

Keynote speaker and Columbia Award recipient

## *Daniel Hannan*



Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen. Thank you to the Washington Policy Center. As well as acknowledging this award, I suppose I'm going to be the only employee of the European Union you see this week, so I'm going to thank you all for the Nobel Prize!

How do I go about crafting adequate words to express what I feel about the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union? I tried to imagine how the committee would have decided — this is a dark time of year in Scandinavia, the afternoons are pretty gloomy, the weather is turning bad, maybe they were sitting there with a lot of schnapps, possibly watching one of those gloomy crime dramas that they're so keen on, and they were trying to cheer themselves up somehow, "What are we going to do to show everyone we have a sense of humor? I mean, how do you trump Al Gore and then Barack Obama? Ah, I've got it!"

And so we have this extraordinary spectacle of the E.U. winning this award in the year when the process of European integration has brought violence and unrest to the capital cities of Europe and has condemned millions of people to poverty, emigration and misery. How can you beat that? There's only one way they can trump it. Next year, they could give the E.U. the prize for economics!

Just analyze for a moment, just think about what we're saying when we say that the E.U. deserves the prize for peace in Europe. The E.U. is not so much a cause of peace in Europe as a

symptom — a symptom of the peace that was born out of the defeat of fascism, the spread of democracy and the NATO alliance.

And who made those things happen? Which unrecognized country was it that was sending its young men overseas decade after decade, first of all to fight the Nazi menace, then to keep Europe free and democratic and then eventually to contribute to the liberation of hundreds of millions of people from communist tyranny? Yours was the biggest contingent, my friends; we had, I think, the second biggest and I like to think in the United Kingdom we acknowledge our debt to you, our friends and allies. We have some countries in the neighborhood that have a slightly different view, that have almost a pathological need to bite the hand that freed them.

If we were serious about honoring the right people with this Nobel Peace Prize, what about honoring the people who brought an end to the communist tyranny which, in crude mathematical terms, must be reckoned the most murderous system of government ever devised by human intelligence? What about recognizing those titanic figures who brought liberation to the people who'd been enslaved by Marxism?

There were three people, two of whom have now passed, who were instrumental in that liberation. One was Pope John Paul II, who posited something better, toured behind the Iron Curtain and held out a promise of something better than people could see around them. One of them was, of course, your greatest 20<sup>th</sup> century

president, Ronald Regan. Neither would be in a position now to accept an award. But the third figure is still there. It was her 87th birthday earlier this week; she was looking fantastic. What about a Nobel Peace Prize for Margaret Thatcher?

Let me just go back a moment to the Al Gore one, 2007. What really leapt off the page at me when I was looking at that was who the other candidates were. Let me tell you the story of the runner up if you like, and some of you will be familiar with this, but for those who are not, does anyone know who I mean by Irena Sendler?

Irena Sendler was a young Polish woman when the Nazis moved into Warsaw. She was a Polish Catholic and she lived through the occupation, and she displayed a heroism that is humbling even by the awesome standards of her generation. She repeatedly risked her life to smuggle babies and young children out of the Warsaw ghetto. She would place Jewish children with Christian families, and she would give them assumed identities. She kept a list of who they were and who their parents were, hoping that after the war she would be able to reunite them. In practice, of course, almost all the parents perished in Treblinka.

Irena Sendler was captured by the Gestapo and tortured, but she wouldn't give up her list. She was then busted out by the partisan resistance, she was rescued from Nazi capture — and this is the really incredible bit — she changed her name and went back to smuggling out the children.

What does it say about the values of our society that we value her achievement less than making a film about global warming? If Al Gore had any decency he would have been hanging his head in shame at the idea that he was on the same paper as her, let alone rushing to collect the ward. Irena Sendler died the following year, modest and humble to the end. She said, "I never use the word 'hero' — there was so much more I could have done."

Compare that to the attitude of Al Gore, who I heard from only as recently as the last debate, explaining that the reason the president hadn't performed was because he was possibly suffering from the altitude sickness in Colorado. (That came as a real revelation to me. I thought he was coming down from Olympus; he would be suffering the other way around!)

What an extraordinary measure of how our age, our generation, values the moralistic over the moral, values holding the right opinions over doing the right thing.

This is surely the challenge we face as conservatives — whatever country we're in — this is what we're up against: This pervasive modern sense that the best thing you can do is not to work tirelessly for charity or to serve your country in uniform or repeatedly to risk your life to rescue the children of strangers, but to hold the right opinions about immigration and multiculturalism. Or conversely, that the worst thing you can do is not to fiddle your taxes or cheat on your husband or wife or betray the people who have been kindest to you, but to hold the wrong opinions about multinational corporations.

And that, it seems to me, is a dangerous attitude in individuals. But in government it becomes a tragic attitude for the nation concerned, because the way you advertise your virtue as a lawmaker is by spending other people's money. And that, it seems to me, is the choice that we face the world over. That's the essence of what distinguishes us from the statists. And you face your version of the choice in three weeks' time.

The writer Charles Lamb made the wonderful observation that there's no sweeter pleasure in life than to do a good deed by stealth and then have it discovered by accident. I thought of that phrase when it emerged that Mitt Romney had given away 30% of his income. How many of you would give away 30% of your income to charity and then fight to keep the information secret? (That's a stupid question because obviously you're not going to tell me now, you're fighting to keep it a secret!) But you get the point if you like doing the right thing rather than advertising your virtue by saying that the government is going to be doing the right thing.

Now why am I butting in to your election? I'm not a U.S. citizen (as we heard from Scott earlier that was settled at Yorktown). Why am I coming and expressing a view about the forthcoming election? Well there are two reasons, my friends. The first is this: If you owe a debt of \$16 trillion — before we even get into these unfunded liabilities which were making the hairs rise on the backs of our necks earlier — \$16 trillion alone is an inconceivable sum. The human brain is not capable of envisaging numbers that big. This is off the scale of any government indebtedness in human history up until this moment. When the debt gets to that size, it's not just your problem anymore, it becomes a global problem. And at that stage I think we all have a legitimate interest in wanting a U.S. government that can live within its means.

I had the pleasure of attending the Republican Convention in Tampa at the end of August. And I watched a lot of people try to convince me that this was the right ticket. You know what I found the single most convincing moment of the whole convention? There was a video which had Mitt Romney's family, his sons talking about what he was like as a dad when they were kids, and one of the sons said, "Whenever we needed pocket money we had to go to our mother because that guy is so tight." That was the moment where I thought, "Right, that's the guy! If I know nothing else about him, given the state of U.S. finances, that is the only recommendation you need."

But there is another reason why I'm intruding into your election, and it's that no British subject can be indifferent to the fortunes of this republic. We've been through too much together. We're tied by common sentiment and habit, by blood and speech, and we have been almost from the beginning.

John Adams was the first American ambassador to the court of George III, and when he presented his credentials he made a handsome and affecting speech which ended with the hope that we restored the old good nature and old good humor between peoples who, though separated by an ocean and under different governments, had nonetheless the same language, similar religion and kindred blood.

Mitt Romney gave an updated version of that when he came to the United Kingdom. He spoke in a very complimentary way. I thought the foreign policy trip he did — the U.K., Poland, Israel trip — was exactly what we wanted to hear. These were three traditional allies of the U.S. which have been slighted and scorned by the present administration. I can't remember a worse time to have been a traditional friend to this country.

There was a moment just before Mitt Romney arrived in the U.K. when one of his aides was quoted as saying, "We have in common an Anglo-Saxon heritage." I don't know whether this was a big rowel on this side of the Atlantic, but it was in the U.K. The left pretended to get terribly upset. They're really good at that, aren't they, this affected outrage? "I am shocked." The Obama campaign put out a statement saying, "This is shockingly offensive." Now I've been in politics long enough to know that when anybody says that they don't really mean it; if you're really offended you don't say, "I am offended." (Just trust me on that one, I'm a professional at this.)

There was this whole nonsense about affecting to understand it as a racial thing, "He's emphasizing Obama's otherness." Even the dimmest Romney aide must be aware that Anglo-Saxons are a minority of the U.S. electorate; that would be a silly thing to say.

They're even a minority of the U.K. electorate. Britain is full of people with non-Saxon names (like Hannan). When the French talk about *les Anglo-Saxons*, when the Spanish talk about *los Anglosajones*, what they mean are people who speak English and believe in limited government and private property and free contract and all of the values that unite the English-speaking peoples.

That's what Mitt Romney was surely referring to. He was talking to about this shared heritage of freedom that stretches back through your revolution, back through the Glorious Revolution, back through the English Civil War, back even before the great charter to that inherited folk right of common law.

The greatest thing our peoples gave to the world, the sublime idea that emerged so far back that we don't know when it started — this extraordinary revolutionary concept that the law doesn't come from the government, that the law rather is already there binding the government as it binds the individual; that the king, as the meanest man in the kingdom, must obey a law that was already there — that was our civilization's best export, our supreme gift to the happiness of mankind. That is our shared ideal. And it is in the name of that ideal that we have stood together through the centuries and fought for freedom.

Scott quoted the very famous ending of the Gettysburg Address, and here's a little example of something that we have in common that is sometimes forgotten. Those words, "government of the people, by the people, for the people," quoted now almost as evidence of U.S. exceptionalism, were not Abraham Lincoln's. The audience at the time would have recognized it as a quotation from John Wycliffe's prologue to the first translation of the Bible into English. Extraordinary thing, that in the 14<sup>th</sup> century we'd already come up with that notion: Government of the people, for the people and by the people. It couldn't have happened in any other language. And it didn't. That was our shared heritage.

While I'm on the subject of Scott's history and our shared history, Lexington and Concord, again, is presented to us as a war between nations and so on. What did Paul Revere shout as he went on his famous ride? Everyone knows, like Abraham Lincoln.

Now think about this: It would have been an odd thing for him to say, "The British are coming," to a population which had never considered itself anything other than British, right? It would have been a pretty odd thing to shout, even at deluded Democrats in Massachusetts. What he actually said was, "The Regulars are out," because the word patriot meant they saw themselves as defenders of their birthright as freeborn Englishmen against a revolutionary court.

Tocqueville came out with the most beautiful phrase when he said, "The American is the Englishman left to himself." What happened in this country was the concentration and consummation of that tradition of liberty that had begun in prehistoric times, and that reached its highest and purest form in the old courthouse in Philadelphia. That's why no British politician can be indifferent to the happiness and fortunes of this Republic.

I have seen in the country where it was first adumbrated that philosophy derided and traduced and almost defeated. I've seen powers in my country passing from the elected representative to the standing bureaucracy, from Westminster to Brussels, from local government to the Whitehall machine. I've seen our patrimony cheapened and lost, and I would always tell myself, "At least it's secure somewhere, the place that we exported it to." The seeds we took across the Atlantic those hundreds of years ago found fertile soil here and they found a deep root even if the ancestral tree is now withered and desiccated.

Don't make a liar out of me. Show that you still care about it. Show that there is one place where the flame of British freedom is still secure.

In 1937 the Texan jurist Hatton Sumners made the brilliant observation,

he said, "There is a straight line that runs from Runnymede to Philadelphia." Runnymede is in my constituency, the place where the Magna Carta was sealed in 1215. (I'd better say that because our prime minister was on David Letterman a couple weeks ago and he didn't know what Magna Carta meant, so just to reassure you there are one or two of us who still remember. In a way it tells you something that the British prime minister needed to be corrected on what Magna Carta means.)

The site of the Magna Carta, as I say, is in the region I represent. It went unmarked until 1952, when a memorial stone was finally erected there by the American Bar Association! They understood Hatton Sumners's point, "A straight line runs from Runnymede to Philadelphia." He went on, "We did not borrow our liberties from the British constitution, we paid for them with the blood of our ancestors on the battlefield." He concluded, "Our constitution came up from the body of a free people, but we may lose our capacity for self-government through its non-exercise."

"We may lose our capacity for self-government through its non-exercise." What does that mean?

Well, look at what is being done by this administration. One by one the distinguishing features which set this republic aside from the run of humanity are being extirpated. One by one the things which used to betoken the exceptionalism of the United States are being harmonized with the rest of the world.

Power is passing from the 50 states to Washington, D.C.; from the elected legislator to the federal czar; from the legislative to the executive branch. And with every such transfer of power — however much it's defended as a one-off, pragmatic response to an emergency — with every such transfer of power, your country becomes less American, by which I mean less prosperous, and less democratic and less free.

The policies currently being pursued by your leaders are not a set of random initiatives that have just been arbitrarily lashed together on health care, on

Social Security, on nuclear energy, on carbon taxes; they amount to a comprehensive program of Europeanization. And I know where that road leads. I'm a member of the European Parliament. I've been working there for 12 years. I am living in your future! Believe me, my friends, you're not going to enjoy it.

There is, isn't there, a double immorality here. On the one hand, our generation is sustaining a standard of living which it's not prepared to pay for by passing on the bill to generations yet to come. That is something that's not happened before in the history of our species. But in doing that there is another way in which the future generations are being betrayed. They are being cut off from the inheritance which was yours from the time of the Constitution, or even from the time of Magna Carta or before. The things which set us apart are being extirpated.

You might say, "Well what are we going to do? In the current mood people are angry, they're looking for people to blame, the candidate who wants to attack the bankers and tax the rich is always going to win." That argument is put to me all the time in the European Parliament. It's put to me sometimes here. Somebody said to me earlier, "How can an austerity party win an election in the current climate? Look at what happened in Greece," he said, "look at what happened in France;

the people who were for austerity got flattened in the polls."

My friends, I am going to answer that question in the most politically incorrect way that I can: You are not Greeks, you are not French, and we expect better of you!

You have three weeks to go until the election — to the elections; let's not focus on one of them at the expense of the others. I think your founders knew what they were doing when they put Congress in Article I of your Constitution and the presidency in Article II. It's Congress that sets the budget. It's successive legislatures that have not lived within their means, and if you want to begin to restore order and sanity to your public finances, it has to be through changing the majority in your legislature so that you once again have people who understand that the money is yours rather than the government's to dispose of as they please.

What single virtue should you look for in a legislator? Only this: That he takes seriously his oath of office; that when he promises to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies domestic and foreign, he really means it; that he has an appreciation, a modesty, a humility to recognize that he is passing through an institution that is bigger than he is; and that he is your servant and not your ruler.

That was the happiest way to launch a new country. Scott spoke about "the other Washington," meaning the capital. Let's go back to the real Washington after whom both this state and that capital are named, the one who appears on your state flag. This republic was founded in an act of extraordinary renunciation: "As the sword was our last resort in defense of our liberties," said George Washington, "so let it be the first to be laid aside when those liberties are secure."

He had that humility, that recognition that there was something bigger than him. He laid aside an imperium that was beyond the dreams of what others in the world at that time could have imagined.

You should prove yourselves his heirs. You should honor that vision and remain faithful to the republic which it founded.

So let me close by pleading with you, as somebody who's not just a friend, an ally of this country, but who sees it as the supreme repository of our common values as Anglo-sphere peoples. Honor the vision of your founders. Don't be the generation that cuts itself off from its parents and that disinherits its children. Never be afraid to speak to and for the soul of this nation of which, by good fortune and God's grace, you are privileged to be part of.