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Who's Your Daddy? **by Jacob G. Hornberger**

Don't let anyone ever tell you that President Bush isn't a brilliant politician, one who has mastered the psychological intricacies of the welfare-warfare state that conservatives and liberals have imported to our nation. The latest proof of Bush's political brilliance and insight into human nature occurred recently when he proposed his \$7 billion federal bird-flu plan to protect the American people from a potential pandemic, which is the latest fear that assails the American psyche.

With his bird-flu plan, Bush has subtly and effectively reminded Americans that despite all the imperfections of the federal government (Rove, Libby, and Cheney, [CIA Soviet-era torture centers](#), torture and sex abuse scandal, Iraq, FEMA), the federal government is still their daddy, a daddy that watches over them and takes care of them with such programs as retirement, health care, job security, education, housing, and flu plans. Bush's underlying message: Even natural parents aren't perfect; despite their imperfections we still love them and expect them to watch over us and take care of us; why should we treat our surrogate parent, the federal government, any differently?

Bush's reminder tends to stop both conservatives and liberals dead in their tracks. Let's not delve too deeply into federal "imperfections," such as lying the nation into war; secret CIA torture chambers in Soviet-era compounds; the torture, sex abuse, rape, and murder scandal in Cuba, Iraq, and Afghanistan; the war of aggression on Iraq; or the federal response to Hurricane Katrina. Let's instead continue looking the other way, leaving it to our federal daddy to do what needs to be done for the welfare and security of our national family, much as children in a dysfunctional household are expected to not take note and confront the beatings and abuse being inflicted by their natural parents, especially since children depend on their parents for their security and well-being.

Bush also brilliantly plays on one of the many fears that assail the American people and that induce them to look to the federal government as their daddy, protector, and provider.

Among the other fears that generate an embrace of federal paternalism are fear of drug dealers (because they will put us all on drugs), of immigrants (because they'll steal our jobs and take over our country), of terrorists (because they'll take us from our homes and spray WMDs in our face), and of loss of Social Security (because old people will die in the streets), Medicare and Medicaid (because the poor and elderly won't have health care), and public schooling (because the poor won't have anywhere to get educated).

Bush's bird-flu plan also serves as a powerful reminder of why the future of our nation lies with libertarianism. Unlike the conservative and liberal vision, the libertarian vision has a consistent commitment to moral principles, individual liberty, free markets, and a constitutional republic. Unlike conservatives and liberals, libertarians do not live their lives consumed by fear and thus are unwilling to surrender their rights and freedoms to the federal daddy, not even "temporarily." Unlike conservatives and liberals, libertarians are committed to ending the federal government's role as welfare-warfare daddy, thereby helping to restore the sense of can-do, self-reliance, independence, compassion, and fortitude that characterized our American ancestors, whose libertarian vision also rejected the federal government's role as national daddy.

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