



Inside Track

Was the Austrian Election “Stolen”?

The razor-thin election result in Austria’s presidential race on May 22 was heralded by EU politicians and the establishment media worldwide as a hair’s-breadth “escape” from a “far-right” takeover. The candidates were “far right” Norbert Hofer of the Freedom Party, who called for a stop to the unrestricted “refugee” migration into the EU, and the “moderate” socialist Green Party candidate Alexander van der Bellen. The final result was determined by postal votes, with nearly 900,000 Austrians — 14 percent of the voters — casting their ballot by mail this year. On May 23, the tabulation of the mail-in vote was announced to be in van der Bellen’s favor, by a mere 31,026 votes. According to election officials, van der Bellen had squeaked out a 50.3 percent of the vote total to Hofer’s 49.7 percent.

There were immediate charges by some Freedom Party supporters that the election had been “stolen,” which may indeed be accurate. The Elections Department of Austria’s Ministry of the Interior announced May 25 that it is investigating “irregularities” involving tens of thousands of postal votes, particularly those concentrated in four towns. “The Austrian Ministry of the Interior has announced an investigation into ‘voting irregularities in four towns during the recent presidential election,” the *New Observer* reported on May 25. “In all cases, the FPÖ’s [Freedom Party’s] candidate Norbert Hofer won the ‘live’ votes, but lost when the postal votes were counted.”

Regardless of the outcome of the official postal vote fraud investigation, it is clear that the prospect of Norbert Hofer’s presidential run was a matter of great alarm in the higher circles of power inside the European Union. Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, was especially abusive and intrusive in the lead-up to the election. “The prospect of seeing the far-right win forces me to say that I don’t like them,” Juncker told French newspaper *Le Monde* on May 20. “The Austrians don’t like to hear this but I don’t care: there is no debate or dialogue with the far-right.”

Abortion a Matter of “Economic Security and Opportunity”?

In a May 13 op-ed piece for the women’s fashion magazine *Elle*, Cecile Richards, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, asserted that “reproductive health,” a euphemism for both contraception and abortion, “isn’t a theoretical issue, a social issue, or a distraction — it’s a fundamental issue of economic security and opportunity.”

Richards’ article was filled with claims that defy basic rules of logic. For example: “Today, the number of women who finish four or more years of college is five times what it was before birth control became legal. One study even found that the Pill is responsible for a third of women’s wage gains since the 1960s.”

With the many changes in our society that occurred since the 1960s, it is impossible to determine which factors were responsible for more women finishing college. The same is true for women’s wage gains, which are likely just a natural consequence of these college-educated women becoming more interested in careers. Yet Richards would have us believe that women owe much of their economic advancement to Planned Parenthood’s campaign to promote birth control.

Throughout her article, Richards praised Hillary Clinton, which is not surprising for someone with a



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long history of ties to the Democratic Party. Before taking her post at Planned Parenthood, Richards served as president of America Votes, a coalition of national Democratic Party-affiliated organizations.

Richards and Planned Parenthood have managed to get away with overt political endorsements of pro-abortion candidates because its advocacy activities are executed by the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, which is registered as a 501(c)(4) charity. Unlike 501(c)(3) organizations, which are prohibited from supporting political candidates, and are subject to limits on lobbying, 501(c)(4) organizations can engage in unlimited lobbying so long as it pertains to the organization's mission. Planned Parenthood endorsed Barack Obama in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, and in the 2014 election cycle it spent \$6,587,100 on contributions to candidates and political parties (overwhelmingly to Democrats) and on independent expenditures.

Bill Would Prohibit Federal Reserve Bailouts for States, Cities

On May 18, a coalition of Republican lawmakers introduced a bill, the No Bailouts for State, Territory, and Local Governments Act (HR 5276), that would prohibit any federal or Federal Reserve "funny-money" funding to bail out state, county, local, or territorial governments across the United States. If the legislation is approved, the prohibition would apply to bailouts by both the Obama administration's Treasury and the Federal Reserve System.

The measure comes amid Puerto Rico's ongoing financial woes, problems so serious that the island, a territory of the United States, is said to be in a "death spiral" after defaulting on its debts. At the same time, America is also facing a widely anticipated wave of looming state, county, and municipal bankruptcies in the face of outlandish pension obligations and wild debts run up by Big Labor-controlled politicians. Some city governments, including Detroit and Stockton, have already declared bankruptcy in recent years. More than a few states are also in trouble. Among state governments, the Big Government-dominated states of Illinois, California, New Jersey, and New York are said to be in the worst shape.

Some analysts suspect the bill is really aimed at saving all of the potential Federal Reserve bailouts for the federal government itself, which currently has more debt and unfunded liabilities than any entity has ever accumulated in all of human history. Among other liabilities, Washington, D.C., has a national debt close to \$20 trillion, owing much of it to the Fed and Communist China. That figure does not include unfunded liabilities, which experts estimate at between \$100 trillion and \$200 trillion.

Lawmakers in both parties should take this opportunity to audit and eventually end the Fed, and rein in the Obama administration's lawless bureaucracies that acknowledge practically no limits on their power. It would also be wise to allow big-spending politicians (and the voters who recklessly put them in power) to face the consequences of their irresponsibility.

Obama Waging Another Illegal War in Libya

The Obama administration has once again deployed U.S. military forces to Libya — again without permission from Congress, much less the U.S. Constitution. Weapons shipments, support for shadowy militia groups, extrajudicial assassinations via drone-fired missiles, and more are already under way. And like last time, various globalist European powers are reportedly helping.

This time, rather than supporting al-Qaeda and other jihadists against a former U.S. terror-war ally, as



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the Obama administration did in round one, Obama purports to be doing the opposite. According to media reports, Obama has deployed American Special Forces to prop up the unstable “transitional” regime that claims authority to rule Libya. The administration is also reportedly helping to battle the “Islamic State,” or ISIS, as well as showering weapons on one of Libya’s self-styled governments — the one backed by the UN.

On May 16, the *Washington Times* reported that a “small number” of U.S. special operations teams had been on the ground in northeast and western Libya “for the better part of a year.” The Obama administration and some of its allies among European governments have also “begun shipping weapons and equipment to Libya’s fragile unity government,” the paper said, without citing sources.

The new weapons shipments from Obama are being provided in violation of UN sanctions and a prohibition on shipping weapons to the war-torn nation. Secretary of State John Kerry tried to justify the decision: “If you have a legitimate government [sic] and that legitimate government is fighting terrorism, that legitimate government should not be victimized” by a UN weapons embargo.

After all of the disasters and bloodshed brought about by the executive branch’s illegal UN-approved wars and military actions, it is hard to believe that almost no one in Washington, D.C., has yet realized the wisdom of the Founders and the Constitution. All war-making powers were vested in the American people’s elected representatives in Congress for a very good reason. And the Founders wisely urged Americans to avoid going abroad in search of monsters to destroy.

UN “Human Rights” Council Ridiculed in Congress

On May 17, the dictator-dominated United Nations Human Rights Council was ridiculed at a U.S. congressional hearing that was seemingly meant to serve as a boost for the controversial outfit and everything it represents. The main takeaway, though, was that with some “reforms,” the dictators club and its “human rights” bureaucracy could do good work.

The hearing, entitled “Ten Years Later: The Status of the United Nations Human Rights Council,” aimed to examine the last decade of the outfit’s operations and the U.S. government’s involvement. According to the announcement, the hearing was supposed to examine “the successes and shortfalls of U.S. engagement with the U.N. Human Rights Council, its current forms of operation and priorities, and possible options for reform that would help the Council more effectively achieve its original mandate.”

A big focus of the hearing was whether the new UN “human rights” bureaucracy, launched a decade ago, was better than the old one. The reason the current iteration of the outfit is only 10 years old, though, remains just as relevant today. The UN “Human Rights Commission,” which existed for 60 years, had become such a discredited laughingstock that nobody could take it seriously. The theater of the absurd was so bad that the UN “Commission” even elected brutal Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi and his regime to lead it. Even then-UN boss Kofi Annan was forced to concede that the outfit had become a joke that “cast a shadow on the reputation of the United Nations system as a whole.” So they tried again with the “Council.”

Despite the apparent support for the overall UN and its agenda, perhaps the most noteworthy and interesting testimony came from Hillel Neuer, executive director of the Geneva-based watchdog group UN Watch. “Next month, Geneva will celebrate the 200th anniversary since Mary Shelley and her husband joined Lord Byron and others at Villa Diodati, in Geneva, right across from where the Council



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is today,” he said. “In that cold and gloomy June of 1816, amid the darkness, and storms of thunder and lightning, they exchanged ghost stories. Mary Shelley then had a nightmare, which she famously published: the story of an idealistic student who tried to create life, only to be horrified by its results, the story of Frankenstein.”

“I often walk past Villa Diodati,” Neuer continued in his remarks at the hearing. “When I gaze across Lake Geneva and see the UN Human Rights Council, I cannot help but wonder: If Eleanor Roosevelt and René Cassin [of the original UN Human Rights Commission] were alive, and beheld the sight of a body that grotesquely legitimizes murderers, dictators, and anti-Semites, would they not be revolted by what has become of their creation? Would they not conclude that today’s UN Human Rights Council has become Frankenstein’s monster, and their dream become a nightmare?”

It would appear to be so. Some of those testifying at the hearing, including Neuer, pointed out that the UN outfit does not even live up to its own mandates. For example, the UN council was supposed to select only member governments that “uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights.” Of course, there are very few governments in the world that actually meet that criteria, provided real rights are used as the yardstick rather than bogus UN-defined “human rights” that can be limited “by law” for almost any reason.

However, despite pointing out a broad range of problems and scandals that plague the UN outfit, Neuer offered a series of “recommendations” for the U.S. government to “reform” and improve the council. Those include speaking out publicly against “the most egregious candidates,” and working to block their election to the UN council. He also called for Washington, D.C., to introduce resolutions against rights-abusing governments and to convene “special sessions” to deal with “gross abuses.” But none of that addresses the root of the problem, and it all assumes the UN was created with good intentions.

Rather than focus on “reforming” the UN outfit and promoting UN-defined “human rights,” Congress should focus on severing America’s ties with the despot-dominated and totally discredited global organization. A bill currently in Congress would do precisely that. There is no good reason why Americans should be forced to fund and legitimize a group of autocracies as they seek to redefine the concept of rights around the world. Instead, U.S. lawmakers should show a renewed commitment to the unalienable rights guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution, and to protecting those rights from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

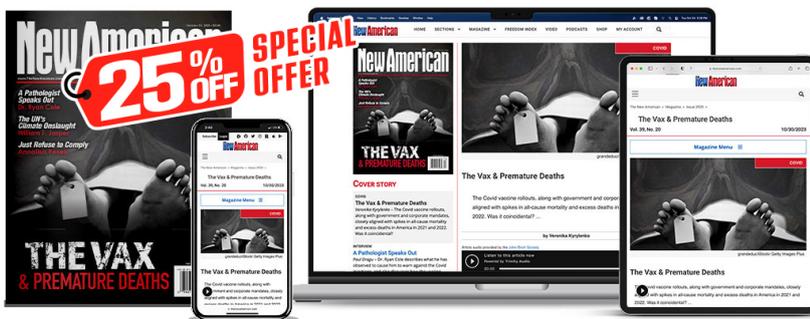


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