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GOP's Utah and Maine conventions show a party coming unglued

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By Dana Milbank
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Future historians tracing the crackup of the Republican Party may well look to May 8, 2010, as an inflection point.

That was the day, as is now well known, that Sen. Robert Bennett, who took the conservative position 84 percent of the time over his career, was deemed not conservative enough by fellow Utah Republicans and [booted out of the primary](#).

Less well known, but equally ominous, is what happened that same day, 2,500 miles east in Maine. There, the state Republican Party chucked its platform -- a sensible New England mix of free-market economics and conservation -- and adopted a [manifesto of insanity](#): abolishing the Federal Reserve, calling global warming a "myth," sealing the border, and, as a final plank, fighting "efforts to create a one world government."

One world government? Do our friends Down East fear an invasion from the Canadian maritime provinces? A Viking flotilla coming from Iceland under cover of volcanic ash?

I was pondering this mystery while on the elliptical machine this week and watching Glenn Beck (I find he increases my heart rate), when I heard him inform his viewers that "they" -- President Obama and friends -- "are creating a global governance structure."

["Social and ecological justice and all of this bullcrap," Beck told his viewers](#), "is man's work for a global government." Beck -- who is second in popularity only to Sarah Palin among the type of Tea Party activists who [hijacked the Maine GOP](#) -- tossed out phrases such as "global standards" and "global bank tax" -- all part of a conspiracy by the "global government people." He further provided the news that "Jesus doesn't want a cap-and-trade system."

Not once did Beck refer to the big news events of the day, such as Afghan President Hamid Karzai's visit to the White House or the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. It was as if he had created a parallel universe for his 2-million-plus viewers. Similarly, on Monday, when Obama nominated Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court, Beck omitted that news in favor of a fanciful administration attempt to restore the broadcast Fairness Doctrine. On Tuesday, USA Today had the headline ["Tax bills in 2009 at lowest level since 1950"](#) (the nonpartisan Tax Foundation put it at [1959](#)); Beck skipped that, instead saying he doesn't want changes to the Internet "at least until people aren't worshipping Satan, you know, in office." ([Beck maintained later](#) that he really wasn't "saying that Obama was a Satan worshipper.")

Beck justifiably credited his viewers for "what happened to Bob Bennett in Utah." He warned: "People in Washington, you should be terrified."

We *should* be terrified -- particularly the Republicans, whose party is turning into this One-World-Government, Obama-worships-Satan, Jesus-opposes-climate-bill m lange. And Beck is only part of the trouble. Consider these GOP milestones of recent days:

In the Alabama gubernatorial race, [a conservative attack ad charged](#) that a Republican gubernatorial candidate "recently said the Bible is only partially true." The outraged candidate reaffirmed his "belief that this world and everything in it is a masterpiece created by the hands of God."

In Utah, just a couple of days after Bennett's fall, conservative Rep. Jason Chaffetz talked about [trying to topple none other than Sen. Orrin Hatch](#) (89 percent lifetime conservative rating) in 2012.

In Arizona, Sen. John McCain, who once said a fence is the "least effective" way to secure the border, continued his fight against a conservative primary challenge by releasing an [ad demanding, "Complete the dangd fence."](#)

Democrats are having purity putsches, too, in Arkansas, Pennsylvania and Colorado. But these are mild compared with the sort of uprising Republicans are experiencing in places such as Maine, tranquil land of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

The Maine Republicans a week ago rejected a platform proclaiming that "we believe that the proper role of government is to help provide for those who can not help themselves"; that "we believe in ensuring that our children have access to the best educational opportunities"; and that "every person's dignity, freedom, liberty, ability and responsibility must be honored."

In its place, they approved a document invoking the Tea Party movement and Ron Paul and insisting that "health care is not a right." The new platform demands: "Eliminate motor voter"; "Reject the UN Treaty on Rights of the Child"; "Eliminate the Department of

Education"; "Arrest and detain . . . anyone here illegally, and then deport, period."

It was a swap they will come to rue -- assuming they survive the Viking invasion.

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