
the audacity oF truth

what Rudy and
Barack won't
tell you

w.j. malan



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Preface

Sickness, war and crime are perennial concerns and are the subjects of this work. They are also topics that are not fully and candidly addressed by our current and aspiring political leaders. This avoidance is due to a lack of courage on their part, pressure from special-interest lobbies and their desire to get elected. But through error or indolence we, the voters, have let them get away with it and cannot dodge responsibility for the situation. Democracy, social critic H.L. Mencken said, is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard.

How hard we are going to get it is not widely appreciated. Let's start with sickness. In its 2007 report, the Social Security and Medicare Boards of Trustees issued—for the first time—a “Medicare funding warning.” In 2007, Medicare expenditures will exceed income, and without remedial action, the Medicare trust fund will be exhausted in 2019. Medicare has an unfunded liability of well over \$60 *trillion*.

To put that number in perspective, former Oregon governor and physician John Kitzhaber uses one second to represent one dollar. One billion seconds ago we were in the early months of the Carter administration. One trillion seconds ago, the Neanderthals were in their final act on the world stage. Two million years ago—about 60 trillion seconds—*Homo erectus* had not yet left Africa. The above number addresses only Medicare; it does not include Medicaid, nursing home nor long-term care, nor the health needs of everyone else.

Foreign policy is also in critical condition. It has been less than 20 years since our Cold War adversary, the Soviet Union, imploded. We were victorious and our future seemed secure. But along the parade route to the New Millennium, the wheels

wobbled and then fell off the victory float. We now face challenges that few fully anticipated during the heady days that followed the collapse of the U.S.S.R.

We no longer stand eye to eye with a super-enemy, but non-aligned and often unstable nation states have acquired nuclear weapons. Sophisticated and motivated terror networks bide their time and strike in the manner and place of their choosing. Although we are the most powerful nation in history, we spend ever greater amounts on defense and security, yet we are continually looking over our shoulders.

Though we remain the world's dominant economy, increasing international competition, rising energy prices and escalating health care costs make the future uncertain. Home and abroad, we seem to be at the mercy of external, uncontrollable forces—more than any time in recent history.

The good news is that none of these issues is beyond resolution. We can regain control of our destiny in the world, enhance our security and have a far better health care system. But we cannot do any of this without understanding where we are, how we got here and who has been calling the shots. We must face reality and take responsibility to demand real change.

Special interest groups are a natural part of a democracy, just as cancer is a natural part of biology. A healthy body can sometimes fight cancer and prevent it from “taking root.” If the body's natural prevention fails, treatment requires getting rid of the cancer. Similarly, our country has two ways to counteract special interest domination: voting and the U.S. Constitution. The Constitution is like our body's natural defense system. Unfortunately, the Constitution's ability to protect us from special interest domination has been severely compromised by a long procession of court decisions that has expanded the power of government and reduced Constitutional protections.

With the Constitution's preventive power eroded, we are thus left with voting as a tool to regain a healthy body politic. The disease of undue political influence has taken hold, but it is not too late to surgically remove it by voting the rascals out.

Why have special interest agendas not been effectively opposed by voters? Why does the public support—or if not support, at least acquiesce to—a special interest agenda? One key is effective propaganda. Special interest groups are most successful when they convince the population that the group's goals are not really special, but in the general interest. Facts and education can refute special interest propaganda. These counter-arguments, however, will not come from mainstream political candidates, who typically depend on various special interests for their support. They will come from sources like this book.

The American public is exasperated with the *status quo*. In foreign policy, while there is broad support for our troops, there is significant dissatisfaction with the course of the war in Iraq. There is also a growing concern about a future of perpetual war. In health care, most are happy with the care they receive, but nobody believes health care can continue to consume larger portions of the gross national product without serious impact on the U.S. economy.

The first task in countering special interest propaganda with education is identifying special interests and putting their arguments to the tests of fact, history and reason. That is the goal of this work.