

Political courage: British-style

by Larry_Elder

The Republicans finally found a leader. Too bad he's a Brit.

Daniel Hannan, who represents South East England in the European Parliament, stood up in that chamber and forcefully addressed Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

"Prime Minister," MEP Hannan said, "I see you've already mastered the essential craft of the European politician, namely the ability to say one thing in this chamber and a very different thing to your home electorate. You've spoken here about free trade, and amen to that. Who would have guessed, listening to you just now, that you were the author of the phrase 'British jobs for British workers' and that you have subsidized, where you have not nationalized outright, swathes of our economy, including the car industry and many of the banks? Perhaps you would have more moral authority in this house if your actions matched your words. Perhaps you would have more legitimacy in the councils of the world if the United Kingdom were not going into this recession in the worst condition of any G-20 country.

"The truth, Prime Minister, is that you have run out of our money. The country as a whole is now in negative equity. Every British child is born owing around 20,000 pounds. Servicing the interest on that debt is going to cost more than educating the child. Now, once again today you try to spread the blame around; you spoke about an international recession, international crisis. Well, it is true that we are all sailing together into the squalls. But not every vessel in the convoy is in the same dilapidated condition. Other ships used the good years to caulk their hulls and clear their rigging — in other words, to pay off debt. But you used the good years to raise borrowing yet further. As a consequence, under your captaincy, our hull is pressed deep into the waterline under the accumulated weight of your debt. We are now running a deficit that touches 10 percent of GDP, an almost unbelievable figure — more than Pakistan, more than Hungary, countries where the IMF have already been called in. Now, it's not that you're not apologizing; like everyone else, I have long accepted that you're pathologically incapable of accepting responsibility for these things. It's that you're carrying on, willfully worsening our situation, wantonly spending what little we have left. — In the last 12 months, 100,000 private-sector jobs have been lost, and yet you created 30,000 public-sector jobs.

"Prime Minister, you cannot carry on forever squeezing the productive bit of the economy in order to fund an unprecedented engorgement of the unproductive bit. You cannot spend your way out of recession or borrow your way out of debt. And when you repeat, in that wooden and perfunctory way, that our situation is better than others, that we're 'well-placed to weather the storm,' I have to tell you (that) you sound like a Brezhnev-era apparatchik giving the party line. You know and we know — and you know that we know — that it's nonsense!"

The British prime minister's "solutions" resemble those of President Barack Obama, the Democrats and some Republicans — solving a spending and borrowing crisis by spending and borrowing. Yet Obama brazenly calls his budget "A New Era of Responsibility."

Obama believes that merely raising taxes on the so-called rich will be sufficient to fund all of his programs. He believes that the behavior of the so-called rich will be unaffected by the fact that they will keep a lot less than what they make. He believes that the same government of unfunded liabilities for Social Security and Medicare – the same government that runs the now-broke post office and "managed" disaster relief after Katrina – can "create" and "invest" in health care, "green" jobs and education. He does not pay the slightest attention to the founding principles of this country – a limited government and a maximum of responsibility by its citizens.

On a recent cable newscast, a pundit actually said that "capitalism" no longer works. And he was a former top aide to then-Republican House Majority Leader Newt Gingrich! The future of this country, at least in my lifetime, has never seemed more frightening and uncertain.

While President Obama busies himself changing the very foundation that made America great, he might sign an executive order – granting immediate citizenship to Daniel Hannan.

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