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## Give the Chance a Plan

**T**UESDAY night – late Tuesday night, 11:30 pm to be exact – I stayed up to watch the President appear on the Charlie Rose Show, the televised salon hosted by one of the country’s great raconteurs. There I lay in the master bed, the light from the 1970’s Sony glowing, my eyelids fighting to stay open. My wife these days is staying in the nursery with our newborn, waking with him several times a night so that I can take care of business in the day. So there I was, alone with the TV and Charlie and the President, and as I fell off into a drowse I heard the President, speaking about the so-called troop Surge in Iraq, say that we need to “give the chance a plan.” This President, famous for his malaprops, had of course meant to say that we need to “give the plan a chance.” But unwittingly, the President had actually hit on something far more profound.

Give the Chance a Plan, give the chance a plan I thought as my eyes fell shut and I fell asleep like an exhausted log. Waking the next morning the words still echoed in my head. I remembered almost nothing that he said other than “give the chance a plan.”

The chance, the opportunity. So many chances, so many opportunities have faced and continue to face this nation and the world, and so many go without plans commensurate with the magnitude of their need.

On Wednesday, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced that it will spend \$60 million to making education the major issue in the next Presidential election. My wife and I have been agonizing about where to send our 2 year old for school – public or private? We have the financial resources to send our daughter to a wonderful private school, and yet I agonize that such an education is not available to all in public schools. American schools, every single one of them, should be bastions of excellence. Where are the plans for this chance?

The nation’s energy production and consumption profile has been created out of a collection of external costs and subsidies, and now threatens the nation’s security and environment. The New Capital Show website now has a carbon calculator on the home page – I calculated my own impact from my 2000 square foot home and my 20 mpg car, a staggering 50,000 pounds a year, 25 tons of CO2 from little old me alone. You and I and everyone else, as we now know, threaten the balance of nature with our activities. A

combination of greater regulation, logical incentives to conserve, and technological advances constitute an enormous chance to change. Who will give the chance a plan?

Centuries of logging, mining, dumping, and burning on this and all continents have resulted in environmental degradation, and the chance to make a plan for environmental renovation now exists. Such a plan would include cleaning land, water, and air, and protecting our beautiful places and fellow species. Who will give the chance a plan?

Economic inequalities have grown drastically in the past few decades, the people of the world under the current system share few common laws and protections, and the wealthy engage in regulation arbitrage to seek the labor and lands of the least protected. A chance exists to improve social and economic justice while still remaining true to economic fundamentals of honest accounting and accurate measures of return on investment. Who will give the chance a plan?

The President objects to Iran having a nuclear weapon but has never once described the immense horror of our own nation's nuclear weapons arsenal. Nuclear weapons disarmament by the entire world is a chance begging for a plan. Who will give this chance a plan?

US government expenditures for the past decades have yielded little, no, or negative returns on investment. The response of our leaders has been to try to eliminate government or propose their own poor projects. A chance exists to reform government and the way that it evaluates and funds projects so that business, economic, and social principles are primary considerations. Who will such a chance a plan?

After six years in office, an insane and arrogant invasion of another country, a trashing of the Treasury's coffers, a determined ignorance of the main issues that we face, the sound of this President pleading that his foolish plans be given a chance, he finally seemed to get it right on Charlie Rose, albeit accidentally – rather than giving his plans a chance, it's instead time that our chances be given real plans.

I'm Leo Gold. This is The New Capital Show.

