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YOUR NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT SOURCE

General Manager
Shelley Lund
slund@floridaweekly.com

Managing Editor
Cindy Pierce
cpierce@floridaweekly.com

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Penny Kennedy
pkennedy@floridaweekly.com

Circulation

Paul Neumann
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Account Executives

Tauna Schott
tschott@floridaweekly.com
Melanie Glisson
mglisson@floridaweekly.com
Nicole Masse
nmasse@floridaweekly.com

Business Office Manager
Kelli Carico

Published by
Florida Media Group LLC

Pason Gaddis
pgaddis@floridaweekly.com

Jeffrey Cull
jcull@floridaweekly.com

Jim Dickerson
jdickerson@floridaweekly.com

Street Address:

Naples Florida Weekly
2025 J&C Blvd., Suite 5
Naples, Florida 34109

Phone 239.325.1960 Fax: 239.325.1964



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OPINION

What would Daniels do?

BY RICH LOWRY

In a new Gallup Poll asking who is the national leader of the Republican Party, Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels didn't even rate an asterisk. That's unsurprising. The governor of the country's 16th most populous state won't normally garner much national attention, especially when he's an unassuming, old-school budget cutter.

It's also a shame, because more than any other Republican officeholder, Daniels points the way ahead for his bedraggled party. He's a Reaganite who's not trapped in 1980s nostalgia; he's a fiscal conservative who believes not just in limiting government, but in reforming it to address people's everyday concerns; he's a politician of principle who refuses to sell his program in off-puttingly partisan or ideological terms.

As they grapple with President Barack Obama, Republicans at the national level could do worse than ask themselves: What would Daniels do?

At a recent forum in Washington sponsored by the Bradley Foundation and Hudson Institute, Daniels noted that Ralph Waldo Emerson said every polity tends

to have a party of memory and a party of hope. "We must be, as we have been in our better days, our more successful days, a party of hope," he said.

When Daniels took office, Indiana had an \$800 million deficit. He turned it into a \$1.3 billion surplus (although it will be eaten into in the current downturn). Since 2005, he's saved roughly \$450 million in the state's budget and reduced the state's rate of spending growth from 5.9 percent to 2.8 percent. "I tell you with certainty," Daniels told his Washington audience, "concern about the debt and deficit has not gone out of style."

"Mitch the Knife," as he was nicknamed when he headed George W. Bush's Office of Management and Budget, has matched his fiscal probity with the restless innovation of a devoted policy entrepreneur. He leased the state's faltering toll road to a European operator for nearly \$4 billion. He created health savings accounts for Indiana's poor. He deregulated telecommunications. And he attracted business to the state, with Indiana winning more foreign investment than any other state during the past two years.

A populist outcry against the toll-road

deal dragged Daniels' approval rating down to 37 percent at one point, and his tenure seemed a warning against putting a tightfisted technocrat in elected office. But opinion turned. He won re-election by 18 points last year.

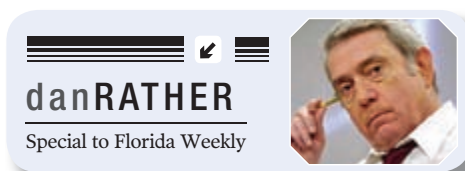
Daniels counsels national Republicans to adopt a "no, but" approach. As he told an interviewer from National Journal, on cap-and-trade he'd say: "No, let's not double the tax on poor people in the vain hope of moving the world's thermometer. Here's a way to conserve energy and protect the environment that doesn't impoverish the nation." On health care, he'd say, "Sure, let's get people covered with health insurance, but here's a much better way."

His success has stoked speculation about a possible 2012 presidential run. Daniels has made Shermanesque disavowals of national ambitions, and expressed confidence that new national leaders will soon emerge. When they do, they should heed the lesson and message of Mitch Daniels, an exemplar of a winning conservatism. ■

— Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

GUEST OPINION

Iran's government uses a crisis



danRATHER
Special to Florida Weekly

One of the catchphrases that's come out of this current era is "Never let a crisis go to waste," a sentiment that's been voiced by various members of the Obama administration in reference to the world economic crisis. As a governing philosophy, it's more than a little Machiavellian; the sorts of thing that you'd imagine officials might think to themselves but not say out loud. With that in mind, one wonders if this is exactly what Iran's leaders are saying to themselves, in the very different context of that country's post election crisis.

By choosing to violently suppress popular opposition to the official election results, the hard-liners in Iran's theocracy have started down a road that will likely see them consolidate power at the expense of relatively reform-minded politicians. Removing the velvet glove of Iran-style "democracy" to expose the iron fist beneath may not be the most sustainable governing strategy over the long haul, but Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei may reckon that it's the best way to preserve what he and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad see as their

nation's national-security interests in the short term.

First and foremost among these, one can guess, would be Iran's nuclear program. Iran has continually insisted that its nuclear program is intended for peaceful purposes of power generation, but, as reported by The Associated Press, Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said last week that Iran has for more than a year turned away IAEA requests for information and inspections "to exclude the possibility of military dimensions to Iran's nuclear program."

If one assumes that Iran is, in fact, trying to develop nuclear weapons, then President Barack Obama's marked change in approach from that of President George W. Bush — emphasizing diplomacy over confrontation — could well have posed a problem for maintaining this program in the face of international pressure. When the de facto leader of the free world is calling your nation part of an "axis of evil," it's relatively easy to resist nuclear talks on principle; when he's asking for talks on grounds of "mutual respect," it presumably gets harder to come up with reasons that don't give every appearance of trying to hide something from the international community.

Then along come the election protests, which provide a new "reason" for Iran to avoid the negotiating table. From the Ira-

nian leadership's point of view, blaming internal protests and unrest on the covert actions of foreign governments — such as the United States and Great Britain — serves two purposes: to discredit the protesters, and to provide a new, if flimsy, excuse for refusing to negotiate with powers that are "trying to overthrow," as Tehran claims, "Iran's government."

Given Obama's determination to only comment on anti-protester violence while avoiding choosing sides (at least publicly) on the election itself, Britain, in particular, has found itself the target of the Iranian government's most vehement accusations of foreign meddling. This week, Iran expelled two British diplomats, which led Britain to respond in kind. Significantly, Britain, a former colonial ruler of Iran, is a key figure in the six-party Iranian nuclear talks.

As recently as three days after the disputed election, the U.S. again urged Iran to return to these talks. Now, after nearly two weeks of violent oppression, such an invitation no longer seems tenable. With the strategy of diplomatic engagement breaking down on all sides, Iran under Khamenei and Ahmadinejad would appear to be heading into increasing isolation from the international community. And for leaders who give every appearance of wanting to be left alone to develop a nuclear arsenal, that might suit them just fine. ■

MOMENTS IN TIME

► On **July 2, 1937**, the Lockheed aircraft carrying American aviator Amelia Earhart and navigator Frederick Noonan is reported missing near Howland Island in the Pacific. The pair was attempting to fly around the world, and no trace of them has ever been found.

► On **July 3, 1908**, writer Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher is born in Albion, Mich. She was a highly productive writer, producing nine books on food, including "How to Cook a Wolf" (1942).

► On **July 4, 1826**, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the second and third presidents of the United States, die on the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Both men had been central in the drafting of the historic document.

► On **July 5, 1865**, in the East End of London, revivalist preacher William Booth and his wife Catherine establish the Christian Mission, later known as the Salvation Army. Soup kitchens were

the first in a long line of various projects designed to provide physical and spiritual assistance to the destitute.

► On **July 6, 1942**, in Nazi-occupied Holland, 13-year-old Jewish diarist Anne Frank and her family are forced to take refuge in a secret sealed-off area of an Amsterdam warehouse, where they hide for two years. "The Diary of Anne Frank" has served as a literary testament to the 6 million Jews, including Anne herself, who were silenced in the Holocaust. ■