

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Daughters Vote

THE SOURCE: "Female Socialization: How Daughters Affect Their Legislator Fathers' Voting on Women's Issues" by Ebonya L. Washington, in *American Economic Review*, March 2008.

POLITICAL SCIENTISTS HAVE spent decades weighing the factors that sway individual votes in the U.S. House of Representatives: party affiliation, constituent preferences, and a legislator's personal opinions and characteristics. Ebonya L. Washington, an economist at Yale University, has identified another influence: daughters. Each female child a member of the House has, Washington found, significantly increases the likelihood that the legislator will cast a liberal vote, particularly on reproductive rights issues.

Washington used the voting scorecards compiled by the American Association of University Women, the National Organization for Women (NOW), and the National Right to

Life Coalition to gauge the impact of having a female child on votes related to women's issues. All but a few of the legislators were men. Among House members with two children, those with one daughter earned an average score from NOW nine points higher than that of lawmakers with two sons (out of 100 total points). Members with two daughters and no sons scored 18 points more than those with just one daughter. Washington found a similar effect among both Democrats and Republicans, regardless of which organization's scorecard and which Congress she examined. All of the scores were from the 1997–2004 period.

When looking at a legislator's entire voting record, Washington found that having female children was correlated with a propensity to take the liberal side, and the strongest effect was always on legislation concerning reproductive rights. She speculates that legislators think about how their votes will affect people they know personally, so it's not too surprising that people who call them Daddy have a powerful influence.

trickiest to pull off, convince your constituents to vote *against* the sitting president's reelection. Though it may seem counterintuitive, Taylor reports that "states that gave the president less of their popular vote in his reelection received significantly more procurement dollars per capita in his second term." Why? Stressing that his theory is "highly speculative," Taylor thinks the answer may have to do with the peculiar nature of lame-duck politics. Second-term presidents may steer federal dollars toward particular states to "buy legislative votes—rather than popular ones—in support of their agenda." Legislators from states that didn't support the president are "predisposed to oppose the administration," which may make them all the more receptive to procurement pressure. They will support the president—in return for those lucrative contracts—and still reap all the credit from the voters they represent. More pork, anyone?

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Unmasking the Surge

THE SOURCE: "The Price of the Surge" by Steven Simon, in *Foreign Affairs*, May–June 2008.

EVEN THE MOST PARTISAN Democrats in Washington acknowledge that last summer's "surge" of

troops has reduced the killing in Iraq, and some Republicans say the strategy has finally cleared the way for victory. But the tactics that have made Iraqis safer in the short run may have the opposite effect over time, says Steven

Simon, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

The surge has lessened the violence only in tandem with home-grown developments, such as the "grim successes" of ethnic cleansing that have driven warring Sunni and Shiite Muslims from mixed neighborhoods and villages, Simon writes. The troop buildup also coincided with a breakdown in the alliance between Sunni tribes and Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia. In the months

leading up to President George W. Bush's announcement of the surge, Al Qaeda had infuriated its Iraqi partners by seizing resources, demanding obedience, and later killing recalcitrant Sunni leaders. Abetted by American offers of \$360 a month, insurgents abandoned the Al Qaeda association in droves, becoming what is known as the "Sons of Iraq," and swearing to support the United States.

The influx of 21,500 surge troops, combined with the cooperation of 90,000 Sons of Iraq, reduced the violence significantly. But the tactics that have been employed have contributed little toward building a stable, unified Iraqi nation, according to Simon. Instead, the surge has inadvertently strengthened the three modern horsemen of Middle Eastern apocalypse: tribalism, warlordism, and sectarianism.

General David Petraeus has employed a "bottom-up" strategy rather than a "top-down" effort that might have built support for a strong Iraqi government among

The troop surge has made Iraqis safer in the short run but may have the opposite effect over time.

tribal leaders, Simon observes. The importance of local sheikhs grew as they struck deals with the Americans, and the 20 percent cut they often skim from the U.S. payments to the former insurgents made them even more powerful. The focus on working with local tribesmen instead of through the Iraqi national government has bolstered warlords who have exploited the current security situation and all but taken over some cities, Simon writes.

The bottom-up strategy has allowed Iraq's three major groups—the Sunnis, Shia, and Kurds—to fantasize that the United States will help each of them achieve their goals. The Sunnis want a return to the power they held under Saddam Hussein.

The Shia want compensation for their suffering under Saddam, and the Kurds want autonomy and territory. None feels much loyalty to a central government that would demand compromise on all fronts.

The failure of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government to make much progress on reconciliation has left the United States with "no good options" in Iraq, Simon concludes. A new U.S. administration is going to need international cooperation to force Baghdad to take meaningful steps. To get this help from neighboring countries, European allies, and the United Nations, the Americans should announce a phased troop withdrawal, and yield a degree of their "dubious control" in return for shared responsibility in establishing stability, he says. The course is "risky and possibly futile," Simon acknowledges, but is more promising than the current fashionable fix, which doesn't address the need for a centralized, functioning government in the heart of the Middle East.

EXCERPT

Naval Disconnect

[Millennium sailors] were born with laptops in their hands. . . . But when we get them into the Fleet, the disconnect between what they were promised and what they find will be profoundly disappointing—a veritable bait-and-switch scheme. They will discover that our "leading-edge-of-the-shelf" and "state-of-the-art" technology is at best ancient. . . .

The two-way communication bandwidth of a single BlackBerry is three times greater than the bandwidth of the entire Arleigh Burke destroyer. Looked at another way, the Navy's most modern in-service multimission warship has only five percent of the bandwidth we have in our home Internet connection. . . . Moreover, every system we field takes nearly seven years to reach the Fleet. By the time it gets to the people who need it, it is already out of date.

—VICE ADMIRAL MARK EDWARDS, deputy chief of naval operations for communications networks (N6), in *Proceedings* (April 2008)