vietnam era and restored public respect for the military. It demonstrated that with sound civilian leadership, the magnificent men and women of the armed forces could defeat any adversary. The military's morale was high and its resources mighty, even with the force reductions after the end of the Cold War.

But in just 20 months, Clinton has squandered the legacy he inherited — and the world has become a more dangerous place. America suffered needless humiliation in Somalia. The development of enduring democratic and market institutions in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is in peril. Our strategic relationships with Japan, China and Western Europe have begun to fray. And the president has begun a program of drastic cuts in our military capability.

At the same time, the Clinton administration is asking the U.S. military to take on missions under the labels "peacekeeping" and "peace-making," which would move our military outside its traditional role — defending the nation's vital security interests. The administration is doing so with neither clarity about the mission to be accomplished nor a firm grasp of the role of the U.S. military in those settings.

The dispatch of a large U.S. military force to Haiti is a case in point. American forces are being asked to "restore" democracy in a country that has never known democracy — indeed never had the institutions of a civil society necessary for true democracy. It is hard to envision this as an appropriate or achievable mission for our military. Moreover, in addition to the potential cost in American lives as the mission wears on, the Haiti deployment diverts resources from the military's core missions and can undermine the readiness of forces to carry out those fundamental responsibilities. Since the U.S. occupation of the country, additional signs of "mission creep" have appeared almost daily.

In the vital matters of military resources and readiness, one can see parallels to the overextended American defenses of the Carter administration. The United States is well on its way toward concocting once again this lethal mix of declining forces and increased commitments. Indeed, Clinton's own "Readiness Task Force," consisting of eight retired generals and admirals, reported in June that "pockets of unreadiness" have begun to form. They further cautioned that without a concentrated effort by the administration and Congress, "the armed forces could slip back into a 'hollow' status."

Unfortunately, neither end of Pennsylvania Avenue — both ends of which were under Democratic control — appeared to be listening. The White House and congressional Democrats are determined to invest the so-called "peace dividend" earned with the end of the Cold War on a dizzying array of domestic programs such as midnight basketball and nationalized health care. Recently, the administration tried to crowd into the defense budget

new financial responsibilities to cover a wide range of nonmilitary functions such as "defense conversion" and U.N. peacekeeping costs.

At the same time, the president is developing a seemingly endless number of new security commitments

around the world — from the Balkans to Africa — all while maintaining the ability to fight two simultaneous major regional conflicts on the order of Desert Storm and continuing to meet our permanent commitments in Europe and Asia. The recent threatening movements of Iraqi forces near the Kuwaiti border, coupled with the ongoing crisis of North Korea's nu-

clear-weapons program, further strain our tightly stretched military.

One of Washington's great myths is that defense spending remains at Cold War levels. In fact, the Reagan military buildup peaked in 1986. The 1995 defense budget marks the 10th consecutive year of real (that is, inflation-adjusted) decline in military spending. According to the Clinton five-year defense plan, the United States by 1998 will be spending about 40 percent less on defense than in 1986. The level of U.S. defense spending will slip to under 3 percent of gross domestic product, the lowest since before World War II. During this same period, spending on entitlement programs will have increased by at least 38 percent.

When he campaigned for office, Clinton was sensitive to the need not to be seen as "soft" on defense. In his standard stump speech, he promised that his five-year defense-spending proposals were only \$60 billion less than the Bush administration's.

Halfway into his term, though, Clinton has more than doubled the defense cuts he promised during his campaign — from \$60 billion to more than \$130 billion. And there is no end in sight. The administration recently was put on notice by the General Accounting Office that further reductions of this magnitude may be required. Defense analysts concur that the administration has underestimated by at least \$100 billion the cost of the force it has outlined for the next five years. Indeed, even Deputy Secretary of Defense John Deutch has recognized the problem and directed each of the armed

**The United States is well on its way toward concocting once again the lethal Carter-era mix of declining forces and increased commitments. Indeed, some 'pockets of unreadiness' already have been identified.**