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# The Washington Times

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## Vigorous refresher course

By R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr.

Published August 12, 2005

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I have been reading an advance copy of memoirs written by Jesse Helms, the retired North Carolina senator who braved the liberals' indignation to create the politics that now prevails on Capitol Hill and in the White House, namely, modern American conservatism.

Mr. Helms did not do this alone, and arguably he was only a member of the first-string team whose quarterback was Ronald Reagan. Yet Mr. Helms was very important, particularly on the social values issues that average Americans now deem so compelling. His memoir, "Here's Where I Stand," is a very good refresher course on how America moved from the dreary, futile governance of Jimmy Carter to the present vigor of a proud, can-do America.

Mr. Helms writes in straightforward prose from a foundation of beliefs that are solidly conservative. He tells a good story. In reading "Here's Where I Stand" I have not been able to slay the fear that when this book comes out August 30 the dominant liberal culture, the Kultursmog, is going to rain down on him. It will malign his motives and values and belittle his achievements. What will be left is another grotesque image of the conservative public figure: a bigoted, small-minded, not very intelligent, provincial. And so Jesse Helms will be interred in the liberals' burial ground along with Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon and all the other political leaders they have opposed. Across the street is the liberal museum of leadership. Franklin Roosevelt is there with all his famous successors, John Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and various of Mr. Helms' colleagues from the Senate: Teddy Kennedy or his sidekick Christopher Dodd -- the blood runs thin. Strangely, Lyndon Johnson is hardly visible.

The Kultursmog has been writing American history for us for decades. Review it for yourself. It contains no admirable or impressive conservatives. Yet here we are in 2005 with much of the country governed by conservatives and conservative values. No wonder the liberals are so perplexed and angry. They are a strange band of rastaquoueres living in what for them is a strange land. Nonetheless, they still have the capacity, owing to their hold on the culture's centers of influence, to belittle those whom they do not like, and to present them as grotesqueries. Watch the liberals go to work over the next few weeks on President Bush's perfectly sensible Supreme Court nominee, John Roberts. This week one of their leading polluters, NARAL Pro-Choice America, is airing fraudulent television advertisements presenting Judge Roberts, when he was deputy solicitor general during the presidency of George H.W. Bush, as a supporter of "violent fringe groups and a convicted clinic bomber." Well, as memoirist Helms says of so

many of the deceits he had to deal with, horsefeathers.

In "Here's Where I Stand," Mr. Helms chronicles reminiscences of scores of friends, Barry Goldwater, Richard Nixon, Reagan and his great friend, Lady Margaret Thatcher. At the end of the senator's long career, a frail but spirited Lady Thatcher came to the dedication of his Helms Center in rural North Carolina. She stayed for the entire three-day ceremony. She knew she was with friends. Mr. Helms also remembers those with whom he has disagreed. That would be every liberal Democrat from the past 30 years. Unfortunately he is too much the gentleman to pass on a bad word about any of them. Even Boy Clinton gets a polite send off.

There are two topics on which Mr. Helms is particularly worth reading: race relations and the United Nations. On race relations he manfully comes out and makes the case for states' rights and the integration that he seems to think could have been worked out in the last quarter of the 20th century without heavy-handed federal involvement. I am not sure his optimism is warranted. The denial of constitutional freedoms had been suffered by blacks for a long time. A jolt of federal power did the trick. The extension of federal power into areas not recognized by generations of Americans (and not always salutary) now seems to be receding. Blacks have their rights and, with the exception of affirmative action's enduring use, the constitutional balance seems to be reemerging. I accept Mr. Helms' insistence that he favored equal rights. I just doubt his approach would have worked.

On the United Nations he has my vote every time. Wherever he mentions that arrogant corrupt organization, he is on the money. At the very end of his memoir he reprints his very compelling speech to the United Nations as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There he notified the assembled crooks and agents of tyranny that American sovereignty cannot be usurped. It is dependent of the "consent of the American people." He reminds them of the dreadful job they have done as peacekeepers and conflict managers. And he urges an end to corruption.

Bearing in mind that this past week saw the first conviction of a U.N. oil-for-food crook in what is the largest fraud case in world history, I think we can conclude that old Sen. Helms' memoir makes for timely reading. Pre-order now on Amazon.

*R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. is the founder and editor in chief of the American Spectator, a contributing editor to the New York Sun, and an adjunct scholar at the Hudson Institute. His latest book is "Madame Hillary: The Dark Road to the White House."*

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