

Rick Perry Hates to Lose?

W. A. Barrett
2797 Lena Drive
San Jose, CA 95124

RE: *Parade* article, October 23, 2011, pages 10-19: see
<http://www.wbarrett.us/political/RickPerryParade23Oct2011.pdf>

I can thank Lynn Sherr for asking several tough questions of candidate Perry in her interview. However, I'm disappointed that there's been no "truthiness" follow-up in your magazine. This leaves a general impression that Mr. Perry's responses are OK by *Parade* and the interviewer.

Let me cite some examples of Mr. Perry's ignorance or lack of truthfulness (it's hard to tell the difference) from the article.

Social Security is a Ponzi Scheme

Perry said, "I think, for young and mid-career people, it is a Ponzi scheme".

No, it isn't. A Ponzi scheme is a get-rich quick financial deal with someone you trust, but who in fact hides all the details, and is a charlatan. It proceeds by enriching the early joiners, paying them "dividends" out of future joiner investments. It can grow exponentially as people "sign up" with more investment money, but eventually crashes when there are no more suckers. Google Ponzi and see for yourself. Or read what brought down Bernie Madoff.

Social Security is controlled and governed by open legislation. Nothing about it is secret or "covered up". There's no illusion that you can get rich, or collect big dividends, by "investing" in it. In fact, social security is both a guaranteed retirement program and an *insurance* program for the disabled, or family survivors of the death of the principal wage-earner. It's paid for out of the famous security FICA tax, which is aside from regular income taxes. There is a trust fund, in government bonds, but as of now, all benefits are paid for out of current receipts.

It's true that the trust fund is inadequate by itself to cover all future benefits promised to the public. That is the result of decisions made by many Congresses to keep the benefits up and the costs down, by both sides of the aisle. That, by itself, does not make it a "Ponzi scheme".

The benefits will not disappear in the future, unless Mr. Perry and his Tea party cohorts actually get their way. Stopping this parade raises all sorts of issues, for example, the overall credibility of the U.S. government to meet its obligations. How should those who have paid into the plan over the years be compensated? And what could possibly replace this popular and safe way of ensuring at least a minimal retirement level and security against family catastrophe?

President Obama's Muddled Policy toward Israel

Mr. Perry uses some very provocative language here: "wavering, muddled policy", "brought us to the point where the Palestinians feel comfortable going directly to the U.N. to ask for recognition".

No one believes for a moment that Obama's Israeli policy is "muddled" or "wavering". Where did that come from?

As to blaming this particular Palestinian action on Obama, that's just absurd. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been going on since Israel was founded in 1948, along with several wars. There's plenty of blame to assign to both sides, as pres. Carter has pointed out. The situation is a mess, with the U.S. being accused of directing Israeli affairs when it never has. Almost every president has tackled the issue, with pres. Clinton probably coming the closest to some kind of settlement of the issues.

How does Mr. Perry propose to deal with that statement? I don't think he has a clue. He certainly doesn't have the proven brainpower to deal with the several factions (intransigent Netanyahu, the west bank Palestinians, the Gaza strip Hamas, plus Egypt, Lebanon and Syria), any more than did George W. Bush. With Perry in the Oval office, I would expect to see even more wavering and muddled treatment of the situation. He's the pot calling the kettle black.

On Cronyism

Ms. Sherr pushed the question of cronyism in the Texas governorships, but she couldn't get a straight answer from Mr. Perry.

Her question was something like "it's been reported that", whereas she should have been specific about particular facts that have been reported by conservatives and progressives alike.

The facts speak otherwise. See <http://www.thenation.com/blog/162863/conservative-criticism-rick-perry-corporate-cronyism> for just one article, out of dozens, on how Perry has used his position as governor of Texas to fatten his campaign chest at the public expense.

This is a corrupt governor, and may well become a corrupt U.S. president.

On Global Warming

"Have you seen the film *An Inconvenient Truth*?" asked Ms. Sherr.

Mr. Perry's reply: "No, I generally don't watch or read a lot of fiction".

What a snide way to wash away the dedicated and hard work of several thousand scientists around the earth, who are now agreed that the global warming is real, it's serious, the effects are now evident to anyone who cares to look at them, and it's caused by excessive human burning of hydrocarbons, like oil and coal!

This is a man who neither understands what's happening on earth, nor even cares to learn about it.

His snide response is clearly because the film was produced by Al Gore, who ran for president as a Democrat in 2000. But it isn't Gore's message -- it's just another way of presenting what we on earth need to come to grips with. The message should not be political, but it has become so through the willful ignorance of prominent politicians like Mr. Perry.

Of course, Perry is against any global warming issue. That might cost his oil/coal political backers some profit in the future.

Organic Chemistry

Mr. Perry: "And organic chemistry made a pilot out of me. [*laughs*]".

Here, he reveals that he not only has no firm grasp of some basic science (organic chemistry really isn't that hard to understand), but he laughingly considers that irrelevant. He did manage to get a degree in veterinary medicine, since its science requirements don't amount to much.

He is proud of his studies in aerodynamics and "physics" after graduation in order to qualify as an air force pilot. But in fact, that sort of theoretical study has little to do with one's training as a pilot. The air force is very good at providing lots of hands-on training, so if you can learn to ride a bicycle or a skateboard, you should be able to become a good pilot.

Did that training prepare him to assess the science of global warming on his own? Clearly not -- he's taken his cues on that issue straight from his oil and coal company backers and what he considers to be the direction of the wind in conservative politics. Plus, of course, his glib distaste for any idea that is espoused by any prominent Democrat, like Al Gore.

In short, **this is a man who should never be in the White House**. Let us have a leader whose intelligence and integrity deserves respect from us all.