

OUTLOOK

Cruz's win is a victory for limited government



George F. Will says the nominee could join forces with like-minded Republicans in the Senate to tighten the restraints on federal power.

Ted Cruz's victory in Tuesday's Texas Republican runoff for the U.S. Senate nomination is the most impressive triumph yet for the still-strengthening tea party impulse. And Cruz's victory coincides with something conservatives should celebrate, the centennial of the 20th century's most important intraparty struggle. By preventing former President Theodore Roosevelt from capturing the 1912 Republican presidential nomination from President William Howard Taft, the GOP deliberately doomed its chances for holding the presidency but kept its commitment to the Constitution.

Before Cruz, now 41, earned a Harvard law degree, he wrote his Princeton senior thesis on the Constitution's Ninth and 10th Amendments, which if taken seriously would revitalize two bulwarks of liberty — the ideas that the federal government's powers are limited because they are enumerated, and that the enumeration of certain rights does not "deny or disparage others retained by the people." Both ideas are repudiated by today's progressives, as they were by TR, whose Bull Moose Party, the result of his bolt from the GOP, convened in Chicago 100 years ago Sunday — Aug. 5, 1912.

After leaving the presidency in 1909, TR went haywire. He had always chafed under constitutional restraints, but he had remained a Hamiltonian, constraining the Constitution expansively but respectfully. By 1912, however, he had become what the Democratic nominee, Woodrow Wilson, was — an anti-Madisonian. Both thought the Constitution — the enumeration and separation of powers — intolerably crippled government. Espousing unconstrained majoritarianism, TR disdained Madison's belief that the ultimate danger is wherever ultimate power resides, which in a democracy is with the majority. He endorsed the recall of state judicial decisions and by September 1912 favored the power to recall all public officials, including the president.

TR's anti-constitutional excesses moved two political heroes to subordinate personal affection to the public interest. New York Sen. Elihu Root had served TR as secretary of war and secretary of state, and was Roosevelt's first choice to succeed him in 1908. Massachusetts Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge had long been one of TR's closest friends. Both sided with Taft.

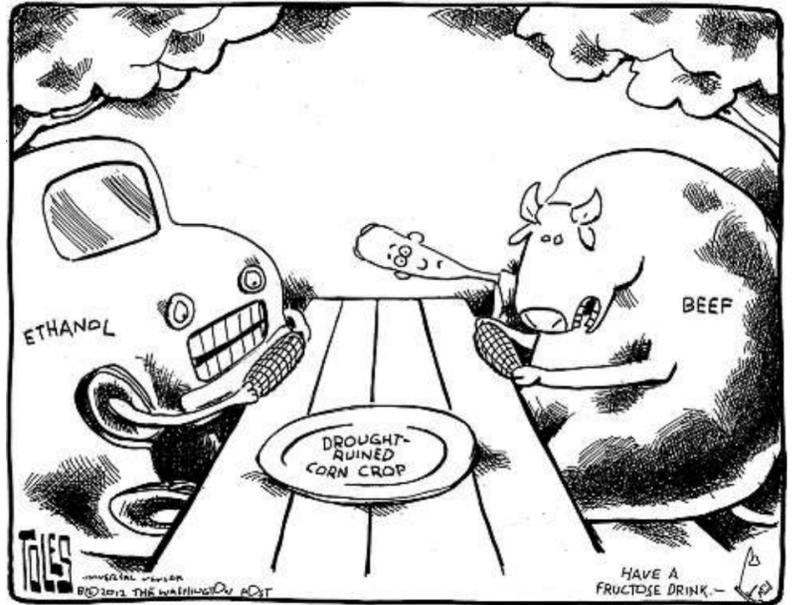
As the Hudson Institute's William Schambra says (in "The Saviors of the Constitution," National Affairs, Winter 2012, and elsewhere), by their "lonely, principled" stand, Root and Lodge, along with Taft, "denied TR the powerful electoral machinery of the Republican Party, which would almost surely have elected him, and then been turned to securing sweeping alterations" of the Constitution. Wilson won with 41.8 percent of the vote (to TR's 27.4 percent). Taft won 23.2 percent, carrying only Vermont and Utah, but achieved something far grander than a second term — the preservation of the GOP as an intellectual counterbalance to the Democrats' thorough embrace of progressivism and the "living" — actually, disappearing — Constitution.

Today, many of the tea party's academic despisers portray it as anti-democratic and anti-intellectual. Actually, it stands, as the forgotten heroes of 1912 did, with Madison, the most intellectually formidable Founder. He created, and the tea party defends, a constitutional architecture that does not thwart democracy but refines it, on the fact that in a republic, which is defined by the principle of representation, the people do not directly decide issues, they decide who will decide. And the things representatives are permitted to decide are strictly circumscribed by constitutional limits on federal power.

TR sought to make these limits few. The New Republic, then a voice of progressivism, ridiculed Root for being "committed to the theory of government, based upon natural rights" — the Declaration of Independence's theory of pre-political rights. Schambra, however, argues that for Root and Lodge, as for today's tea party, the rights proclaimed in the Declaration and the restrictions the Constitution imposes on government are inseparably linked, as Root said, to "the end that individual liberty might be preserved."

The GOP's defeat in 1912 was profoundly constructive. By rejecting TR, it preserved the Constitution from capricious majorities. When Cruz comes to the Senate, he and like-minded Republicans can honor two exemplary senatorial predecessors by forming the small but distinguished Root-Lodge Caucus.

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India outage illustrates infrastructure woes

Government has not kept pace with private sector

By Russell A. Green

The Great India Blackout that occurred this week and cast into darkness half of the country, or 600 million people, did illuminate one thing: the woeful state of the country's infrastructure. Power failures of this magnitude are obvious disasters, but roads, railways, mining and ports also exhibit serious shortfalls. These inadequacies have given a black eye to the trumpeted Indian growth story, which anticipates India replacing China as the next miracle economy. While maintaining a 6 percent to 7 percent growth rate amid a global recession, India impresses, depresses and puzzles at the same time.

First, some context about the blackout. While 600 million may be the population in affected states, Indian census surveys show that 279 million of those people never had power in their homes to begin with. They likely forged ahead heedless of the blackout, but unfortunately, they are likely to be so poor as to make little impact on the economy.

Second, India has faced nearly significant power shortages for years, so small blackouts are a daily occurrence. As a result, individuals and companies invest tremendous resources into private provision of public services. Those who cannot provide their own public goods get left behind.

A striking example lies next door to the Delhi Airport in a new suburb with modern high-rise office buildings housing high-tech firms like Microsoft and Convergys. Each gleaming building is topped with its own smokestack to accommodate its diesel generator. Frequent outages mean the generators are well used, often giving the skyline the smoke plume signature of an industrial park.

India's leadership saw this crisis coming, but trying to turn the metaphorical aircraft carrier of the bureaucracy to face a new direction is even more difficult in India's democracy than it is in the United States. Since the modern economy has not yet engaged the majority of Indian voters — access to power being a case in point — obtaining a mandate for pro-growth reforms has proven challenging. So India continues to struggle

with corruption-laden systems and low-quality bureaucrats, especially at the state and local level.

India's major infrastructure investments started to ramp up only about 10 years ago, but with the exception of private company-led sectors like telecom, progress has been slow. The blackouts, traffic jams and other infrastructure bottlenecks drive supply costs higher, helping to keep inflation rates close to 10 percent. Insufficient infrastructure has also contributed to the slump in Indian economic activity. India cannot reach its full potential until it finds a way to accelerate the building of its airports, roads and power plants.

Much of the initiative must come from India's 28 state governments, which vary considerably in aptitude and motivation. And in a country as densely populated as India, legitimate environmental concerns have created thorny conflicts.

The government in Delhi recently put forward a land acquisition reform bill — infrastructure is land-intensive — and has developed policies to increase private sector involvement in projects and incentives for state governments to improve performance. In the midst of the blackout, the Finance Ministry hammered out a deal to restructure the debt of state-run power distributors in exchange for lowering subsidies that encouraged excess power consumption. Putting the government house in order will also give comfort to private players who want to invest in power plants and distribution networks.

The blackout is simply another reminder that the Indian government is still playing catch-up to a commendably dynamic private sector. Removing the roadblocks, literally and figuratively, can be done only with sustained commitment. Here the outlook is optimistic. As more people get electricity in their homes, more people will notice blackouts, and more people will vote for candidates who get things done. Public attention to the massive blackout will bolster that commitment. India's government will soon have no choice but to catch up.

Green, the Will Clayton Fellow in International Economics at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, spent the past four years in the Republic of India, where he served as the U.S. Treasury Department's first financial attaché to that country.



Let's be the generation that finishes bayou parks system



Bill King says Mayor Annise Parker's bond proposal could help complete an iconic park system that could last for hundreds of years.

Houston is the Bayou City. There are about 10 bayous that flow east and south across our city on their way Galveston Bay. They are the defining aspect of our limited topography.

They are normally benign, lazily flowing waterways. However, occasionally in our torrential deluges, they roar out of their banks and wreak havoc in nearby neighborhoods.

For nearly a century, civic leaders have envisioned using the bayous' flood plains for both recreational and flood control purposes. Over many years, both the city of Houston and Harris County have made major investments in parks and flood control projects at various locations on the bayou system.

In recent years the Houston Parks Board has laid out an ambitious plan

for the bayou system called the Bayou Greenways Project. It is a comprehensive, nearly half billion dollar project that would create a series of linear parks along almost the entire length of the bayou system. It would connect the existing recreational areas along the system, providing more than 100 miles of continuous pathways for walking, jogging and biking and thousands of acres of new park lands. It would undoubtedly become the defining feature for Houston, even more so than the Riverwalk is to San Antonio.

Mayor Annise Parker has proposed a giant step toward completing this project with the inclusion of \$100 million for it in her recent bond proposal. One feature of her proposal that I find particularly appealing is that the money

in the proposal is to be used for matching gifts from private contributors. My experience is that matching funds are a powerful motivator for the philanthropic community.

I am generally very skeptical of grandiose government projects, especially those that cannot meet an exacting cost-benefit test. With ever-growing traffic congestion and our basic infrastructure crumbling, tax dollars are simply too scarce to waste on projects that do not have definite and quantifiable public benefits.

The Parks Board has commissioned an economic impact study of the project, but frankly, it is very speculative. For example, it estimates \$77 in savings per Houstonian in health care costs from improvement in local residents' physical and mental health. Not exactly the kind of stringent cost-benefits analysis upon which such a significant investment of tax dollars should normally be based.

Nor am I impressed by the mayor's assurances this bond proposal will not increase taxes. If there is going to be excess cash flow in the future from which this

debt could be serviced, it could instead be used to ... gasp ... perish the thought ... lower taxes.

But the truth is that there are some things that cannot be valued in dollars and cents, and there are some things worth paying for. Public parks are just such things.

That is not to say that every park proposal should be automatically endorsed. But this proposal has been well thought out. It takes advantage of our defining natural features. It leverages previous investments and the philanthropic community. And it will provide tangible flood control benefits.

Yes, it will mean that our generation will leave our children and grandchildren with another \$100 million of public debt. But, at least, for this debt they will be getting something — an iconic park system that will last for hundreds of years.

Let's be the generation that finishes this.

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