



Pawlenty's speech to the CFR: Dumb even by his liberal standard

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By **Paul Mulshine/The Star Ledger**

In his **speech to the Council on Foreign Relations**, Tim Pawlenty said, among other inanities, "history teaches there is no such thing as stable oppression."

Has this guy ever heard of the Roman empire? The British empire? The rise of the Mongols? The reign of the czars in Russia? The Chinese dynasties that flourished for millennia?

The ...?

Never mind. The list is endless. What history teaches is that oppression is one of the most reliable tools of stability.

And consider this line. After paragraph after paragraph of calling for the overthrow of dictators in the Mideast, Pawlenty states, "We must insist on religious freedoms for all, including the region's minorities—whether Christian, Shia, Sunni, or Bahai."

Does he know the first thing about what happened to the Bahai after a dictator was overthrown in 1979? With the Shah gone, they were persecuted as heretics and often executed - with the consent of the majority of Shia. That's how democracy works. It's a little late in history to believe democracy and freedom are synonyms. They are more often antonyms.

Another idiocy: "The governments of Iran and Syria are enemies of the United States. They are not reformers and never will be. They support each other. To weaken or replace one, is to

weaken or replace the other."

The Alawites who run Syria are considered heretics by the Shia who run Iran. They have little in common. Weakening one would have no effect on the other.

Another idiocy: "Syria is Iran's only Arab ally."

Didn't this dullard ever hear of Iraq? It's run by two formerly terrorist parties founded in Iran. See the clip above. He doesn't even know which of the two has U.S. troops within its border.

Of course, if Pawlenty understood Iraq and Iran, he would know how risky it is to assume that removing dictators will necessarily aid the U.S. It was Saddam Hussein who hated the Iranians and he's been replaced by their allies - thanks to George W. Bush.

And then there's this moronic passage:

"In the 1980s, we were up against a violent, totalitarian ideology bent on subjugating the people and principles of the West. While others sought to co-exist, President Reagan instead sought victory. So must we, today. For America is exceptional, and we have the moral clarity to lead the world."

In the 1980s, the Mideast was just as repressive as it is now. Saudi Arabia didn't let women drive, Iran suppressed the Bahai, etc. Reagan did not propose that we try to change any of that. He proposed we keep the Soviets from getting access to the oil.

The Soviets are gone. As for the oil, the Europeans are the ones depending on it. If they don't care about the Mideast, then why should we?

And then this final inanity:

"When the Palestinians have leaders who are honest and capable, who appreciate the rule of law, who understand that war against Israel has doomed generations of Palestinians to lives of bitterness, violence, and poverty – then peace will come."

Right after Santa Claus comes.

This is a recipe for eternal American involvement in the Mideast. And it comes from a man who promises to balance the budget. That can't be done in the near future even with drastic cuts in military expenditures.

If the man really believes this nonsense, he is a moron - even by Minnesota standards.

I'd bet a six-pack, however, that he didn't write this nonsense. As the above clip shows, he doesn't even know the difference between Iran and Iraq.

I suspect the actual author was some neocon seeking to use him as the vehicle for perpetuating the liberal internationalism of the Bush years.

But that era is over.

No one could be dumb enough to equate the Cold War era with the current situation. Then we faced a real enemy that could destroy us in mere minutes.

Now we have to go around looking for enemies. Pawlenty seems to have found quite a few.

Let him go fight them and leave the rest of us alone.

ALSO: My former Rutgers classmate (though I never met him back then) Bruce Bartlett **weighs in** on Pawlenty's ignorance of economics.

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