

Conservatives can thank Bush for apostate McCain



CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER says the incumbent has so muddied conservative waters that true believers panicked and found themselves stuck with a maverick.

ON Super Tuesday, John McCain secured the Republican nomination. How did that happen? Simple. In the absence of a compelling conservative, the Republican electorate turned to the apostate sheriff.

In the beginning, there were two. There was America's mayor, Rudy Giuliani, determined to "go on offense." And there was America's maverick, John McCain, scourge of Iraq wobblers.

Both aroused deep suspicions among conservatives. Giuliani's major apostasy is being pro-choice on abortion. McCain's apostasies are too numerous to count. He's held the line on abortion, but on just about everything else he could find — tax cuts, immigration, campaign finance reform, Guantanamo — he not only opposed the conservative consensus but insisted on doing so with ostentatious self-righteousness.

The story of this campaign is how many Republicans didn't care, and felt that national security trumps social heresy. The problem for Giuliani and McCain, however, was that they were splitting that constituency. Then came Giuliani's humiliation in Florida. After he withdrew from the race, he threw his support to McCain — and took his followers with him.

Look at the numbers. Before Florida, the national polls had McCain hovering around 30, and Giuliani in the mid-teens. After Florida, McCain's numbers jumped to the mid-40s, swallowing the Giuliani constituency whole.

On Super Tuesday, the Giuliani effect showed up in the big Northeastern states — New York, New Jersey, Connecticut — and California. McCain won the first three with absolute majorities of 51 percent or more. And in California, McCain-Giuliani (plus Schwarzenegger, for good measure) moderate Republicanism captured 42 percent of the vote.

Elsewhere, where Giuliani was not a factor, McCain got no comparable boost. In Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia, he could never break through even 37 percent. The vote was divided roughly evenly among McCain, Mike Huckabee and Mitt Romney (trailing). But these splits were not enough to make up for the winner-take-all big ones, all of which McCain won.

The other half of the story behind McCain's victory is this: There would have been a far smaller Republican constituency for the apostate sheriff had there been a compelling conservative to challenge him. But there never was.

The first messianic sighting was Fred Thompson, who soared in the early polls, then faded because he was too diffident and/or normal to em-

brace with any enthusiasm the indignities of the modern campaign.

Then, for that brief and shining Iowa moment, there was Huckabee — until conservatives actually looked at his record (on taxes, for example) as governor of Arkansas, and listened to the music of his often unconservative populism.

That left Romney, the final stop in the search for the compelling conservative. I found him to be a fine candidate who would have made a fine president. But until very recently, he was shunned by most conservatives for ideological inauthenticity. Then, as the post-Florida McCain panic grew, conservatives tried to embrace Romney, but the gesture was both too late and as improvised and convenient-looking as Romney's own many conversions. (So late and so improvised that it could not succeed. On Thursday, Romney withdrew from the race.)

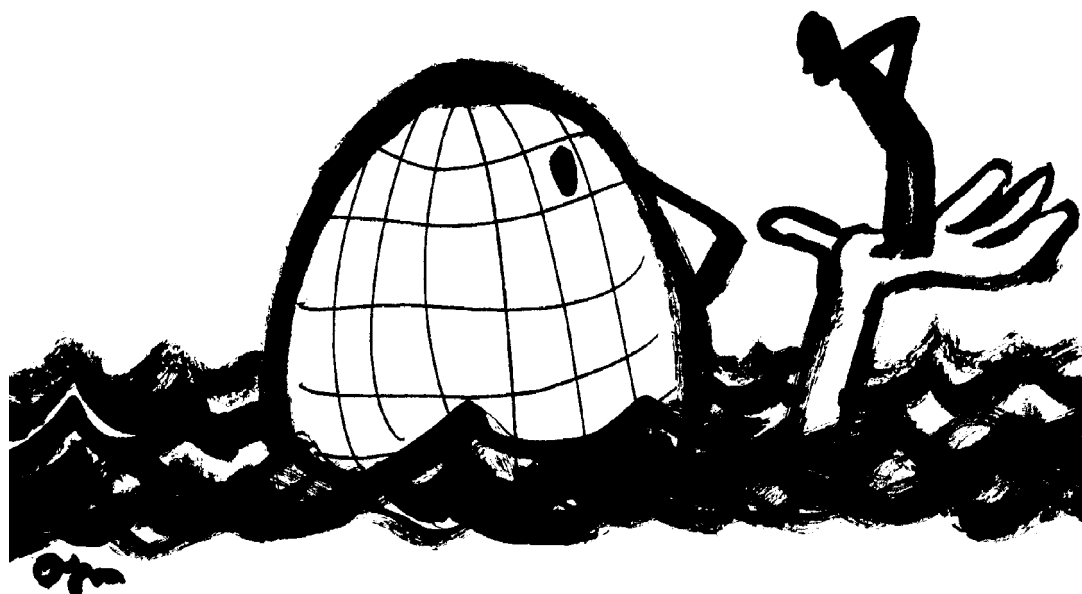
Conservatives are on the eternal search for a new Reagan. They refuse to accept the fact that a movement leader who is also a gifted politician is a once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon. But there's an even more profound reason why no Reagan showed up this election cycle and why the apostate sheriff is going to win the nomination. The reason is George W. Bush. He redefined conservatism with a "compassionate" variant that is a distinct departure from classic Reaganism.

Bush muddied the ideological waters of conservatism. It was Bush who teamed with Teddy Kennedy to pass No Child Left Behind, a federal venture into education that would have been anathema to (the early) Reagan. It was Bush who signed the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform. It was Bush who strongly supported the McCain-Kennedy immigration bill. It was Bush who on his own created a vast new entitlement program, the Medicare drug benefit. And it was Bush who conducted a foreign policy so expansive and, at times, redemptive as to send paleo-conservatives like Pat Buchanan and traditional conservatives like George Will into apoplexy and despair (respectively).

Who in the end prepared the ground for the McCain ascendancy? Not Feingold. Not Kennedy. Not even Giuliani. It was George W. Bush. Bush begat McCain.

Bush remains popular in his party. Even conservatives are inclined to forgive him his various heresies because they are trumped by his singular achievement: He's kept us safe. He's the original apostate sheriff.

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Ideas that will actually cut into global warming

■ There are no panaceas, but here is a portfolio of policies

By **NEAL LANE** and **MALCOLM GILLIS**

OVER the past year, the issue of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions policy has rightly climbed to the top of the agenda in political and media circles in the United States. The 110th Congress introduced more than 125 bills, resolutions and amendments specifically addressing climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. This represents a huge increase in the number of bills pitched in past years and reflects a growing public concern about the potential environmental and economic consequences of global warming and climate change.

Americans are calling for a credible approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions — one that allows for a gradual transition to new, lower-carbon technologies while simultaneously protecting the U.S. economy and well-being of the American people.

Climate change needs to be faced head on. But there are no panaceas or simple solutions. Nonetheless, this should not be taken as an excuse for inaction.

Still, before we fast-track to the legislative path, we need to recognize that a portfolio of policies will have to be deployed. Some of these policies can reap immediate benefits through early implementation while others will require thoughtful, methodical market design and economic study.

And whatever policies the United States chooses, they must be developed in a global context. All countries emit greenhouse gases, and all countries will be impacted by climate change.

In the early benefits category, curtailing world deforestation, especially tropical deforestation, should be on the top of the climate policy list. Forest destruction is responsible for 20 percent of global carbon emissions each year. Higher taxes and royalties on timber harvests, in addition to removal of all subsidies for forest clearing, would contribute materially to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Moreover, since nontropical, industrial nations like the United States have a vested interest in maintaining tropical forests intact in places like Brazil and Indonesia, we should share the costs of creating and maintaining new forest reserves.

An international agreement against natural gas flaring would be another great step toward reducing greenhouse emissions. Flaring currently contributes about 400 million tons of carbon a year, the same scale of emissions from all vehicles in the United Kingdom, France and Germany. Flaring poses an immediate health risk to local populations and wastes a valuable resource, which if captured, could be used to provide fuel for power generation and industry, adding diversity to local or exported energy supplies. The leading contributors to global gas flaring include

Nigeria, Russia, Iran, Algeria, Mexico, Venezuela, Indonesia and the United States.

Investments in programs that will make zero-carbon energy cheaper in the future also hold great promise. Technologies in wind, solar and tidal power are also poised to make a contribution. In addition, it is time to again reconsider carbon-free nuclear power as part of the solution. New U.S. fuel efficiency standards passed by Congress in December 2007 will reduce greenhouse emissions by almost 185 million tons, or roughly 25 percent, between now and 2030.

Finally, the time has come to phase out non-sensible subsidies to high carbon-emitting energy consumption. Given global climate and energy security challenges, such subsidies are creating dangerous distortions in the energy market and thwarting a shift to energy-efficient technologies. That includes reckless U.S. subsidies for corn-based ethanol as well as consumer-friendly fuel subsidies in countries such as China, Iran, Russia and Mexico.

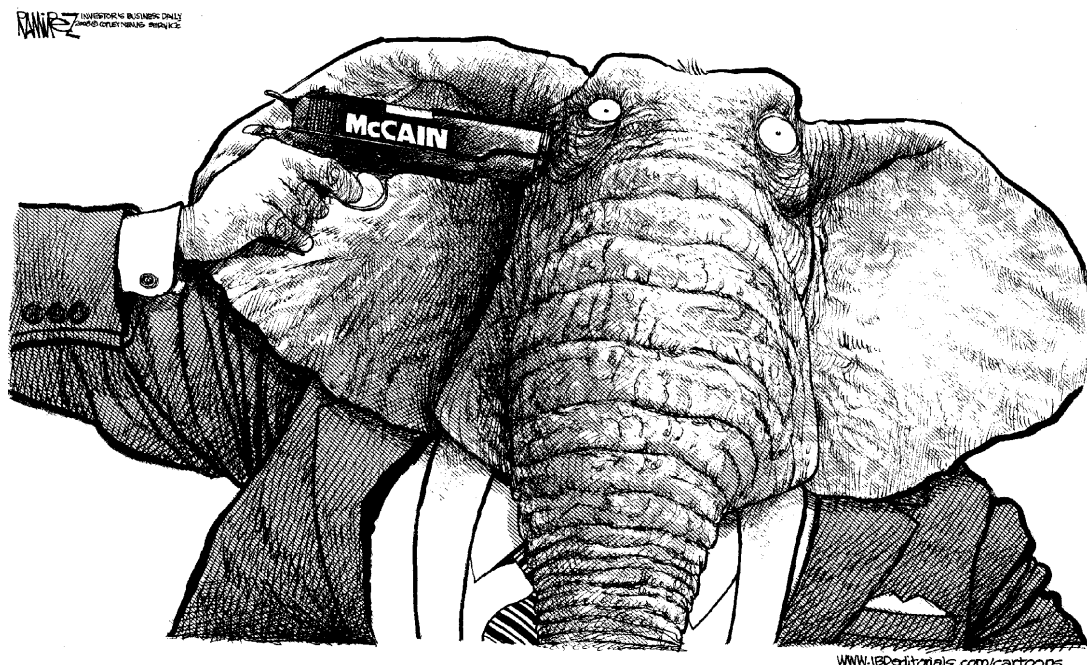
For the longer term, policy-makers will need to look carefully at carbon taxes or market-based cap and trade systems that can create a cost to carbon emissions that will propel new, carbon-free technologies and force a phase-out of outdated carbon-intensive infrastructure. Europe's experiment with a cap and trade system has had mixed results so far, giving pause to quick-fix approaches to adding the costs of carbon to the business calculus. As we learned during the California electricity crisis, market design matters and market structures to limit greenhouse emissions need to be carefully considered and vetted with stakeholders and economic experts.

Still, systems that would inject the true costs of greenhouse gas emissions into future energy investment and use will become necessary if we are to take the large amount of carbon out of global economic activity that current scientific projections suggest are necessary.

There are many other ideas as well — from new alternative energy technologies to carbon capture and storage systems — that will likely be required as part of a broad carbon avoidance policy portfolio. We need to ensure that each of these policies do not have to compete with each other for political space. Many, if not all, of the solutions have a role to play.

We have the tools available to tackle this pressing global problem — some for immediate action and others that will be available down the road. But the longer we delay in making substantial reductions in carbon emissions, the more serious will be the consequences for those who follow us. We must start now.

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Tuesday left troubles for all, but bigger ones for GOP



E.J. DIONNE JR. says the seminal primary revealed weaknesses in both parties that could be consequential and will not be easily repaired.

THE Super Tuesday primaries were a test of strength that demonstrated weaknesses in both parties and pointed to problems each could confront in the fall.

With Mitt Romney's decision to leave the race on Thursday, John McCain's nomination is a near certainty. But he leads a party torn by ideology and has survived only because his conservative opponents have fractured their movement.

Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama fought to a near draw in a series of Democratic primaries that revealed a sharp gender gap, a generation gap at least as deep as the age divide that was so widely advertised in the 1960s, and differences across lines of ethnicity, race and class.

Clinton could count herself lucky in surviving a national wave toward Obama that began building after the bitter South Carolina primary.

Important states that her campaign feared might stray — New Jersey, California and Massachusetts — stuck with her. She won them with strong support among women, whom she always saw as her ballast in stormy moments.

As they did in New Hampshire, women allowed Clinton to fight another day.

But a Clinton campaign that once hoped it could use Tuesday's contests to dispatch a young challenger with just over three years of Washington experience found itself facing a well-organized opponent capable of winning 13 (and possibly 14) states as diverse as Idaho and Georgia, Alaska and Missouri.

In the short run, the political map favors Obama, who has steadily gained ground as he has become better known.

Yet whatever divisions the Democrats face, it is the Republicans who have confronted an ideological civil war in which popular talk show hosts — in vain as it turns out — served as field generals determined to beat back McCain's advancing army of Republican dissidents.

Despite his impressive victories, McCain continued to fare poorly on Tuesday among the conservatives who have defined the Republican Party since the rise of Ronald Reagan.

McCain came to dominate the Republican contest because moderates and liberals, opponents of

President Bush and critics of the Iraq War, continued to rally to him despite his actual stands on the very issues that arouse their ire. And he prevailed because Mike Huckabee and Mitt Romney continued to divide the right.

Huckabee became the champion of the Old South, winning in Arkansas, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama, and he nearly defeated McCain in Missouri and Oklahoma.

Romney won a swath of states in the Midwest and mountain West.

McCain, in other words, lost the core Republican states and instead piled up delegates in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Illinois and California. All are traditionally Democratic states unlikely to vote for him in November. Rudy Giuliani's strategy, which was premised on his strength in such places, actually worked — but it worked for John McCain.

Huckabee's showing doomed Romney's chances of uniting conservatives behind his candidacy. This may only aggravate the frustration of McCain's critics on the right, who looked on powerlessly as a starched investment banker and a good-natured preacher split asunder their party's natural majority.

Clinton and Obama face different challenges. Democrats have declared in poll after poll that they like both of them, but the two have reached parity in part because of difficulties each has with important constituencies.

Obama is the overwhelming favorite of voters under 30, and he has inspired a disciplined army of youthful organizers who helped him win deci-

sive victories in caucuses in Colorado, Kansas, Idaho, Minnesota, North Dakota and Alaska. If Clinton is the nominee, how many of these young voters will walk away from a process that thwarted their hopes?

Sisterhood has certainly been powerful for Clinton. But does her weakness among male Democrats — she lost men by 20 points in Delaware, 21 points in Connecticut and 39 points in Georgia — portend problems in a general election?

For his part, Obama has consistently lost badly among voters over 65 who are white or Latino. Outside his home state of Illinois, he has yet to make serious inroads among white working-class voters who were central to Clinton's victories in states such as Massachusetts and New Jersey. Obama will need a larger share of these voters in the coming Ohio showdown in March and, possibly, in Pennsylvania in April. And he would need them in November.

But the larger challenge is to a Republican Party that faces, simultaneously, an insurrection and a lack of enthusiasm in the ranks.

Super Tuesday anointed McCain as the favorite for nomination. It did not make him the favorite of his party's most important wing. Now, McCain must appease his conservative critics while not squandering his appeal to middle-of-the-road voters whose sympathy made him his party's most electable candidate.

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