

Governor Lamm offers brave new world rationalization for euthanasia

by Steve Parsons

During the 1980s, Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm attained national notoriety for advocating what no other major politician had dared to say: that the withholding of medical care for those whose “useful” life had passed, was not only appropriate, but a virtue necessary for preserving the United States. Lamm worked hard to popularize the socially taboo ideas of health care rationing and euthanasia, which had heretofore been confined to academic debates over ethics. Lamm argued, “We’ve got a duty to die, to get out of the way.” He compared the effort to prolong human life to the futility of pasting fallen leaves back on trees.

Today, Lamm is the director of a think-tank at the University of Denver called the Center for Public Policy and Contemporary Issues. His career and his message have intersected the increasing inability of the U.S. health care system to meet the medical needs of the population, at the same time that costs have soared beyond the means of Americans to pay, and disease rates are rising because of social collapse—tuberculosis, measles, AIDS, etc. What is required are crash research programs on cures and treatment for AIDS, cancer, and other diseases, and a resumption of advanced health care—from infant vaccinations to geriatric medicine.

Instead, Lamm’s outrageous views of yesterday are now considered not only respectable, but are the genesis of myriad legislation and medical regulations that aim to curtail costs through restricting treatment and prematurely ending life through living wills, “assisted suicide,” and medical euthanasia.

In contrast to these views of the death lobby, the economic benefits to a society from high-technology health care should be obvious. The real measure of the adequacy of health care as an economic necessity is: Does it extend human life? Does the average individual in society live longer? And is the population growing?

Examples abound of money-saving benefits from providing health care, instead of cutting budgets. In the recent Texas measles epidemic, universal vaccination of the young was not carried out, in order “to save money.” Subsequently, thousands of children required far more costly hospitalization.

Lamm most recently appeared with Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) on a health care panel at a March 11 conference sponsored by the Economic Strategy Institute, but his rationalizations for denying health care had been formulated in a paper entitled “The Brave New World of Health Care,” issued in May 1990.

U.S. economy can’t afford health care

In his paper, Lamm makes clear that his primary concern over health care costs has nothing to do with improving health care availability or delivery. On the contrary, his subtitle, “Health Care as Economic Cancer,” indicates his view that “costs in the United States are making our economy sick.” He castigates the morality that believes “that everyone is entitled to unlimited health care regardless of how costly and without regard to a patient’s prognosis for recovery,” blasting those who term his “mere suggestions to the contrary . . . as an act of callous insensitivity.” We must face up to the reality that health care costs are consuming so much of our gross national product that it will soon paralyze the entire economy, he claims.

It is the rising cost of health care that constitutes one of the greatest drains from our competitiveness with other nations, writes Lamm, as well as “the single biggest cause of individual bankruptcy and of industrial unrest . . . [which] could wreak havoc with reported [corporate] profits, book values, and stock market valuations.” Our “medical genius” and “exploding technology” are leading to “fiscal suicide”—unless we “begin making hard choices and develop a system that provides the best possible health care to the greatest number of people *at a price the nation can afford* [emphasis added].

“We are careening rapidly into a brave new world of health care” whose “basic defining characteristic . . . is that we have invented more beneficial medicine than we as a society can afford to pay for. . . . America’s economy no longer throws off as large a growth dividend with which to buy benefits for its citizens. Our exploding health care costs and our shrinking economy (caused in part by our exploding health care costs) are on a collision course. . . . We no longer are as wealthy a nation as we once were. Our resources are growing arithmetically, our health care geometrically.”

Therefore, concludes Lamm, “How we adjust to this brave new world . . . will be politically and professionally painful. . . . We shall, inevitably, have to decide what is ‘appropriate’—not merely what could be ‘beneficial.’ . . . Health care prioritizing is the ugly child of our brilliant success in health care.” This prioritization amounts to triaging—a polite term for killing—whole segments of the population, axing research and development of new technologies, savaging the morality and practice of the medical profession, and

destroying the humanity and cultural values of America.

Accommodating to economic collapse

Unlike most other purveyors of the same bestial policies, Lamm has exposed the fallacious premise of all the arguments for rationing and triage: that one must accept as a given the destitute and degenerating condition of the U.S. economy. If one accepts that premise, there is indeed no way that necessary health care can be provided. If one does not change what for Lamm is this immutable reality, then virtually everything he delineates, from the breakdown in health care to the “painful remedies,” is inevitable, regardless of one’s moral outrage.

Lamm believes Americans will do nothing fundamental to reverse the depression. In 1984, he wrote an article for *Playboy* magazine saying that George Orwell’s 1984 was not wrong, but merely a bit late. He titled that article “1994: A Prediction,” and wrote:

“I believe we are now heading toward a gloomy future filled with major economic, political, and social traumas, and it’s not that we can’t alter that trend but that we *won’t*. Thus, we’re careening toward disasters of our own making. . . . These hard problems . . . won’t get better, they’ll get

worse—unless attacked immediately. What follows are my own best-guess predictions about where certain political, social, and economic forces are taking us. I have borrowed a technique from Orwell, whose book projected 35 years into the future to help us conceive the inconceivable. In this case, I have merely added 10 years to this date.

“We will see a Depression-like economic trauma before 1994” from the “new reality of the static economic pie. . . . By 1994, it will have become clear that the U.S. is a country in liquidation. . . . 1994 will see the U.S. with a substantially reduced middle class, and we will have moved toward a two-class society. . . . 1994 will see a bitter battle over a shrinking number of jobs. . . . I predict that 1994 will see America’s cities largely full of angry, frustrated, and unemployed minorities. . . . America’s health care system will be bankrupt by 1994.

“The Third World will be bankrupt by 1994. . . . By 1994, the U.S. will have an international welfare caseload to add to its domestic welfare caseload. . . . We will see constant political turmoil on our southern borders” (emphasis in original).

In a 1985 lecture series at Pacifica School of Religion in Berkeley, California, Lamb underscored his contention that

Abortion counseling ban: Bush’s circus

When the Republican Party rallies votes and funds from anti-abortion as well as “pro-choice” Republicans, it says the party is a “big tent” with room for differing views on abortion. Actually, the “big tent” concept refers to how George Bush uses abortion issues as his personal political circus. His newest act is the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) amendment to the ban on abortion counseling at federally funded clinics.

The HHS Office of Population Affairs (OPA) says the purpose of the Title X program is to provide preventive, pre-pregnancy family planning services. Once a woman is pregnant, she no longer needs Title X services and must be referred for comprehensive prenatal and social services. Grantees of Title X funds (clinic operators) cannot provide abortion as a method of family planning, nor, as a 1988 rule stipulates, can they counsel or make referrals for abortion in Title X-funded projects. The loophole in the largely unenforceable and unenforced rule was that it did not apply to a grantee’s activities not part of the Title X project. This allowed the abortion industry, most notably Planned Parenthood, which receives tens of millions of dollars in Title X and other federal program funds annually, to operate abortion clinics in tandem with their

Title X-funded projects for years.

Despite the fact that abortion doctors almost *never* counsel women on medical care (even teen “counselors” arrange the abortions), Planned Parenthood built a campaign out of accusing the administration of interfering with the doctor-patient relationship, gagging doctors, and endangering the lives of poor women. They took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. When the Court upheld the ban last June in *Rust v. Sullivan*, the abortion lobby whipped up congressional support for legislation which overturned Bush’s “gag” rule. Bush vetoed the legislation, garnering adulation from anti-abortion layers. But, behind the charade—both Bush’s and the abortion lobby’s—is the fact that the rules were never enforced. Planned Parenthood even boasted recently that it has ignored the rules altogether.

Bush’s latest amendment lets Title X doctors (but not clinic staff) give abortion advice to women for medical reasons. The abortion brigade, which now admits that counselors, not doctors, see patients, is calling the (still unenforceable) amendment a political ploy. The amendment, full of loopholes the OPA will not discuss, is like a funhouse mirror: you see in it whatever you want. For instance, it stipulates that Title X projects can refer women to full-service providers who give abortions, but “not to those whose principal activity” is abortion. So, if clinics give out condoms and birth control information *and* perform abortions, they qualify.

his predicted fate of nations is the result of failing to act to change these otherwise inevitable outcomes. "These are not 'developing' countries," Lamb said. "They are 'never-to-be-developed' countries. It is sad but true that most of the world's poor will stay poor—and that there is nothing the developed nations can do to alter this . . . [to] make a dent in their poverty. . . . Aristotle said it so well, 'From time to time it is necessary that pestilence, famine, and war prune the luxuriant growth of the human race.' "

Competitiveness . . . and Perot

It is obvious that if the United States continues in its present course, Lamm's 1994 brave new world will indeed become reality. He and his accomplices in the death lobby will have succeeded in destroying what he targeted in that same lecture series: our cultural "optimism [that] is too deep; our traditions [that] are too strong; our history [that] is too rich; and our self-confidence [that] is too bold."

Indeed, former Governor Lamm's line that health care is one of the biggest causes of the nation's lack of international competitiveness, was retailed on March 1 by the Competitiveness Policy Council. "We single out this sector for particular attention," said the council. Such costs "divert a large share of national resources that could be used productively elsewhere."

This thinking is also reflected by billionaire H. Ross Perot, who is now being puffed by the media as an independent presidential candidate. During an interview March 27 on the McNeil-Lehrer News Hour, Perot blamed the elderly for much of the nation's economic ills. He said he agreed with outgoing Sen. Warren Rudman (R-N.H.), who blasted "special interest" groups for blocking attempts to cap entitlement programs such as Medicare and Social Security. "He's right," said Perot.

"There's a wonderful phenomenon going on here around all of these special interests, and I think there can be some good balancing out of that, specifically on the entitlements and so forth," Perot said. "We now have a new huge groundswell coming up of the 18- to 40-year-olds who are mad as the devil and are not going to take it anymore because we're spending their money. Now . . . if they ever get organized, they have a secret weapon. . . . Some of the people who created this problem, by and large, are their parents. They will sit down with mom, dad, grandmother, and granddad and, on a private basis, get a lot of this straightened out, because no mother and father can look their children in the eye and say, 'Sure, we're taking your money and we're proud of it.' That's democracy at work."

If the baby boomers in fact do what Perot advocates, and gang up on their parents and grandparents in a show of social Darwinian force, Lamm's predictions will indeed come true. Ironically, Lamm's brave new world will soon destroy the rest of the population, which will be systematically weeded out by such epidemics as AIDS and diseases of poverty that an increasingly triaged health care system will be unable to combat.

Ross Perot bids for anti-establishment vote

by Leo F. Scanlon

After the latest primaries, American voters are presented with a field of "official" presidential candidates limited to George Bush, Bill Clinton, and Jerry Brown. No sooner had this gruesome choice become clear than, *mirabile dictu*, a savior appeared—Texas billionaire Ross Perot, who blazed into the headlines as the leader of a third-party movement which is attracting voters by the thousands. Sadly, desperate people who are flocking to the petition committee meetings which have been formed to put Perot on the ballot in each state, are generally emphatic that they don't know what Perot's program is, and they don't want to know. All they want is the chance to support a "media credible" candidate who at least appears to be human.

The secret to Perot's success is simple: The level of disgust expressed by voters for the candidates presented by the parties has reached unprecedented heights. Primary voter turnout is running below 1988 levels and, among those who have voted, almost 50% express dissatisfaction with all the major candidates. This vast number of disaffected voters is being carefully shepherded by the news media, which have declared themselves to be the official referees of the elections. Pat Buchanan led that parade for several months, but he has completed his mission of "toughening-up" the Bush campaign, and has retired to the reviewing stand. The new media-certified leader of the disaffected is Ross Perot.

While news media tout the phenomenon as a spontaneous "grass roots" movement, the Perot campaign is about as spontaneous as a NASA launch. Like every sales campaign ever conducted by the wily Mr. Perot, this is a meticulously organized juggernaut, prepared months in advance, and leaving little to chance. Prior to the start of his petition effort, Perot had been speaking to gatherings around the country, all but declaring himself a candidate. Some months ago, for example, he was feted at a "term limitation" meeting organized by John Anderson, the former Republican congressman who ran for President as an independent in 1980, and who now leads the World Federalist Association. Perot won supporters at these populist gatherings with his blunt talk about the social crisis gripping the nation, a call for an expansion of industrial employment, and his colorful critique of the corporate and political establishment. As a result, he says, "Thousands . . . have written and called me in the last few months, [and] asked me to" run for office.

On Feb. 20, Perot told a nationwide television audience