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**GUEST
COMMENTARY:
OFFSHORE
IS NEXT
TARGET FOR
ENVIRONMENTALISTS**





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GUEST COMMENTARY: OFFSHORE IS NEXT TARGET FOR ENVIRONMENTALISTS

{ By Richard Levick
Originally posted on Fuelfix.com }

I got my start in public affairs working for environmental activists. I've kept a close eye on their campaigns ever since. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that, at times, they are a' changing.

Their very existence relies on identifying the next big target.

Not long ago it was the Keystone XL Pipeline in the crosshairs. Then it was hydraulic fracturing. Now that these campaigns have, at least in part, come to a successful conclusion, we're seeing the bull's eye moving toward offshore drilling.

The signs are apparent in activists' social and digital media activity, which has evolved into the lynchpin of environmental grassroots mobilization efforts.

Take Keystone.

Over the course of that campaign, activists generated more than 50,000,000 YouTube views, amassed more than 1,000,000 Twitter followers, uploaded more than 36,000 Web videos and photos, and wrote more than 1,800 blog posts.

Those numbers dwarfed the pro-Keystone social media presence by factors of as much as 55 to one. Activists also enjoyed a distinct advantage on Google. Their messages were overwhelmingly seen first (and second and third), with industry messages lost amid the clutter.

The story was much the same on fracking: If you're getting drowned out to such an extent – and in some cases can't even be found – you simply don't exist.

The proof is in the numbers. Between June 2013 and April 2014, public support for Keystone dropped 21 percent according to Harris and Rasmussen polling. Between March 2013 and September 2013, opposition to fracking grew 11 percent according to the Pew Research Center.

What's evident is that old line strategies such as advertising and lobbying, which worked so well for 60 years, are no longer enough to even maintain current levels of public support, let alone win. Almost everything that matters now takes place outside the Beltway – and inside the social and digital media venues that are home to the grassroots.

As such, this is where we find “What's next.”

That's the bad news for offshore interests as the Obama Administration opens 112 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico to oil and gas exploration and as Congress considers Senator Tim Scott's (R-SC) Southern Energy Access Jobs Act (legislation that could result in the first Atlantic oil and gas drilling leases since 1983).

The good news is that the impending activist campaign is still in its nascent

stages – meaning there is still time for the industry to take back control of the online narrative before activists chip away at the 68 percent of Americans who currently support offshore oil and gas drilling.

But the window is closing fast.

In just the last month, we've seen a significant uptick in Deepwater Horizon-related content posted to activist social media hubs, such as the “1,000,000 Strong Against Offshore Drilling” Facebook page, which boasts more than 230,000 “likes.” We're seeing anti-offshore drilling commentary posted to high-profile blogs, such as The Huffington Post. As of this writing, we're seeing evidence that groups including Oceana and Greenpeace are optimizing their Web content for searches on terms such as “seismic testing and offshore drilling.”

This is the same springboard from which environmental activists ground the Keystone Pipeline to a halt and won fracking bans and moratoriums in myriad states and jurisdictions across the country.

Fortunately, this particular campaign has yet to reach critical mass. Before it does, offshore drilling interests need to take a page from the activist playbook, mobilize their own grassroots support online, and neutralize environmentalists' advantage on the Web.

Because in the Digital Age, 68 percent public support can become 48 percent support in the blink of an eye. ■

Richard Levick is chairman and CEO of LEVICK, a global strategic communications firm.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT ISIS OVER DINNER

{ By Eric Lebson
Originally posted on TheHill.com }

With over a decade of war in Afghanistan and Iraq behind the American people, many of us in DC have become accustomed to starting conversations about new international developments while assuming that every participant understands the complex history and context involved with these complicated international regions.

When those of us who have been a part of the U.S. national security apparatus do this, we commit a disservice to our audiences. The truth is that for all the ink spent on these issues, we have largely failed to make foreign policy issues accessible to the millions of Americans who have never spent significant time working in government or living abroad.

Recently, over dinner, my wife and I were discussing these intricate international developments, and I realized

exactly how much our political and military leaders have failed to distill the breaking news into its most important messages or offer relevant context. An informed history of the region and its politics would provide a clear pathway to understanding. My wife is a great sounding board, and though she doesn't work in foreign affairs, she asks insightful questions that give new perspective to my background in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency.

As we chatted, she began to understand the issues surrounding ISIS more clearly and I began to understand that too often our exposure to these topics is via media commentators who fail to ask exceptionally pedigreed guests the salient and insightful questions that would give clarity to the issue.

One anchor interviewed three terrorism experts about the



most recent ISIS beheading, only to end the interview with "Well, this is terrifying."

That is, of course, the point of terrorism.

Similarly, political and military leaders who sit in the guest chair have a deep and intimate knowledge of the issues at hand but sometimes avoid them, ducking questions about the underlying logic or the associated costs. These are the conversations we should be having at dinner, and for those looking to widen their perspective as the U.S. embarks on another confrontation abroad and looks to avert one on its own shores, there are three main points that are important to know.

FIRST, WHAT IS ISIS?

As President Obama said, ISIS is neither Islamic nor a State. ISIS

is a group that, like al-Qa'eda, has the same general goal of establishing a caliphate, or an Islamic zone led by a supreme religious and political leader known as a caliph (a "successor" to the prophet Muhammad). They adhere to an extreme form of Islam – even by al-Qa'eda standards.

Al-Qa'eda is a Salafi group practicing the harsh administration of Sharia law manifested in violence against and ejection of apostates (non-believers) from Islamic lands. ISIS, on the other hand, practices their own subjective

interpretation of Islam that, as former CIA officer Bob Baer recently observed, justifies a Crusade-like approach to vanquishing enemies and infidels. They give the vanquished one choice: convert to ISIS' theology on the spot or die immediately. These are differences that even al-Qa'eda abhors.

While ISIS is Sunni, the largest branch of Islam, they execute other Sunnis who don't convert to this extremist ideology. They also kill other Islamists like Kurds and Shia and actively seek to capture Brits, Americans,



“One anchor interviewed three terrorism experts about the most recent ISIS beheading, only to end the interview with "Well, this is terrifying.”

The United States must immediately stop thinking in terms of national borders and start thinking in terms of susceptible populations.

and Jews, who they execute in high-profile and media-focused ways that provide a publicity benefit and recruitment tool. They kill mercilessly and indiscriminately; earlier this year, ISIS militants reportedly killed at least 1,000 Iraqi military cadets in Tikrit, Iraq, one of many incidents of mass brutality.

WHERE DOES ISIS OPERATE?

ISIS’ efforts are nominally focused on establishing a caliphate in Iraq and Syria, but do not let the name fool you. They generally reject the concept of national borders as an imperialistic imposition by the apostates. That is why bordering countries like Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia are also vulnerable to the same factors that allowed ISIS to take hold. Fear that ISIS might spread and an interest in framing the effort to stop it as something other than a U.S.-branded military action is why the U.S. sought to have Sunni Arab participation in the anti-ISIS campaign.

Non-bordering states, too, have cause for concern. Those with similar underlying social factors – disenfranchised youth, lack of economic opportunity, a history of repression, and others – are also vulnerable. Countries like Indonesia and the Philippines are thousands of miles away but have histories suggesting they could be risk areas.

Nigeria and Egypt, too, have concerning social factors coupled with a history of insurgent groups. Through this lens, the scope of the ISIS risk increases and pockets of unrest across the zone start to look more related. Thus, the entire international community should be concerned about all of these conflict zones linking together under a charismatic leader or unified command structure.

FINALLY, WE IN THE USA SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ISIS THREAT.

Make no mistake – the same underlying social factors that foster support for ISIS in the Middle East are also present within our own borders. The United States must immediately stop thinking in terms of

national borders and start thinking in terms of susceptible populations.

Governments in the U.S., U.K., Australia, and other Western countries know that passport holders have gone to Syria to fight with pro-Islamist forces against the Assad regime. After radicalization in the region, there is the possibility that they may return home and take action. Others may have been radicalized without ever setting foot in a war zone by finding ISIS’ ideology an answer to their discontent. This is a real threat indeed.

These topics are frequent at my dinner table. As Americans who vote, pay taxes and face risks in our daily lives, we are finding a way to translate ‘inside the Beltway’ perspectives about counterterrorism and counter insurgency into the basic questions that all Americans should be asking. Whatever your background, talking about ISIS over dinner can and should be a positive step toward appropriately answering the hard questions of our time. When Americans are informed about the risks associated with an adversary, the costs of engagement, and of lack of engagement, we make the right choices. **L**

Lebson served at the Pentagon from 2007-2009, the National Security Council from 2009-2011, and was the chief architect of Australia’s Strategic Risk Assessment from 2011-2013. He is currently a senior vice president with LEVICK and can be reached at elebson@levick.com.



Ankara

Yerevan

AZERBAIJAN

TURKEY

Mt. Ararat
16,854 ft

Adana

Gaziantep

Tabriz

Lake Urmia

Halab

Mosul

Hims

SYRIA

LEB.

Beirut

Damascus

IRAQ

Baghdad

ISRAEL

Yafo

Amman

Jerusalem

JOR.

Suez

Ar Rutbah

An Najaf

Tigris

Al Basrah

Dezful

Al Jawf

Al Kuwayt

KUWAIT

Mt. Katrina
8668 ft

Bag

EGYPT

SAUDI

Al Manamah

ARABIA

Ad Dawha

Medina

Riyadh

Aswan

Arabian



NON-LETHAL WEAPONS: THE FERGUSON CRISIS CHALLENGES A BILLION-DOLLAR INDUSTRY

{ By Richard Levick
Originally posted on Forbes.com }

Who manufactured the billy clubs that Bull Connor and his minions used on peaceful civil rights protestors in the 1950s? Practically no one knew then and absolutely no one knows now.

Times, of course, have changed. Digital media rabid for content casts its glare on every otherwise hidden facet of major news events, especially when the visuals are compelling and an outraged public lobbies its representatives to take unprecedented regulatory action. Add to that an abiding policy issue – like the militarization of local police departments – and the overall dynamics spell future uncertainty for every private sector interest affected.

Which brings us to Ferguson, Missouri. Among the indelible images arising from that national tragedy are billowing clouds of tear gas dispersing crowds in riotous

scenes uncomfortably reminiscent of Cairo. Tear gas, of course, is ostensibly non-lethal and therefore its discussion is not quite the same as the debate over police militarization. Yet it's a discussion nonetheless as the purported hazards of the gas now raise questions about closer control or even outright illegalization.



The discussion should, in turn, raise business issues for the entire non-lethal weapon industry, especially as tear gas has been promoted as a safer alternative to Tasers as well as rubber bullets, which have killed people, and water hoses, which can maim. In total, it's a \$1.6 billion-dollar industry that, despite modest recent growth as a result of security spending cuts, has seemed poised for a sharp upturn amid ongoing concerns over the use of lethal weapons to ensure domestic security.

"Yet it's a discussion nonetheless as the purported hazards of the gas now raise questions about closer control or even outright illegalization."

Some observers lament that the industry does not have much to worry about. The public, they say, has gotten used to the deployment of such weapons. Sven-Eric Jordt, a professor at Duke University School of Medicine, says that "massive use worldwide has decreased the threshold in western countries to deploy tear gas."

These observers may be underestimating the public's persistent sensitivity and, therefore, the industry's longer-term exposure. Let's look at it from another angle, actually five other angles, to assess what could be next in terms of industry liability.

First, because we live in an event-driven world, every Ferguson-like occurrence (including less cataclysmic ones) will renew safety discussion of non-lethal weapons, especially tear gas. Tasers are used one-on-one and, in the majority of cases, involve individuals who need to be subdued. By contrast, tear gas rains on the just and unjust alike. Nor do the triggering events necessarily fade over time. Commentary on tear gas use in Ferguson has, for example, duly commemorated the 2011 use of pepper spray on handcuffed Occupy Wall Street demonstrators.

Second, critics of tear gas have at least one prepossessing message: it has been banned in warfare since the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993. I'm not sure Americans appreciate being less privileged than, say, ISIS.

Third, the "scientific" debate is already underway, the same kind of debate that has bedeviled companies under attack for their environmental practices. One side produces evidence; the other side calls it "junk science." The arguments go back and forth, keeping the issue interminably alive.



Fourth, the tear gas issue has already proven to be a hot social media topic – to such an extent that residents of Gaza were tweeting Ferguson protestors with advice on how to protect themselves during exposure.

Finally, and decisively, images are the most powerful communications medium. Sometimes words alone pictorialize the event. Consider this report from Ferguson: “Others fled, crying out for water as stinging tear gas bit at their eyes.... ‘I had to go back for my sister,’ explained 18-year-old Travis Hollins, who ripped off his shirt as tears streamed from his eyes. His 21-year-old sister had fallen near a tear gas canister...”

"Others fled, crying out for water as stinging tear gas bit at their eyes..."

If not a perfect storm, such multi-front vulnerability should at least justify an exercise in risk management among non-lethal weapon companies, along with some strategic thinking about how to weather the gathering storm. One company, Safariland unit Defense Technology – to which some of the gas used in Ferguson has been traced – offers an example of such strategic messaging with website pages labeled “less lethal.” Yet this kind of terminology might confuse the audience. What’s needed industry-wide is language that conveys the human value of the work in no uncertain terms.

At TASER International, Inc., CEO, Director and Cofounder Rick Smith takes

a thoughtful approach, sounding neither defensive nor antagonistic to critics of the non-lethal weapon industry. “The point we have to get across in as many ways as we can is that there’s a big difference between crowd control and riot control,” he tells us.

"...there's a big difference between crowd control and riot control"

Smith is keenly aware that this battle can be won or lost on the visuals. “The industry needs to do a better job deploying technology to gather video evidence,” he says. Now we mainly see police response: torrential gas and panicked crowds.

But “the public also needs to see what the police are responding to, the overturned cars and menacing behavior,” advises Smith. “That balances the narrative. That gives a fair rendition in pictures.”

By the way, TASER’s own tagline is short and sweet: “Protect Lives.” It’s the right message. In fact, it’s the only message. ■

Richard Levick, Esq., is Chairman and CEO of LEVICK, a global strategic communications firm.



NATURAL GAS:

***INNOVATIVE
FINANCING
BREAKS
DISTRIBUTION
BARRIERS***

{ By Richard Levick
Originally posted on Forbes.com }

Everybody loves energy providers until they don't. As long as services are uninterrupted and costs consistent over time, providers and consumers can live in some degree of connubial bliss. But when disastrous weather or other uncontrollable circumstances affect supply, prices spike upward or fluctuate to an extent that, at best, unsettles wary consumers.

So they blame the energy providers that are no more able to control the causes of instability than are the homeowners or small business operators who pay the monthly bills.

That said, while energy companies may not be able to stop problems from happening, they can and do seek solutions, the long-term benefits of which must be clearly communicated to their public stakeholders. Right now, for example, a nascent trend in the natural gas industry promises real relief to consumers, right where they live – in their wallets.

Consider a recent spate of pipeline announcements for transporting natural gas from the Marcellus Shale in Pennsylvania to the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast. The \$3.0 billion Atlantic Sunrise project will transport 1.7 billion cubic feet per day of natural gas in a pipeline from Lycoming County, Pennsylvania to the Mid-Atlantic and as far south as Georgia and Alabama. The project incorporates a \$410 million investment by WGL Holdings, Inc. (parent company of gas utility Washington Gas). Construction of the Atlantic Sunrise project is expected to begin in 2016 with proposed in-service timing for the second half of 2017. (Full disclosure: my firm has a business relationship with WGL Holdings.)

While a pipeline of such size is obviously important in and of itself, the historic

"ONE EVENT IS NOTABLE, TWO EVENTS MAKE A TREND, AND THREE EVENTS COMPRISE A MOVEMENT. SO WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE CONSUMER?"

moment is most significantly underscored by the fact that Atlantic Sunrise is the first of three similar projects currently underway.

The second is the \$1 billion 105-mile project spearheaded by the PennEast Pipeline Company to bring natural gas from Luzerne County, Pennsylvania to the Trenton, NJ area. PennEast is a joint project involving AGL Resources, NJR Pipeline Co., South Jersey Industries, and UGI Energy Services.

Most recently announced is the third project, "Atlantic Coast," in which Dominion Resources, Duke Energy, and others want to invest \$5 billion in a pipeline to deliver natural gas from Harrison County, West Virginia, to the Southeast.

One event is notable, two events make a trend, and three events comprise a movement. So what's in it for the consumer? Significantly, all three constructions share

fundamental similarities in how they're financed – advantageous arrangements that may encourage additional pipeline projects in the near future. The more pipeline infrastructure we have, the more natural gas we can distribute, which, of course, solves a pretty basic problem. There's not much point in drilling for gas, however inexpensive it may be, if no one gets to use it.



“OUR POSITION AS AN LDC, AND OUR PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN ASSET OPTIMIZATION AND WHOLESAL ACTIVITIES, GIVES US KNOWLEDGE AROUND WHERE GAS IS NEEDED, AND HOW TO STAGE AND TRANSPORT IT.”

In terms of the financing, the three are all to one extent or another “market-pull” rather than “producer-push.” In market-pull arrangements, the investor commits to also distributing a share of the natural gas. The builder of the project is thus guaranteed a future revenue stream and significant risk reduction as a result.

It has been done before but not, it seems, at this current level of frequency and simultaneity. In these deals, the prominence of local distribution companies (LDCs), which distribute gas within particular markets, is decisive. LDCs bring a larger perspective on the whole supply chain, thus encouraging them to take a portion of the pipeline’s output on a long-term basis. It’s really the LDCs

that have accelerated market-pull to the level of a major energy industry trend.

“You have companies that specialize in different parts of the value chain (exploration, production, construction, commodity ownership, marketing, distribution) but not many that span most of the links,” says Terry D. McCallister, Chairman and CEO of WGL Holdings, Inc. “Our position as an LDC, and our prior experience in asset optimization and wholesale activities, gives us knowledge around where gas is needed, and how to stage and transport it.” There’s another critical factor that helped drive

this innovative financing and the accelerated construction that resulted. It’s called timing.

Last winter, you may recall, was particularly harsh and many areas of the United States saw massive electricity as well as oil price hikes. Eastern Seaboard communities suffered sharp upticks even though natural gas was plentiful in the shale region.

Consumer awareness of how energy costs can wreak havoc on their wallets – all for want of a way to transport the less expensive fuel – hasn’t dimmed yet. The operative word is “yet,” and utilities are keenly





"THE **BREAKTHROUGH** THAT THESE NEW NATURAL GAS PIPELINES REPRESENT THUS REFLECTS THE HAPPY CONGRUENCE OF PUBLIC READINESS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF INNOVATIVE FINANCE."

aware of the need, in terms of communications, to strike while the proverbial iron is hot. In that sense, the Atlantic Sunrise announcement in February was very well timed. Over the course of the winter, daily gas prices in the east ranged from \$3.85 per million BTUs at the beginning of December to \$90.00 per million BTUs at the end of January because of capacity issues.

We've seen similar dynamics related to the unrelenting drought that lowered agricultural production over the last couple of years, as utilities sought (with varying degrees of success) to responsibly rally public support for

water infrastructure refurbishments. In this case, the goals of the energy industry seem easier to reach, considering the cost-effectiveness of natural gas and the probability that pipeline construction will save consumer dollars, or at least stabilize pricing, rather than add to monthly costs.

Meanwhile, the ancillary benefits are predictable. Atlantic Sunrise, for example, is a critical piece of the natural gas infrastructure in Pennsylvania's existing natural gas industry that employs 200,000 people across the region. Meanwhile, in Virginia, Gov. Terry McAuliffe says the natural gas provided by Atlantic Coast will attract more heavy manufacturers to the State. He calls it a "game-changer."

The breakthrough that these new natural gas pipelines represent thus reflects the happy congruence of public readiness and the availability of innovative finance. To be sure, all industry leaders need to seize both marketplace demand and the means to meet it.

It's a leadership role that energy companies today must play. **L**

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BREAKING GLASS CEILINGS IN FLORIDA: BUBBA GUMP MEETS THE GOOD OLD BOYS

{ By Richard Levick
Originally posted on Forbes.com }

Entrepreneurship comes in multiple forms and in diverse places. So do the forces that seek to repress it, especially when thick glass ceilings hang menacingly over human aspiration. Here's one compelling example – of a woman's resolute courage and the equally resolute malice she now confronts.

A resident of a rural community in Central Florida, Lee Noga is a distinguished military veteran, formerly a professed Franciscan Sister in the Independent Catholic Church, an educator, and a proponent of innovation in her current industry, which happens to be recreational shrimping.

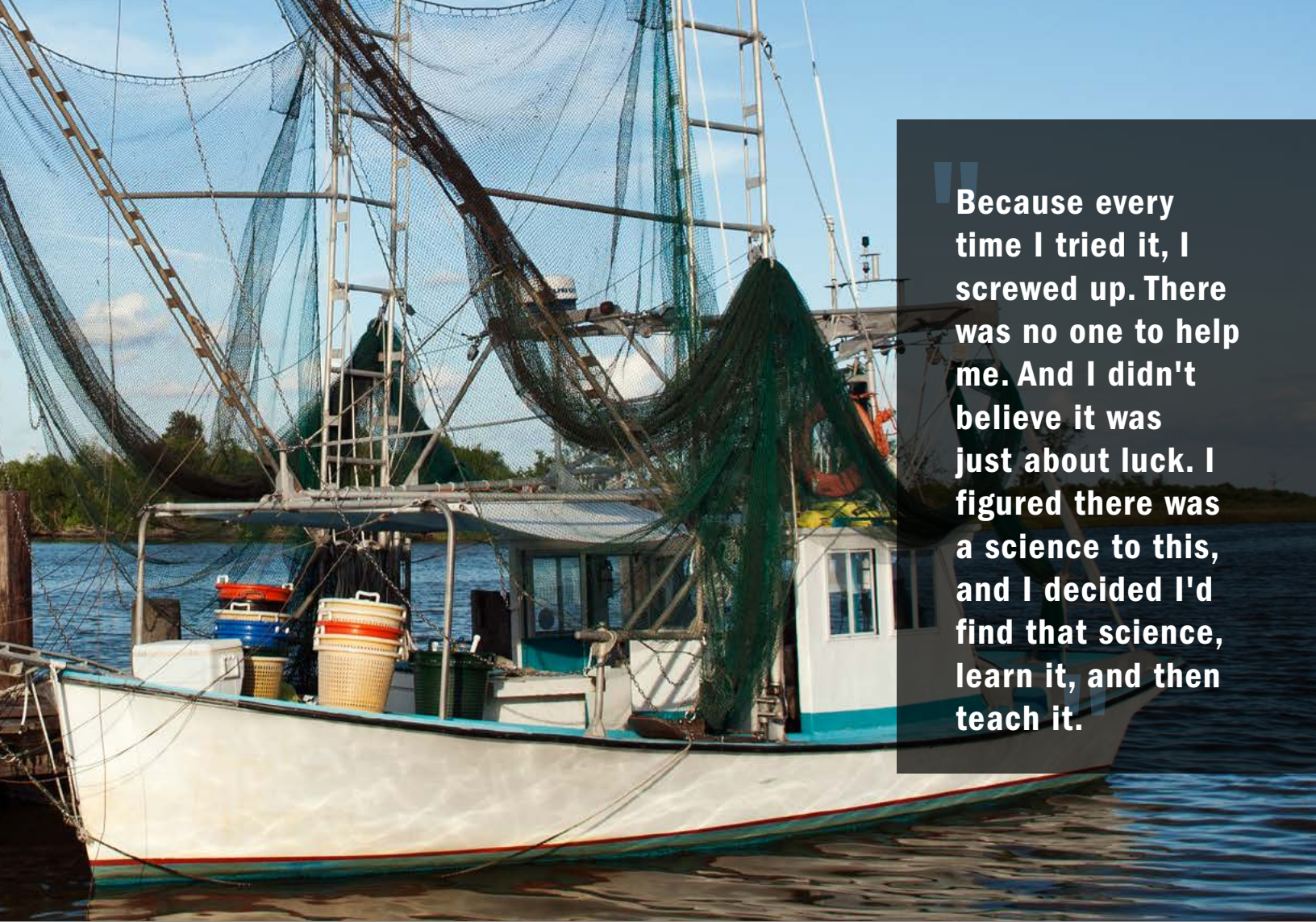
In fact, she has become the very face of shrimping in her region, in large part because she created the Academy of Shrimping in 2010, providing a full range of resources and information on technique, safety, and etiquette, as well as product reviews. The site will even clue novices into the best current fishing spots, a disclosure traditionally contrary to the code of fishermen who naturally want the richest beds for themselves.

That may have been the first strike against Noga, although the good old boys seem to have gotten over it. We're in the Information Age, after all. And Noga, like all industry leaders

in the Information Age, likes to share intellectual capital. Thanks to Noga, it wasn't long before shrimping became trendy, attracting younger sportsmen and families.

The good old boys had something else to "get over." Noga is a lesbian; in fact, as far as we know, the first-ever openly gay United States Coast Guard-licensed boat captain in a leadership position. Here too, they may have had no choice but to join the modern world as Noga was the most talked-about captain in the region. For the changing consumer demographic, including new area residents, homophobia was just preposterous. Noga was now





“Because every time I tried it, I screwed up. There was no one to help me. And I didn't believe it was just about luck. I figured there was a science to this, and I decided I'd find that science, learn it, and then teach it.”

a sought-after public speaker, a featured guest on radio and TV (her first cable broadcast ran prime time for 30 minutes in 2011), and a go-to source for local print coverage. Her energy was unaffected by a physical disability.

“I had gone viral, and there wasn't anything they could do about it,” she says – not, that is, until a single individual went on the attack.

As mentioned above, Noga has had a varied and rather splendid professional life. As a 10-year Navy medic, for example, she tended to VIPs like Vice President Hubert Humphrey. She was attracted to

shrimping “because every time I tried it, I screwed up. There was no one to help me. And I didn't believe it was just about luck. I figured there was a science to this, and I decided I'd find that science, learn it, and then teach it.”

In other words, she defined a marketplace need and filled it – the hallmark entrepreneurial skill.

In a way, she'd done the same thing twenty years earlier when she began publishing CD-ROMs that included Adult hard core product. “Actually, I never thought much about the content,” Noga adds. “It was the technology that attracted me, at

a time when pornography was actually the cutting edge of the new media.”

She neither condones nor apologizes for her involvement. No matter. For the aforesaid attacker, it's fueled an indefatigable smear campaign targeting angling industry associations as well as media. Explicitly, the message is that Noga is a child pornographer and that children aren't safe around her. Implicitly, it's a way to reintroduce homosexuality into the mix, without directly attacking her sexuality but with a vicious wink to the effect that homosexuality

and pornography spell double trouble.

The attacks also include insidious references to a lawsuit that Noga and her CD ROM company lost in 1993. The suggestion is that the suit had something to do with illicit trafficking. In fact, it was a landmark trademark case that Noga did indeed lose. She went broke as a result. Like most entrepreneurs, she's been way down and way up.

While the attacks feed on homophobia, their important underlying motive goes beyond that as her attacker is in the shrimping gear business. According to Noga, someone built a better mousetrap, the MacDaddy light device manufactured by LumaSea that manipulates shrimp toward the net. (It's a perfect example of the "science" that, instead of luck, Noga says governs this sport.) And Noga had the consumer's ear. It was apparently after she exposed efforts by her attacker to bootleg MacDaddy that the attacks began, as well as veiled physical threats of which the police have been duly notified.

As of this writing, her media contacts have stood by her and still publish her columns. But the attacks have drawn blood, especially when she was denied a director's position at an industry trade association. "They're in a tough spot," says Noga. "I'm sure they don't believe this garbage, but they fear their donors will pull money and parents will shy away."



But the attacks have drawn blood, especially when she was denied a director's position at an industry trade association.

Noga's website community still has 3,200 members but right now she doesn't know the lasting impact of this ordeal. "I'm afraid to promote anything. If I do, it will only keep inciting new attacks," she says. As of this writing, Noga is weighing her legal options. One of the region's largest law firms is considering taking the case pro bono, especially as there's the strong possibility of working with the wider LGBT community, as well as the possibility that the physical threats may constitute a hate crime.

The lessons here are many, and mostly hard to stomach. One is about the perils of breaking glass ceilings, of what might later happen to those who do. Another is about how the most discredited biases can simmer just beneath the surface, re-ignite, and hurt like hell – tools in the hands of those with covert agendas. A third is about the perils of innovation, and how those who move whole

industries forward often do so at their own risk. Another is about the corrective limits of even digital communications when one lone individual can simply scrawl innuendos that impact the decisions of responsible organizations.

But there's also a more encouraging lesson here, about the unbeatable will of creative people driven by a passion for community service. In an interview with The Daytona Beach News-Journal, Noga says that shrimping is "pure muscle, cast net and heart. You gotta love it to do it."

A nice little metaphor for life itself, I'd say. **L**

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GRIDLOCK ON THE BELTWAY?

TAKE A LOCAL **DETOUR**

{ By Patrick Pannett
Originally posted on LEVICK Daily }

The months leading up to midterm elections are never the most promising in terms of moving a public affairs agenda through Congress. Add the polarization of the current political environment, and the prospects of affecting policy change at the national level are downright daunting.

As such, companies, associations, and NGOs are thinking smaller when it comes to advocacy – focusing instead on the more collaborative, less toxic political environments in local and state governments.

NBC's Meet the Press detailed the shift with a segment Who Needs Washington?: Mayors Making Progress. The eye-opening piece illustrates how politicians and communities can buck the laissez-faire trend toward policy-making and accomplish big things to make life better, promote real economic development, or affect other change.

One only has to look at the rise of issues and referenda at the **state and local level** to see that the **big policy developments** of the day are happening at the state and local level.

One only has to look at the rise of issues and referenda at the state and local level to see that the big policy developments of the day are happening at the state and local level. But there's another wrinkle that's leading policy advocates down state and local avenues. More and more, congressional offices and other national officials around the country are looking at the grassroots communications efforts (many via social media) that accompany state and local policy efforts as credible sources of public opinion. As a result, those that focus on the state and local levels are moving the ball nationally as well.

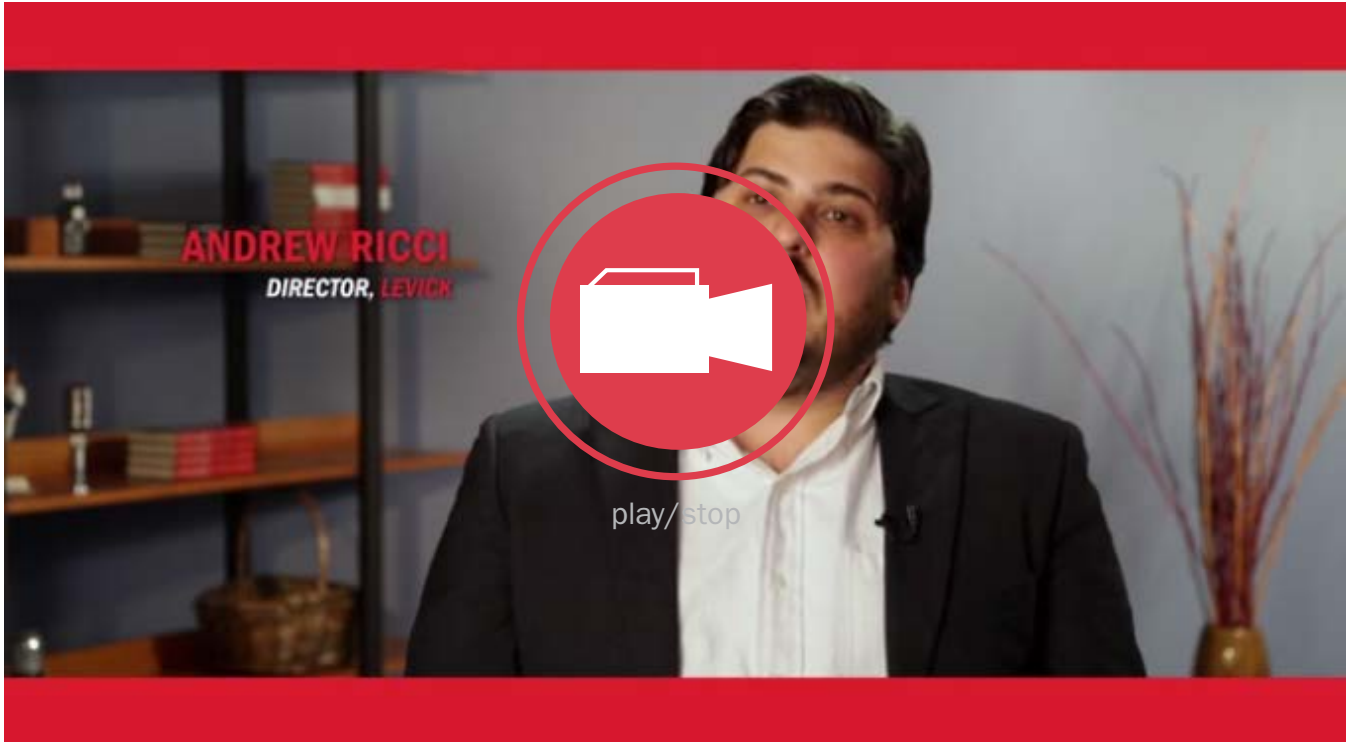
What does this mean for those still focusing all their attention inside-the-Beltway? It may be time to retool and look beyond the confines and inertia of D.C. Identify the state legislatures and cities that present opportunities to move your agenda forward. Leverage new tactics beyond the traditional influence game of lobbying and donating to candidates. Engage your stakeholders, the public, and community leaders in the social media conversations that now carry the weight of polling data in D.C. and out.

If there's gridlock on the Beltway, consider a detour. You may get home much faster than you thought. ■

Patrick Pannett is a Vice President at LEVICK and a contributing author to LEVICK Daily.

Andrew Ricci

ON THE FUTURE OF U.S. ENERGY



In this LEVICK Energy video interview, LEVICK Energy Editor Andrew Ricci discusses the advancements made in United States Energy Production in the last decade and the future of U.S. Energy policy.

**THE URGENCY
OF NOW.**