

California wages war on single-family homes

by Joel Kotkin, 26 July 2011

...In California, the assault on the house has gained official sanction. Once the heartland of the American dream, the Golden State has begun implementing new planning laws designed to combat global warming. These draconian measures could lead to a ban on the construction of private residences, particularly on the suburban fringe. The **new legislation's goal** is to cram future generations of Californians into multi-family apartment buildings, turning them from car-driving suburbanites into strap-hanging urbanistas...

...These "facts" may be more grounded in academic mythology than reality. Some widely quoted experts, like the Anderson Forecast at UCLA, cite Census information to say that demographics are shifting demand from single-family homes to condos and apartments, although the **Census asked no such question**. These experts also fail to address why condo prices have dropped even *more* in the major California markets than single-family home prices; the percentage of starts that come from single-family houses shifts from year to year, but last year's number tracks around the same level as seen in the 1980s...

...But who needs facts when you have religion? Take the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transit Commission's (MTC) new "**sustainable communities strategy**," a document designed to meet the requirements of the state's draconian anti-greenhouse gas legislation...

...So, why wage war on the house? Some greens seem to regard the single-family house as an assault on eco-consciousness. Yet in many cases, these objections are overstated. Research supporting higher-density housing, for example, **has routinely excluded** the greater emissions from construction material extraction and production, building construction itself and greenhouse gas emissions from common areas like parking levels, entrances and elevators.

Further, higher densities are associated with greater congestion, **which retards fuel efficiency and increases greenhouse gas emissions**, a factor not sufficiently considered. Given that less than 10% of Bay Area residents take transit — and barely 3% in its economic engine Silicon Valley — **higher density likely would create greater, not fewer, emissions...**

More: <http://blogs.forbes.com/joelkotkin/2011/07/26/california-wages-war-on-single-family-homes/>

'The best we could get'

by Andrew Stiles, 31 July 2011, 10:49pm EDT

House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio) told GOP members on a **conference call** Sunday evening that he had reached **a deal** with congressional leaders and the White House, but that it wouldn't happen "unless we have membership on board." It remains to be seen how many House Republicans will end up supporting the final package, but members on the call told *National Review Online* they thought it would ultimately pass with bipartisan support. "I'm not sure I'm going to support it but I think it will probably pass," said freshman Rep. Dennis Ross (R., Fla.). Members described the tone of the call as overwhelmingly positive, with many praising Boehner's efforts in the negotiations. Despite his concerns about the final deal, Ross said "leadership has done a very good job of getting it to this point," and described a sense of relief among members, many of whom may not love the deal, but are nonetheless happy to be moving on to the next fight...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/273254/best-we-could-get-andrew-stiles>

Cain takes inaugural Denver 2011 straw poll

by Michael Sandoval, 31 July 2011

Georgia businessman Herman Cain has won the inaugural Western Conservative Summit straw poll by a wide margin, earning 48 percent of the vote. Texas governor Rick Perry was second, with 13 percent...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/primary-event/273233/cain-takes-inaugural-denver-2011-straw-poll-michael-sandoval>

Unraveling the mystery of murderous minds

Brian M. Carney talks to prison psychiatrist Theodore Dalrymple, who asks why we feel compelled to understand monsters like Anders Breivik, but no need to explain others' righteous behavior.

30 July 2011

... "Here is a man," Dr. Dalrymple says, "behaving like this and quoting all kinds of people, some of whom I admire or agree with." But to suggest that the views of those thinkers (including himself) somehow contributed to the killing in Oslo, he argues, makes no sense. "It's like somebody saying that if you believe, for example, that bankers were irresponsible during the [2008 global financial] crisis, you are leading inexorably to the killing of three bankers in the bank in Athens," as happened during one of the recent anti-austerity protests there.

Another modern impulse in trying to understand men like Breivik is what Dr. Dalrymple calls "a kind of neuroscientific investigation combined with Darwinism, which tries to persuade us that we understand something that perhaps Shakespeare didn't understand" about human nature. "And of course," he allows, "there are things we understand that we didn't understand in Shakespeare's time. But the idea that we have finally plucked out the heart of the mystery of existence is drivel."

He notes that so far at least, the explanatory power of sociobiology combined with neuroscience is entirely "retrospective." Experts can draw correlations between this and that, "but they can't even tell you what's going to happen on the New York Stock Exchange tomorrow. So, there's a feeling that we have finally achieved some kind of understanding that our poor benighted ancestors didn't have. But this is nonsense." Human action remains mysterious, and what's more, "it's dangerous to think we do have that kind of understanding," because in the worst case, it could lead to a kind of scientific dictatorship.

"Supposing," he says of Breivik, "you examine him and you come to the conclusion that this, that and the other factor went to create the situation. You wouldn't have any more than a statistical generality." But if that statistical correlation could be verified, could it lead to "locking up people before they've done anything"?...

Read it all: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111904888304576476052920894000.html>

We are edging towards the partition of Libya

Western recognition of Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC) looks like the start of a process that Nato has been desperate to avoid — the partition of the country.

Daily Telegraph editorial, 27 July 2011

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/8666184/We-are-edging-towards-the-partition-of-Libya.html>

This magazine publishes paleocon morons like Francis Fukuyama, but also occasional pieces by good guys like James Q. Wilson and Theodore Dalrymple.

Getting Serious in Syria

by Michael S. Doran and Salman Shaikh, 22 July 2011

The Arab revolutionary wave of 2011 was slow to arrive in Syria. Public disobedience did not show its face until mid-March, a full month after the fall of Hosni Mubarak. When demonstrations did finally emerge, they focused on the grievances of Daraa, a middling-sized town near Syria's Yarmuk River border with Jordan. The citizens of Daraa were outraged over state security service atrocities so heinous as to be out of character even for Syria. In early March, a group of 15 boys, aged ten to 15, imitated crowds in Tunisia and Egypt by spraying anti-regime graffiti on the walls of public buildings. Agents of the secret police working for General Atef Najeeb, a cousin of President Bashar al-Assad, detained the boys and tortured them by **pulling out their fingernails**. Angry citizens of Daraa took to the streets in protest. The regime reacted to the demonstration with lethal force. The Arab Spring had acquired "Syrian characteristics."

The conflict between Daraa and Damascus soon came to symbolize the grievances of all disaffected Syrians against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad. Across the country, solidarity protests erupted in what soon became a weekly cycle...

4,400 words: <http://www.the-american-interest.com/article.cfm?piece=1001>

Save the whole house or it will all burn down

speech by Senator Marco Rubio, 30 July 2011 (with two questions from Senator John Kerry)

Text: http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2011/07/30/sen_rubio_save_the_whole_house_or_it_will_all_burn_down.html

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_68GjR6V6zI&feature=player_embedded

Testimonial of a Black Republican

by Providence Crowder, 26 July 2011

<http://www.fdfny.org/blog/2011/07/26/testimonial-of-a-black-republican/>

(Hat tip: Jim D.)

A Tale of Two Signs: "Hiring Now!" or "Going Out of Business"?

by Wynton C. Hall, 29 July 2011

The 2012 equivalent of Ronald Reagan's famous "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" will be: "In your hometown, which do you see more of: 'Hiring Now!' signs or 'Going Out of Business' signs?"

Those trapped in the grip of the disastrous Obama economy already know the answer, and it terrifies David Axelord, David Plouffe, and President Barack Obama. The presidential candidate who frames the debate this way will win.

Why? Because the sad and tragic economic facts are now undeniable, and they have absolutely nothing to do with ideology or party affiliation...

Those sad and tragic facts: <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=45177>

'Life on this planet' about to change

by Mark Steyn, 30 July 2011

That thoughtful observer of the passing parade, Nancy Pelosi, weighed in on the "debt ceiling" negotiations the other day: "What we're trying to do is save the world from the Republican budget. We're trying to save life on this planet as we know it today..."

...What about life on this planet tomorrow? How's that look if Nancy gets her way? The Democrat model of governance is to spend four trillion dollars while only collecting two trillion, borrowing the rest from tomorrow. Instead of "printing money," we're printing credit cards and preapproving our unborn grandchildren. To facilitate this proposition, Washington created its own form of fantasy accounting: "baseline budgeting," under which growth-in-government is factored in to federal bookkeeping as a permanent feature of life. As Arthur Herman of the American Enterprise Institute pointed out this week, under present rules, if the government were to announce a spending freeze—that's to say, no increases, no cuts, everything just stays exactly the same—the Congressional Budget Office would score it as a \$9 trillion savings. In real-world terms, there are no "savings," and there's certainly no \$9 trillion. In fact, there isn't one thin dime. But nevertheless that's how it would be measured at the CBO.

Around the world, most folks have to work harder than that to save \$9 trillion. That's roughly the combined GDPs of Japan and Germany. But in America it's an accounting device. This is something to bear in mind when you're listening to the amount of "savings" touted by whatever triumphant bipartisan deal is announced at the eleventh hour in Washington.

So I find myself less interested in "life on this planet as we know it today" than in life on this planet as we're likely to know it tomorrow if Nancy Pelosi and her chums decline to re-acquaint themselves with reality...

Read the rest: <http://www.oeregister.com/opinion/planet-310129-life-know.html>

Over to you, Harry

by John Hinderaker, 29 July 2011

...What the Democrats are trying to do, of course, is gain absolution for all of their fiscal sins by negotiating a cosmic deal with the GOP that, as I once put it, would put Republicans in the position of going over the waterfall holding hands with the Democrats. If Republicans are dumb enough to let that happen—which I doubt—then it will indeed be time for a third party.

The Democratic Senate has now gone for more than two years without adopting a budget. That is not only poor practice, it violates federal law. Why won't the Democrats adopt a budget? Because they don't dare put down on paper, for the American people to see, what they really want: skyrocketing spending, higher taxes and spiraling deficits. Forever. The Democrats don't want to commit to anything until they have bullied the Republicans into signing onto it.

One of the little-known features of Harry Reid's "compromise" proposal—no detailed version of which exists—is that it would "deem" budgets to have been enacted for fiscal years 2012 and 2013. In that event, our government would go a full four years without a lawful, statutory budget being in place. Today, the Republican members of the Senate Budget Committee sent a letter to Reid protesting this procedure...

... You could say that the Democratic Party is fiscally irresponsible, but that would be an insult to irresponsible people everywhere...

Read the rest: <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2011/07/over-to-you-harry.php>

The GOP's path forward

A strategic victory is there for the taking.

by James C. Capretta, 29 July 2011, 7:00pm EDT

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/273168/gop-s-path-forward-james-c-capretta>

Fort Hood, again

New York Post editorial, 29 July 2011

Thanks to a tip from a Texas gun-dealer, Army Pvt. Naser Jason Abdo never had the chance to re-enact the kind of slaughter that wreaked bloody havoc at Fort Hood in 2009. But he came close, officials say...

... Officials said Abdo's bomb-making techniques came "straight out of [the al Qaeda magazine] *Inspire* and an al Qaeda explosives course manual."

Such murderous rage may seem surprising from a "conscientious objector" who refused to ship out to Afghanistan on the grounds that his Islamic faith requires him to be a pacifist. "I don't believe that Islam allows me to operate in any kind of warfare at all," he said last year. (Odd for a *soldier*, no?)

Yes, Abdo is clearly a troubled man. He fled his home base, Kentucky's Fort Campbell, after being charged with possession of child pornography and recommended for court-martial in June.

Still, nothing explains away the extremist literature in his possession. Proclaimed a "Muslim peacemaker" by pacifist Web sites for refusing deployment, Abdo insisted: "Only when the military and America can disassociate Muslims from terror can we move onto a brighter future of religious collaboration and dialogue." Absent "dialogue," it seems, he communicates with bullets and bombs...

More: http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/editorials/fort_hood_again_rbuwWf0hoCV9TMoW1vfFNM

Project Veritas Investigates: Medicaid

by James O'Keefe et al., starting 17 July 2011

Project Veritas embarked on a multi-state investigation to uncover the fraud, waste and abuse that takes place in America's Medicaid system. Posing as drug smugglers, and other criminals, Project Veritas' bold volunteers visited state Medicaid offices to request assistance for family members, themselves and even illegal aliens.

Indiana, Virginia, New York City, South Carolina, and Ohio have been exposed thus far.

Watch the shocking videos here: <http://projectveritas.com/node/51>

RNC Chairman Priebus calls for investigation of fundraising activity in the White House

by Michael Short, 18 July 2011

Republican National Committee (RNC) Chairman Reince Priebus today called on the Department of Justice to investigate whether or not President Barack Obama broke federal election laws by conducting illegal political fundraising activity in the White House. A fundraising video featuring the President appears to have been recorded in the Map Room, which is not part of the White House residence, but rather "occupied in the discharge of official duties." According to federal law, it is a crime for the President of the United States to solicit political contributions in a place of official government business...

More: http://www.gop.com/index.php/news/comments/rnc_chairman_priebus_calls_for_investigation_of_fundraising_activity_in_the

Lethal fiasco

by Michael A. Walsh, 29 July 2011

Operation Fast and Furious—the Obama administration's lethal gun-running fiasco—keeps getting uglier and uglier. In a series of hearings, Rep. Darrell Issa and Sen. Charles Grassley have been systematically dismantling the administration's preposterous claim that no one in the Justice Department—which oversees the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives—knew anything about the so-called gun-tracking operation.

In Fast and Furious, ATF officials encouraged "straw buyers" in Arizona—including two convicted felons who should have been stopped by the FBI—to purchase more than 2,000 heavy-duty firearms, including AK-47 variants and .50-caliber sniper rifles, and then resell them to the Mexican drug cartels, allegedly to trace and stop crossborder arms trafficking.

At least two dead American agents later, the scheme looks set to blow up in Attorney General Eric Holder's face—and now's there's evidence that it might reach all the way to the White House...

Read on: http://www.nypost.com/f/print/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/lethal_fiasco_rllfHYxZwgAHwNGmMUCaoL

The failure of Central Planning Lite

by Robert Tracinski, 29 July 2011

...The debt ceiling debate, which is driven not so much by the immediate prospect of default but by the long-term unsustainability of the federal debt, shows what happens when the welfare state comes crashing down. And the Fed's failure to encourage lending and stimulate economic growth, despite yanking on all of the levers it can reach, shows the illusion of monetary central planning.

The failure of Central Planning Lite cannot just be attributed to incompetence or politicization, to shovel-ready jobs that are not shovel-ready, or bailouts organized as favors to political pressure groups. After all, Ben Bernanke was a respected and impartial economist. But the job of central planning is inherently impossible; even the smartest person can't do it.

In discovering this fact, we are emerging from a specific illusion created by one man: Alan Greenspan. When he stepped down as Fed Chairman, I noted the irony that the onetime champion of the gold standard had instead established the Greenspan Standard: the markets' faith that economic contractions would be moderated, growth would continue steadily, and inflation would be kept at bay, all because of one man. It was the illusion that a brilliant, dedicated, all-knowing "maestro" could control the markets and make Central Planning Lite work.

Yet we can now see that in seeking to mitigate the effects of previous economic downturns, Greenspan helped set the stage for a monetary expansion and the resulting housing bubble, and when he handed his power over to the sorcerer's apprentice, all hell broke loose. In dictating an expansion of credit, the central planners at the Fed replaced the individual plans of bankers, investors, and borrowers, deliberately overriding any signals that might have warned of excessive risk and called for a contraction of credit. Yet the central planners did not, in fact, know how to understand and control the easy money forces they had unleashed. So is it any wonder that they have been unable to marshal those same forces to summon up a recovery?...

More: http://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2011/07/29/the_failure_of_central_planning_lite_99155.html

America's Jericho moment

The fortress walls were really just myths about debt. Now they're tumbling down.

Chicago Tribune editorial, 28 July 2011

...Whatever the debt ceiling when this episode ends, Americans have learned that they face the same threat to their public finances that they do in their families: If you've spent yourself into penury, wary lenders aren't eager to hand you still more money. That's sobering reality for a nation whose government now survives only by borrowing another \$4 billion every day...

...If Americans think they can settle this little spat and go back to spending as usual, they're dead wrong. Elected officials no longer can pretend that deficits have no dangerous consequences. Here's one: A lower credit rating will raise the government's borrowing costs by perhaps \$100 billion a year. That would essentially be a mountain of money wasted on bigger interest payouts — just to keep current with a national debt *that continues to grow*. Remember, the trillions

that lawmakers say this or that plan will "save" are merely reductions in future deficits. The \$14.3 trillion that Americans owe today? No matter how this debt-ceiling fight ends, that number will only get bigger until spending and revenue align...

Read the rest: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-edit-credit-20110728,0,6665242.story>

Five (Fairly) Short Points

by Michael Hammond, 28 July 2011, 11:23pm EDT

(1) House Republicans are walking into an enormous trap. The Boehner plan is sufficiently similar to the Reid plan, in virtually all important respects, that its passage will lead to the following compromise:

The adoption of Boehner's ten years of sham cuts, which will be ephemeral beyond fiscal year 2012. Even John McCain said tonight that Gramm-Rudman (whose "sequestration" provisions are the enforcement mechanism for Boehner) became worthless because Congress just started declaring emergencies.

A commission which will report out large tax increases which cannot be filibustered. The "deciders" on the commission will be six Pelosi/Reid people and one squish Republican, who will be corralled into submission by a "trigger" which will make the pressure currently being applied to Congress seem small by comparison...

More: <http://www.redstate.com/mikehammond/2011/07/28/five-fairly-short-points/>

Crossing a line and overreaching

by Erick Erickson, 28 July 2011, 3:43pm EDT

UPDATED: Speaker Boehner has come out forcefully and denied that he is a part of or approves of redistricting Jim Jordan out of office.

Yesterday, House Republicans went to war against the conservative Republican Study Committee and its staffers who've been doing the Lord's work against the Boehner plan...

More: <http://www.redstate.com/erick/2011/07/28/crossing-a-line-and-overreaching/>

MSM ignores how Oslo shooter's own manifesto completely destroys "Christian Conservative" label

by Ezra Dulis, 27 July 2011

Anders Behring Breivik's manifesto, penned before his horrific mass murder in Oslo, contains 1,500 full pages of text, yet the *New York Times* has not asked readers to pore over it and help them find information relevant to their coverage of his terrorist attack. The Huffington Post has not posted a blog advertising "LIVE UPDATES" from those studying the writings' minutiae. Neither has the *Guardian*, MSNBC, ABC News, Yahoo! News, nor has the *Washington Times* created a Twitter account to tweet live micro-updates of research on this document. What documents *did* prompt this fanatic scrutiny? If you guessed the emails of a private citizen during her tenure as Governor of Alaska, you'd be right... Now, the narrative is *Breivik = Tea Party/Bloggers/Conservatives/Christians*, so his targets (Labour Party children), anti-Islamic and anti-Marxist statements, plus his Facebook profile stating he was a "Conservative Christian" is all the information they need.

But the champions of the "No Labels" movement are content to leave "Conservative Christian" completely unexamined. Where's the nuance from the MSM? David Frum calls himself a "conservative," and so do I, yet our positions on myriad issues couldn't be more different. Nancy Pelosi calls herself a Christian, and so do I, yet our positions on *more* issues couldn't be more different. Where is their curiosity to find out what Anders Behring Breivik meant when he called himself a "Conservative Christian?" Are their content to merely stereotype his actual political and economic views with two undefined words? I'm sorry; that was rhetorical. Of course they are. It serves their agenda to smear people who had nothing to do with this travesty, and besides, it's just so hard to read all those words!

But Breivik's actual words completely contradict the "Conservative Christian" caricature. Below, you can see how, to save the environment, he wants the world to rid itself of oil consumption. You can see how he wants a one-child policy, government control of private industries, the breakup of Rupert Murdoch's media empire, the military support of Russia to prevent a possible U.S. invasion of Europe, and the removal of all U.S. military bases from European soil. Yes, the tea party platform through and through, folks! ...

He's actually a leftist loon:

<http://bigjournalism.com/edulis/2011/07/27/msm-ignores-how-oslo-shooters-own-manifesto-completely-destroys-christian-conservative-label/>
(via [Dana Loesch](#))

Gov't welfare widens the wealth gap

Investor's Business Daily editorial, 27 July 2011

...If nothing else, these data point out the failure of federal welfare and anti-poverty policies to do what they intended: eradicate wealth differences in our country.

Starting in 1964, when President Johnson launched the War on Poverty, a well-intentioned crusade to end poverty, the U.S. has spent an estimated \$16 trillion trying to help the less well-off. LBJ and other well-meaning Democratic politicians at the time also hoped that the burgeoning welfare state would make people more self-sufficient, a noble goal. It didn't work.

Today, some 44 million Americans are on food stamps. In 2007, it was 26 million. Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner recently boasted that U.S. issues more than 80 million checks a month. But while the U.S. has more than 70 means-tested welfare programs, the poverty rate today is higher than it was in the late 1960s...

...The road to hell, it's said, is paved with good intentions. But sometimes it's paved with taxpayers' money.

More: <http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/579547/201107261841/Govt-Racks-Up-Another-Failure.htm>

You think the debt crisis is bad now? Wait until Obamacare takes its toll

by Andrea Tantaros, 28 July 2011

<http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/columnists/tantaros/index.html>

Are we alone in the universe? New analysis says Maybe

by Natalie Wolchover, Life's Little Mysteries staff writer, 26 July 2011

Scientists engaged in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) work under the assumption that there is, in fact, intelligent life out there to be found. A new analysis may crush their optimism...

...Their optimism relies on one factor in particular: In the equation, the probability of life arising on suitably habitable planets (ones with water, rocky surfaces and atmospheres) is almost always taken to be 100 percent. As the reasoning goes, the same fundamental laws apply to the entire universe, and because those laws engendered the genesis of life on Earth — and relatively early in its history at that — they must readily spawn life elsewhere, too. As the Russian astrobiologist Andrei Finkelstein put it at a recent SETI press conference, "the genesis of life is as inevitable as the formation of atoms."

But in a new paper published on arXiv.org, astrophysicist David Spiegel at Princeton University and physicist Edwin Turner at the University of Tokyo argue that this thinking is dead wrong. Using a statistical method called Bayesian reasoning, they argue that the life here on Earth could be common, or it could be extremely rare — there's no reason to prefer one conclusion over the other. With their new analysis, Spiegel and Turner say they have erased the one Drake factor scientists felt confident about and replaced it with a question mark...

More: <http://www.space.com/12421-alien-life-rare-universe-extraterrestrials-seti.html>

See also: **Aliens Cause Global Warming**, by Michael Crichton

Obama offers lectures but no answers

by Charles Hurt, 27 July 2011

..."Do you know what people are fed up with most of all?" Mr. Obama inquired woodenly of the very American people about whom he was talking. Of course, he did not wait for the American people to respond, this being a lecture and all. "They're fed up with a town where 'compromise' has become a dirty word," he explained to the fed-up American people...

...Goodness, if politicians in this town compromised any more than they already do, none of them would still be married, the Potomac River would turn green with the last of your money, and lobbyists would actually start outnumbering city rats around here. The common pretzel would not be able to keep up. Endless compromise and accommodation is precisely how these people have gotten us into this fine mess in the first place.

Dispute over whose political boondoggle to spend millions on? Let's spend it on everybody's!

Welfare is un-American and unpopular? Well, let's give it to both lazy people and big, fat corporations!

Out of money? Well, just print some more!

This town oozes with so much compromise it would drown an honest whale. It is filled with Olympic compromisers. No one here, it seems, is uncompromised.

No, what people are fed up with about Washington is the lack of common sense and basic principle. You run out of money? You stop spending. And you figure out some way so you don't ever come this way again.

More: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/jul/26/hurt-obama-offers-lectures-but-no-answers/print/>

Obama's Towering Inferno

by Jonah Goldberg, 27 July 2011

...Meanwhile, Obama wants Americans to call Congress to express their support not for an actual approach but for some gauzy, poll-tested, bromides about “balance” and “fairness” and whatnot. Wasn't this the guy who was supposed to be the next Lincoln? Did I miss where Lincoln offered to settle the issue of slavery by having Americans send vaguely written letters to Congress? Did the Gettysburg Address end with the rail-splitter asking for a show of hands?

Imagine you're in a burning office building. Obama's plan for getting out alive: “Okay, you guys break up into different groups and come up with a series of proposals about how we get out of the building. I will then negotiate with each of you separately and then together, and then separately. Then I'll get on Skype and tell the world what I think of your respective plans and criticize you for their lack of seriousness. I will insist that we have balanced approach of applying both water to the fire and opening the windows, which some say will only provide more oxygen for the flames. But my base says window-opening is essential. Oh and I will blame all of the gasoline I threw around on the lower floors of this building on the guy who moved out two years ago. And I will veto any plan that requires we have a new plan should we get stuck on another floor. And, did I mention this mess was created by the former tenant and...

Brilliant: <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/272825/obamas-towering-inferno-jonah-goldberg>

Norway mass murder: The *Dexter* Factor

by Frontinus, 27 July 2011

The appalling killing in Norway, and its purported justification via a 1500 page “compendium” by the mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik under the pseudonym “Andrew Berwick,” has let loose a remarkably well-coordinated campaign against any intellectuals who have opposed Islamisation or jihadists in Europe, a campaign pursued with meticulous precision by the New York Times, the leftwing blogs and the European press, executed against political leaders (Wilders, Merkel, Cameron, Sarkozy et al), against authors of books and opeds and essays, against human rights activists, anyone who has written or acted against violent jihad or the imposition of the violent doctrines of Shariah in western nations.

But no one is talking about the *Dexter* Factor, which is this: “Andrew Berwick” liked the *Dexter* cable series about a ruthless and completely deceptive serial killer. A ruthless and completely deceptive killer, a narrator detailing his murderous plans, proud of his clever ability to escape detection...

...If this trendy brutal show's producers and writers are not responsible for influencing Breivik — then why are the media holding responsible these other political leaders, writers, human rights activists and journalists worldwide who oppose brutality rather than making a buck off it?...

Read it all: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/07/dexter-factor.html>

Violence is Not the Answer

Pat Condell, 27 July 2011

Watch: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=MVbUzbLCSGE

Statement issued to the media

by Baron Bodissey, 27 July 2011

...I have access to translated summaries of every European news story on Breivik and the Oslo murders, and of

course I can read the English-language articles myself. I am well aware of what is being said in the newspapers and on television about me, Fjordman, and many other colleagues.

It is astonishing how much bad information, innuendo, rumor published as fact, unsourced articles, character assassination, and outright lies are being published in Europe today. The lack of ethical behavior among professional journalists is absolutely appalling...

More: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/07/baron-bodissey-statement-issued-to.html>

Walker's Vindication

The controversial Wisconsin budget reform saves teachers' jobs.

by John McCormack, 25 July 2011 (August 1 issue)

http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/walker-s-vindication_577310.html

(Hat tip: Jim D.)

The Antidote for Socialism

We'll have to wait for 2012, because this administration won't administer it..

by Pete Du Pont, 27 July 2011

...Republicans in the House hoped the debt ceiling negotiation process would have been a chance to reset the trajectory of huge increases in government spending. But it is not likely to happen, for the president will not move enough to fix our worsening financial position. That means the 2012 election is the most likely opportunity to change America's fiscal policies.

So the public policy results of the next election must be business and individual tax reform—lower rates on a flatter and broader base, repeal of ObamaCare, and reform of entitlement programs (slowly raising the Social Security retirement age, adding in block grants to the states for their own Medicaid rules, etc.). Add in the elimination of farm and "green" subsidies like ethanol, continue banning earmarks, and get federal spending down to 20 percent of GDP.

None of these policy changes will be possible with President Obama in the White House or Democrats in control of the Senate...

More: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903999904576469041984395736.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_MIDDLETopOpinion

Oslo and the dangers of Moral Equivalence

by Bruce Thornton, 25 July 2011

...The absurdity of these arguments is patent. First, the number of attacks attributable to self-professed Christian terrorists is miniscule compared to the toll of Islamic jihadists—17,489 since 9/11, as counted and documented by [Religion of Peace](#). More important, though the former terrorists may call themselves Christian, only a tiny handful of Christians would accept that label, contrary to the wide acceptance and approval of jihadist terrorism that can be found throughout the Muslim world. For example, a recent Pew [survey](#) found that one in five people in Egypt view al Qaeda favorably, the same percentage in supposedly moderate Indonesia, figures representing over 60 million people. It is unimaginable that a similar survey about Breivik would generate anything more than a rounding-error's worth of Christians supporting him.

This fact reflects the most obvious fallacy behind the moral equivalence argument: the complete lack of anything remotely resembling a theology of violence in the Bible. Yes, there is plenty of blood and guts in the Old Testament, but as Raymond Ibrahim points out, the references to those battles are “descriptive, not prescriptive,” and reflect history rather than theology. There is nothing in the Bible remotely similar to the numerous commands to wage war against the infidel that can be found in the Koran, the hadiths, the biographies of Mohammed, and 14 centuries of Islamic jurisprudence, commentary, history, and theology.

Nor can one find Christian clerics or scholars praising and justifying religious violence, whereas numerous respected Muslim religious leaders do so on a regular basis, for the obvious reason that it is doctrinally legitimate and traditional. The continuity of this 14-century-long tradition can be traced starting with Mohammed's farewell address in 642, when he said, “I was ordered to fight all men until they say, ‘There is no god but Allah.’” This incitement to religious violence was repeated by the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979: “Until the cry ‘There is no God but God’ resounds over the whole world, there will be struggle.” It was repeated by bin Laden in 2001: “I was ordered to fight the people

until they say there is no god but Allah, and his prophet Muhammed.” And it was quoted by the Fort Hood murderer Nidal Malik Hassan, in a power-point presentation at Walter Reed Hospital. No such tradition exists in Christianity or Judaism, because theological violence is not part of those faiths...

More: <http://discoverthenetworks.us1.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=caa6f67f1482e6214d83be62d&id=3d5c6cefd8&e=ff1611b9a9>

I would remind you that extremism in defense of solvency is no vice

by Steven Hayward, 26 July 2011

...My headline here obviously borrows from Barry Goldwater's infamous line that "extremism in defense of liberty is no vice." A better precedent might be to that singular moment when Churchill faced down the appeasers in the war cabinet on May 28, 1940, not yet three weeks into his premiership... When Lord Halifax and a handful of other influential members of the war cabinet were building support to seek peace terms with Hitler through the Italians, Churchill reminded them that "nations which went down fighting rose again, but those which surrendered tamely were finished." The same may be said for the Republican Party today; if it surrenders to Obama, it may as well pack it in for good...

... For Churchill, it wasn't a matter of keeping office; life itself wasn't worth living if the struggle wasn't won. It was a huge risk on Churchill's part. But it was the only noble course. It is not possible to guarantee victory, Churchill said at other times; it is only possible to deserve it. For Republicans at this moment, it ought not to be worth keeping office if they surrender.

To extend the analogy, recall Churchill's words about the RAF after the Battle of Britain: Never have so many owned so much to so few. Today the Tea Party-influenced members of Congress, and a few long-time stalwarts like Sen. Jim Demint, are the few who stand in the way of fiscal Armageddon. Let us hope that at some point down the road from here we can say the same thing about the Tea Party members of Congress that Churchill said of the RAF.

More: <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2011/07/extremism-in-defense-of-solvency-is-no-vice.php>

Obama the Immoderate

by David Harsanyi, 27 July 2011

...So if things stand, this will be the first genuine political victory for the economic wing of the Tea Party. Tax hikes are not being seriously considered in any plan on the table, as the horrified pangs of distress from the left can attest. No amount of Tim Geithner's politically motivated scare stories or the demonization of the Tea Party by the deeply sane wing of America's punditry is likely to undo this reality when a deal finally comes down.

We've heard since the start of the debate that some House Republicans were crazy for wanting the debt ceiling to be a debt ceiling. We've heard Democrats falsely claim that failing to hike the ceiling means the nation defaults. Never mind that the fringe position matches rather neatly with the majority of Americans, who in nearly every poll oppose raising the ceiling. These riffraff have probably taken the debt ceiling too literally. Or perhaps they haven't been sufficiently tenderized by the barrage of fear-mongering. Perhaps another prime-time speech blaming the previous president might do the trick.

Recently, Obama joked with a La Raza crowd, "The idea of doing things on my own is very tempting. I promise you, not just on immigration reform." He was joking, but when many of the crowd cheered heartily and chanted "Yes, you can," we learned a little about expectations on the left...

More: <http://www.creators.com/opinion/david-harsanyi/obama-the-immoderate-11-07-27.html>

In Defense of Robert Spencer

Silencing terrorism researchers is a victory for terrorism.

by Daniel Greenfield, 26 July 2011

<http://frontpagemag.com/2011/07/26/in-defense-of-robert-spencer/>

Anders Breivik stole the Counterjihad movement from freedom-fighters

We're stealing it back.

by Robert Spencer, 26 July 2011

<http://frontpagemag.com/2011/07/26/anders-breivik-stole-the-counterjihad-movement-from-freedom-fighters/>

Geert Wilders denounces Norway massacre

26 July 2011

<http://frontpagemag.com/2011/07/26/geert-wilders-denounces-norway-massacre/>

The Debt Ceiling

Speaker of the House John Boehner's response to [President Obama's debt ceiling address](#).

25 July 2011, 9:29pm EDT

...The president has often said we need a 'balanced' approach—which in Washington means: we spend more, you pay more... The sad truth is that the president wanted a blank check six months ago, and he wants a blank check today. That is just not going to happen.

You see, there is no stalemate in Congress. The House has passed a bill to raise the debt limit with bipartisan support. And this week, while the Senate is struggling to pass a bill filled with phony accounting and Washington gimmicks, we will pass another bill—one that was developed with the support of the bipartisan leadership of the U.S. Senate.

Obviously, I expect that bill can and will pass the Senate, and be sent to the President for his signature. If the President signs it, the 'crisis' atmosphere he has created will simply disappear. The debt limit will be raised. Spending will be cut by more than one trillion dollars, and a serious, bipartisan committee of the Congress will begin the hard but necessary work of dealing with the tough challenges our nation faces...

...This debate isn't about President Obama and House Republicans. It isn't about Congress and the White House. It's about what's standing between the American people and the future we seek for ourselves and our families.

You know, I've always believed, the bigger government, the smaller the people. And right now, we have a government so big and so expensive it's sapping the drive of our people and keeping our economy from running at full capacity. The solution to this crisis is not complicated: if you're spending more money than you're taking in, you need to spend less of it...

More: http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/speaker-boehners-debt-ceiling-speech_577405.html

Reps. Allen West and Bill Flores both endorse the plan. Rep. James Lankford isn't sure. Reps. Tim Huelskamp and Jim Jordan oppose it. Read why.

A New Deficit Plan

House Republicans are optimistic, but wary.

by *Andrew Stiles*, 25 July 2011

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/272688/new-deficit-plan-andrew-stiles>

This is great.

Congress stands its ground

by *George F. Will*, 25 July 2011

Between 6 p.m. Friday and 4 p.m. Sunday, the nation began a constitutional course-correction. The current occupant's vanity and naïveté — a dangerous amalgam — are causing the modern presidency to buckle beneath the weight of its pretenses. And Congress is reasserting its responsibilities.

At his Friday news conference-cum-tantrum, Barack Obama imperiously summoned congressional leaders to his presence: "I've told" them "I want them here at 11 a.m." By Saturday, his administration seemed to be cultivating chaos by suddenly postulating a new deadline: The debt-ceiling impasse must end before Asian markets opened Sunday evening Eastern time, lest the heavens fall.

Those markets opened; the heavens held. The faux deadline, reportedly invoked at a Saturday White House meeting by Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, who should resign, inevitably seeped into the media and invited overseas panic, thereby risking the nation's currency, for brief tactical advantage.

Amid these tawdry episodes, House Speaker John Boehner signaled constitutional sanity regained: "Congress will forgo a responsible path forward." Congress. Obama has marginalized himself...

Read the rest: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/congress-stands-its-ground/2011/07/25/gIQAmvNsYI_story.html

Debt-fight doomsayers

by Charles Gasparino, 25 July 2011

...A U.S. failure to pay bond holders could tank the Dow and upend the bond markets, where companies borrow to finance everything from plant and equipment to employee salaries. Credit cards might not work because banks won't have access to borrowed money to lend to consumers. Forget about getting a loan to buy a house or a car. In other words, the economy could come to a halt.

But there's no reason for default even if there's *never* a debt-ceiling hike. Even if Congress and the president remain deadlocked past the Aug. 2 deadline, when the feds are supposed to run out of money to pay *all* their bills, a default still leaves them with plenty of cash to pay the most *important* ones.

Uncle Sam takes in \$2 trillion in tax revenues yearly and spends around \$200 billion on debt interest. Geithner can cover the bond payments just fine—and hold off on sending out other checks. Of course, it wouldn't be pretty to stiff defense contractors and agribiz giants while a budget deal is hammered out, but it's way better than the financial calamity a default is likely to spark.

Perhaps more important to Obama & Co., default would leave less room for government spending for the rest of our lives—because the country would have to pay much higher interest rates on its debt when we come back to the markets. (We'd definitely have to; even under the most austere budgets talked about in Washington, the country will still have a deficit for the foreseeable future.) So why are Obama & Co. using the "D word" so obsessively? Here are two possibilities...

More: http://www.nypost.com/f/print/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/debt_fight_doomsayers_AhCKQLmjQi8e3phgFwi460

Extraordinary deception

by Pamela Geller, 24 July 2011

...We're still waiting for the Department of Defense to speak to the religious motivation in the Fort Hood jihad. And yet here we are with a mass murderer who has been planning this for nine years, long before I ever heard of a blog, and who sought to use us, to use our work as a basis for his maniacal, homicidal rampage—and we are held responsible. Notice that no attention is being paid to last week's jihad attack in Mumbai. Is it because it's Islam, and the media is Sharia-compliant? Is it because it's brown people? Are we going to go there? That's what the left would say if conservatives were not paying sufficient attention to murders in a non-Western country.

There is only a single and insignificant reference to me in Breivik's manifesto. The 55 references to Spencer are mostly quotes from Muslim scriptures. But Breivik cites LGF numerous times, in a very different way. He includes a long diatribe against Charles Johnson, whom he clearly admired until he felt betrayed enough to snap. The killer speaks about Charles Johnson obsessively and wrings his hands about Johnson's turn to the left. Could this perhaps have been the provocation? Could this have been what caused him to snap?

Breivik also refers favorably to Obama. Does that make the president culpable as well? This whole exercise is ridiculous. Anders Behring Breivik is responsible for his actions. If anyone incited him to violence, it was Islamic supremacists...

More: http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/2011/07/extraordinary-deception.html

Questions, so many questions

by Iowahawk, 6 July 2011

President Obama graciously offered to take questions submitted via Twitter today, courtesy the #AskObama hashtag. Being an inquisitive sort, I decided to submit a few that have been nagging me (**I am on Twitter**, by the way). Although he declined to answer any, I thought I'd warehouse them here in case he ever gets around to them:

[Here are Don John's favorites. There are 30 more.]

An \$8 billion high speed train leaves Chicago for Iowa City at 8:15am at 40mph. Why?

If shovel-ready projects create jobs, wouldn't spoon-ready projects create even more jobs?

Instead of making cars get 62 mpg, why not 62 million mpg? Also, do something about the gravitational constant.

Math wasn't your strong suit, was it?

I let my Mexican drug lord license expire. Am I still eligible for the free machine gun program?
When you said "days not weeks" did you mean Venusian days?
I understand you finally quit smoking. Do they make a patch for spending addicts too?
Would you get tougher with Iran if you knew they were working with Scott Walker?
On behalf of the entire US population: dude, WTF?
I just voted to increase my sobriety ceiling. Why won't the bartender give me another drink?
If ATMs are so bad, why do you keep treating me like one?
Whose spending created your job?
Are strawmen cheaper when you buy them by the gross?
How much CO2 is created by a burning straw man?
Who are these "those who say"?

More: <http://iowahawk.typepad.com/iowahawk/2011/07/questions-so-many-questions.html>

The problem is spending

Yet the Democrats keep pushing for higher taxes.

by Jack Kelly, 24 July 2011

...The problem is spending. Outlays rose from \$1.863 trillion in FY 2001 to an estimated \$3.819 trillion in this fiscal year, 105 percent in 10 years. The federal government now consumes 24 percent of the gross domestic product. (Since 1903, federal spending has averaged a hair over 20 percent of GDP).

Another way to indicate the problem is spending—specifically, Mr. Obama's spending—if federal spending were held to what it was during President Bush's last year in office, deficits likely would be eliminated in four years.

Since World War II, federal tax revenues have averaged 18 percent of GDP. Income tax rates varied widely during this period, and there were both booms and busts. But tax revenues never exceeded 20.6 percent of GDP. That seems to be a ceiling—no matter what economic conditions are or how high rates are raised—and it suggests the budget cannot be balanced unless spending is held below 20 percent of GDP. So tax hikes can't close the budget gap. But they could clobber the moribund recovery, making the deficit worse.

Democrats want Republicans to accept real tax hikes in exchange for mostly phantom spending cuts. Because they are unwilling to do so, many journalists describe Republicans as "intransigent." But the truly intransigent, it seems to me, are those who want to go on spending as if there were no problem.

More: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11205/1162266-373-0.stm?cmpid=bcpanel3>

John Boehner set to call Obama's bluff: may push short term deal to avoid crisis

by Jim Hoft, 23 July 2011, 7:48 PM CDT

<http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2011/07/john-boehner-set-to-call-obamas-bluff-may-push-short-term-deal-to-avoid-crisis/>

Obama the man without a plan

by Mark Steyn, 23 July 2011

...You hit the debt ceiling, you jack it up a couple trillion, and life goes on—or so it did until these GOP yahoos came along and decided to treat the vote as if it actually meant something.

Obama has done his best to pretend to take them seriously. He claimed to have a \$4 trillion deficit-reduction plan. The court eunuchs of the press corps were impressed, and went off to file pieces hailing the president as "the grown-up in the room." There is, in fact, no plan. No plan at all. No plan whatsoever, either for a deficit reduction of \$4 trillion or \$4.73. As is the way in Washington, merely announcing that he had a plan absolved him of the need to have one. So the president's staff got out the extra-wide teleprompter and wrote a really large number on it, and simply by reading out the really large number the president was deemed to have produced a serious blueprint for trillions of dollars in savings...

...The only "plan" Barack Obama has put on paper is his February budget. Were there trillions and trillions of savings in that? Er, no. It increased spending and doubled the federal debt.

How about Harry Reid, the Senate Majority Leader? Has he got a plan? No. The Democratic Senate has shown no interest in producing a budget for two-and-a-half years. Unlike the president, Sen. Reid can't even be bothered pretending he's interested in spending reductions. But he is interested in spending, and, if that's your bag, boring things like budgets

only get in the way.

It seems reasonable to conclude from the planlessness and budgetlessness of the Obama/Reid Democrats that their only plan is to carry on spending without limit. Otherwise, someone somewhere would surely have written something down on a piece of paper by now. But no, apparently the Department of Writing Down Plans is the only federal expense the president is willing to cut. You begin to see why the Europeans are a little miffed...

Read it all: <http://www.ocreger.com/opinion/austerity-309261-plan-debt.html>

Boehner runs laps around Obama, again

by Jennifer Rubin, 22 July 2011

...Boehner is the composed "adult in the room" now. He, excuse the expression, called the president's bluff — a viable deal with no tax hikes and Obama blinked (or sloshed in the other direction, to follow the Jell-O imagery). All of this followed Obama's appearance in which he angrily accused Boehner of walking away from the deal. (According to Boehner, Obama upped the revenue figure at the last moment.)

Boehner now has left the White House on the sidelines, has his troops in order and can craft a deal with the Senate. At this point, the Senate Democrats who have never put forth a plan of any type must be desperate for a deal. The ranking member on the Senate Budget Committee, Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), took the opportunity to twist the knife, putting out a statement that read in part: "The President has never put a single plan on paper that actually reduces spending, and he has no program that would substantially reduce the deficit. If he does, it's a closely guarded secret. And if such a secret plan does exist it should be made public... The honest truth is that this president, and this Democrat-led Senate, will not agree to the level of spending cuts in a debt deal necessary to put our country on a sound path."...

More: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs-and-features/2010/08/25/gIQAlCqHUI_page.html

Books without Borders

by Rich Lowry, 22 July 2011

You have to have a heart of stone not to feel a pang of sadness at the passing of the bookstore Borders... The story of Borders has been repeated again and again by all the countless American companies that have risen to prominence only to disappear. It started with an inspired innovation only to be overtaken by subsequent innovations. It had an advantage that, in new conditions, became a liability. It lost its footing on the free market's ceaseless wheel of change...

...Government exists in an entirely different plane, characterized by stasis and the lack of market or any other kind of discipline. *USA Today* reports that "federal employees' job security is so great that workers in many agencies are more likely to die of natural causes than get laid off or fired." Washington is locked in a debate over whether health-care programs designed in the 1960s can ever be reformed to account for new realities...

Read the rest: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/272478/books-without-borders-rich-lowry>

Will college bubble burst from public subsidies?

by Michael Barone, 21 July 2011

...Behavior that is beneficial for most people may not be so for everybody. And government subsidies can go too far. Subsidies create incentives for what economists call rent-seeking behavior. Providers of supposedly beneficial goods or services try to sop up as much of the subsidy money as they can by raising prices. After all, their customers are paying with money supplied by the government. Bubble money, as it turns out. And sooner or later, bubbles burst...

...What have institutions of higher learning done with their vast increases in revenues? The answer in all too many cases is administrative bloat.

Take the California State University system, the second tier in that state's public higher education. Between 1975 and 2008, the number of faculty rose by 3 percent, to 12,019 positions. During those same years, the number of administrators rose 221 percent, to 12,183. That's right: There are more administrators than teachers at Cal State now. These people get paid to "liaise" and "facilitate" and produce reports on diversity. How that benefits Cal State students or California taxpayers is unclear.

It is often said that American colleges and universities are the best in the world. That's undoubtedly true in the hard sciences. But in the humanities and to a lesser extent in the social sciences, there's a lot of garbage. Is a degree in religious and women's studies worth \$100,000 in student loan debt? Probably not...

More: <http://patriotpost.us/opinion/michael-barone/2011/07/21/will-college-bubble-burst-from-public-subsidies/>

Green, shovel-ready stimulus — 100 years ago

by Victor Davis Hanson, 21 July 2011

...Quite simply, Big Creek could not be built today in the United States. Environmentalists would claim that the pristine nature of the San Joaquin River would be unnecessarily altered, citing a newly discovered colony of spotted newts or dappled dragonflies in the way of the proposed penstocks. Unions would demand blanket representation without elections — and every imaginable compensation for such hazardous duty. Workers would apply for stress-related disability benefits given the dizzying heights and the dank subterranean digging. Government regulators and inspectors would outnumber project engineers. Private entrepreneurs would never risk such a chancy investment without ironclad government guarantees of profits despite enormous cost overruns. And the public would be as skeptical of the risky project's success as they would be eager to enjoy its dividends when completed...

...We should remember the lesson of Henry Huntington's Big Creek project, started 100 years ago this year, as we let rich irrigated farm acreage lie idle and pass up the exploitation of new oil and gas fields — preferring to argue endlessly over how to redistribute our inherited but ever-shrinking national pie.

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/272325/green-shovel-ready-stimulus-100-years-ago-victor-davis-hanson>

What do we know?

by Baron Bodissey, 23 July 2011

... We are left with the persistent suspicion that there is more to the Oslo atrocity than meets the eye. The Utøya massacre is very different, and hardly seems to fit the profile. One can't help but wonder if both actions really were carried out by the same person working entirely alone.

When discussing the incident, it's crucial to keep in mind what we *know*. We actually know very little beyond what has been released by the Norwegian authorities or published by the state media. Additional material comes from semi-private media — not much Scandinavian journalism operates with no state subsidy whatsoever — and sources derived from them. The journalistic digging has just barely begun...

...Consider these questions: 1. How do you know the man who made those comments on various websites is the man who is in custody now? 2. How do you know that the identity assigned to the man existed more than a few days ago? 3. Has anyone tracked the supposed culprit from childhood through high school and university, right up to today? If this were the USA, hundreds of reporters would be analyzing his old report cards, talking to his aunts, interviewing his former employers, etc. Is any of that happening now in Norway? 4. Is there any substantive information about him that was not provided via the government or government-backed media?

The process of answering these questions has just begun. We have as yet no significant data on the murderer's accomplices or preparations. We need more information derived from something other than state sources. While we wait for additional data, to characterize Anders Behring Breivik as a particular type of ideologue — a "Nazi." a "Zionist." a "right-wing extremist." or anything else — is to jump to conclusions.

More: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/07/what-do-we-know.html#more>

And here's Jeppo's marvelous Comment on the lies told by the apostate Charles Johnson, proprietor of the Obama-loving liberal fascist site Little Green Footballs:

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/07/what-do-we-know.html?showComment=1311449091458#c8498020595342823233>

Young woman accuses Oregon Rep. David Wu of aggressive, unwanted sexual encounter

by Charles Pope, Janie Har, and Beth Slovic, 23 July 2011

A distraught young woman called U.S. Rep. David Wu's Portland office this spring, accusing him of an unwanted sexual encounter, according to multiple sources. When confronted, the Oregon Democrat acknowledged a sexual encounter to his senior aides but insisted it was consensual, the sources said. The woman is the daughter of a longtime friend and campaign donor. She apparently did not contact police at the time.

One person who heard the voice mail described the woman as upset, breathing heavily and "distraught." In the

voice mail, the young woman accused Wu of aggressive and unwanted sexual behavior, according to sources with direct knowledge of the message and its contents...

More: http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2011/07/rep_david_wu_accused_of_aggres.html

It should all be free

Why does anyone pay for health care after all?

by *Mona Charen*, 22 July 2011

Free medicine! That's what Obamacare has brought you — or should bring you, at least according to CNN.

The story's opening sentence sets the tone: "Contraceptives, sterilization, and reproductive education should be covered by health insurance plans with no cost to patients under the health reform law, a new report recommends."

In a tone that can only be called cheerleading, CNN tells its audience that the Institute of Medicine has made these recommendations to the secretary of Health and Human Services. "Historic" is the way Secretary Kathleen Sebelius described the report, adding that "we will release the Department's recommendations of what additional preventive services for women should be covered without cost sharing very soon." ...

...Secretary Sebelius praised the IOM report as "based on science and existing literature." By literature she perhaps means *Cinderella*, in which a kindly fairy godmother waves a magic wand and produces dresses, coaches, and jewels "at no cost" to *Cinderella*. She surely cannot mean the medical literature.

Although the Obama administration never tires of repeating this falsehood, the science **does not support the claim that increased spending on preventive care reduces overall costs.** The journal *Health Affairs* has studied the literature and concluded, "Over the four decades since cost-effectiveness analysis was first applied to health and medicine, hundreds of studies have shown that prevention usually adds to medical costs instead of reducing them. Medications for hypertension and elevated cholesterol, diet and exercise to prevent diabetes, and screening and early treatment for cancer all add more to medical costs than they save."

An administration that preens about its "evidence-based" policymaking constantly errs about what medical research has shown. But even more flagrantly, it fails to grasp the very first lesson of economics: Nothing is free. Someone will pay. As the great P.J. O'Rourke put it many years ago, "If you think health care is expensive now, just wait till it's free."

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/272460/it-should-all-be-free-mona-charen>

Krauthammer: 'This is Obama at his most sanctimonious, demagogic, self-righteous and arrogant'

by *Jeff Poor*, 22 July 2011, 8:10 PM

... "This is Obama at his most sanctimonious, demagogic, self-righteous and arrogant," Krauthammer said. "And given the baseline, it wasn't a pretty sight. Look, he started out by summoning the leaders of Congress—summoning on them at 11:00, who does he think he is? In the American system, the executive and Congress are coequal ... The way he demanded their appearance in the Oval Office I thought was disgraceful," Krauthammer said.

He said the president's consternation was curious because **Obama has yet to publicly offer his own plan...**

More: <http://dailycaller.com/2011/07/22/krauthammer-this-is-obama-at-his-most-sanctimonious-demagogic-self-righteous-and-arrogant/>

The President is actually trying to talk the markets into a panic

by *John Podhoretz*, 22 July 2011, 6:35 PM

An enraged Barack Obama just took to the nation's airwaves to announce his effort to strike a deal with Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner has fallen apart. Perhaps for the first time in American history, this president is **literally using this press conference to create a financial panic** over the weekend about the opening of the markets on Monday...

...He claims to have put \$1.5 trillion in cuts on the table, plus \$600 billion in entitlement reductions, in exchange for tax increases of the same size. He says Republicans said they would accept a dollar in higher taxes (or "revenue") for every four dollars in cuts, which isn't exactly saying "no" to everything. For their part, Republicans in the House passed their cut, cap and balance bill on Wednesday, and it included an increase in the debt ceiling, **so even by his own account his criticisms of the GOP are not accurate.**

More: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/07/22/the-president-is-actually-trying-to-talk-the-markets-into-a-panic/>

Boehner walks, Obama says ‘We’re out of time’

by Daniel Foster, 22 July 2011, 7:01 PM

...Obama revealed that Republicans had agreed to a roughly four-to-one ratio of spending cuts to tax increases in the deal, under the proviso that the new tax revenue come only from the elimination of subsidies and other deductions. But Boehner balked when the president demanded that tax increases at least match the amount to be cut from entitlement programs...

...**UPDATE:** At a press conference just now, House Speaker John Boehner confirmed that Republican leadership had agreed to some \$800 billion in revenue as part of a deal with the White House, but said that President Obama yesterday made a last-minute demand for an additional \$400 billion, which Boehner said would have had to have come from “raising taxes . . . on job-creators.” Boehner also said that he was “not really interested” in a short-term debt-ceiling increase, but would instead work with bipartisan leaders in the Senate on a long-term solution.

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/272578/boehner-walks-big-deal-talks-over-daniel-foster>

Boehner ends debt talks with White House

by Andrew Stiles, 22 July 2011, 6:08pm

House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio) has announced in a letter to House Republicans that he has ended negotiations with the White House, citing President Obama’s intransigence on taxes and his refusal to engage on meaningful entitlement reform. In effect, there will be no “grand bargain” and lawmakers will now focus on various contingency options...

Read Speaker Boehner's letter:

<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/272574/boehner-ends-debt-talks-white-house-andrew-stiles>

Terror attack in central Oslo 22 July 2011

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/07/terror-attack-in-central-oslo.html>

Norwegian media report on Utøya 22 July 2011

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/07/norwegian-media-report-on-utya.html>

Updates on Utøya 22 July 2011

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/07/updates-on-utya.html>

Possibly the most interesting news so far is this:

Corriere Della Sera reports that **the terrorist group Ansar al-Jihad al-Alami** has claimed responsibility for the explosion in Oslo with a message on a jihadi forum, blaming the presence of Norway in Afghanistan and “insults” to the prophet Muhammad. (Update from 1:47pm EDT)

Bachmann's Headache

Chicago Tribune editorial, 22 July 2011

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-edit-migraine-20110722,0,1907575.story>

Uproar as BBC muzzles climate change sceptics

by Nathan Rao, 21 July 2011

<http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/260164/Uproar-as-BBC-muzzles-climate-change-sceptics>

The world is not overpopulated

by Alex B. Berezow, 20 July 2011

http://www.realclearscience.com/articles/2011/07/20/the_world_is_not_overpopulated_106247.html

32nd anniv of Jimmy Carter's "malaise" speech - Obama remix

Laura Ingraham Show, 15 July 2011

Listen: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=mWAdt07XPgY

Spenditol

by Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee (CWALAC), 20 July 2011

Watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBoYYc1APr8&feature=related>

Obama's Magical Thinking

by Adam Yoshida, 18 July 2011

...Let's travel back in time half a decade, to George W. Bush's second term. Over the first few years of his term, the deficit trended steadily downward—from over \$400 billion in FY2004 to \$161 billion in FY2007. In FY2008, as a recession began (and a Democratic Congress took office), the deficit trended back up into the \$400 billion range.

Prior to 2008 the federal government was about a year of growth from a balanced budget with the war, the tax cuts, and the prescription drug benefit all taken into account. Such a deficit as existed was less than 10% of the present deficit. None of these costs has significantly increased since 2008. In fact, the cost of the war has declined. Therefore, to think that the \$1.5-trillion increase is a result of the previously mentioned factors requires one to hold a magical belief that everything wrong in the world is the fault of the 43rd president. That, in the face of all reality, some liberals persist in this belief is unsurprising as in their minds President Bush has become a Goldstein-like figure of hate conjured up to excuse the errors the present government.

So, where did the present deficit come from? Simple: it came from the current president...

More: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/07/obamas_magical_thinking.html

Fact-checking NPR's agenda journalism on terrorism

by David Reaboi and Travis Korson, BigPeace, 19 July 2011

Yesterday's poorly reported National Public Radio Morning Edition story, "Terrorism Training Casts Pall Over Muslim Employee," demands a fact-check critique. The NPR report alleged that the head of Ohio's Muslim outreach program Omar al-Omari was wrongly terminated due to a law enforcement briefing on political Islam. We needed to issue several corrections...

More: <http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/p18770.xml>

See You August 3

Some conservatives plan to keep fighting through the debt deadline.

by Robert Costa and Andrew Stiles, 21 July 2011

...On Fox Business yesterday, Matt Kibbe of FreedomWorks said that "the Republicans' ability to actually negotiate real spending cuts really comes into play on August 3, the day after the so-called end of the world happens." Still, there are some who strike a more tempered tone. Rep. James Lankford (R., Okla.), who voted for the Boehner-Obama spending deal but is currently one of 37 members who has signed a pledge promising not to raise the debt ceiling absent the full enactment of "Cut, Cap, and Balance," tells NRO that House Republicans have no plans to barrel past the August 2 deadline. "There's not any enthusiasm to just ignore that date," he says. "We understand that date is significant, and we've got to be able to pay our bills."

But as August 2 approaches, DeMint, Jordan, and their fellow conservatives aren't daunted. "I can tell you this, the tide of history is moving here," Walsh says. "I don't think our leadership can stop it, I don't think Harry Reid can, and I know Barack Obama can't."

Full story: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/272428/see-you-august-3-robert-costa>

U.S. hiring declined from 67,600 per month to 6,400 per month!

Recovery stalled after ObamaCare passed

by James Sherk, 19 July 2011

Private-sector job creation initially recovered from the recession at a normal rate, leading to predictions last year of a “Recovery Summer.” Since April 2010, however, net private-sector job creation has stalled. Within two months of the passage of ObamaCare, the job market stopped improving. This suggests that businesses are not exaggerating when they tell pollsters that the new health care law is holding back hiring. The law significantly raises business costs and creates considerable uncertainty about the future. To encourage hiring, Congress should repeal ObamaCare...

Read on: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2011/07/Economic-Recovery-Stalled-After-ObamaCare-Passed>

Missing the Debt

by Yuval Levin, 21 July 2011

...The debate about policy changes attached to the debt-limit increase is supposedly about how to avoid this fate. But in fact, the debate has had basically nothing to do with the causes of that trajectory. Because our budget debates look ten years into the future (since congressional budget rules require ten-year budgets), we have been able to sustain the illusion—on the left and on much of the right—that what we’re dealing with is a familiar kind of public finance problem, if on a larger scale than usual: We have had an explosion of discretionary spending in the past few years combined with increases in entitlement spending, and taxes have not risen to match, and so we’re debating whether to cut spending down to the levels of our tax revenue, to raise taxes to match the spending explosion, or to do some combination of the two. That’s the familiar fiscal debate—everybody knows his part, and has basically played that part this year. It’s an important debate. But it is the debate of yesterday’s and today’s debt problem, not tomorrow’s debt problem—not the medium and long-term problem that is the source of that crazy debt trajectory that has everyone worried.

That debt explosion—which will be at the heart of our politics in the coming years—is different and unprecedented, and we have seen in recent months that the Left is completely unprepared to understand it, and the Right (with much help from the indispensable Paul Ryan) is only starting to grasp it.

Simply put, that debate is all about health-care entitlements. And I mean *all*...

Read it all, and view three SHOCKING charts: <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/272407/missing-debt-yuval-levin>

Gang of Six plan: A \$3.1 tril tax hike

Investor's Business Daily editorial, 21 July 2011

...But what the gang conveniently leaves out is that the CBO's forecast has \$4.6 trillion in tax hikes already baked into it. That's because the CBO baseline assumes all the Bush tax cuts get repealed, that every other temporary tax cut is left to expire, and that the alternative minimum tax continues to entrap millions more middle-class families each year. Once you take that into account, the \$1.5 trillion in "tax relief" turns instead into a \$3.1 trillion tax increase over the next decade. (It's anyone's guess where the gang got its \$1 trillion tax hike figure.)

The plan also boasts an "immediate" down payment of \$500 billion in deficit reduction. But there's nothing immediate about it at all. These savings come mainly from a three-year cap on discretionary spending — never mind that such spending caps haven't ever worked in the past — as well as a change in the official inflation index that would cut annual Social Security benefit increases and impose a hidden tax on families by lowering the annual inflation adjustment to tax brackets.

The long-term plan doesn't appear any better. The \$2.6 trillion in spending cuts over 10 years might sound like a lot, but it amounts to a mere 5% of projected federal spending. And even calling it a "cut" is a misnomer, since federal spending would continue to climb over those years, just at a very slightly slower rate...

More: <http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article/578924/201107201854/Gang-Of-Six-Plan-DC-At-Its-Worst.htm>

An Intransigent President

by *George Neumayr, 21 July 2011*

...Obama considers it very heroic that he is even contemplating unspecified spending cuts and expects Republicans to make a similar "sacrifice" and swallow tax increases. This line of negotiation is a self-serving diversionary sham given that the crisis is due wholly to overspending. He is simply using a crisis that he compounded through trillions of dollars in heedless expenditures to push an ideological agenda extraneous to the issue under discussion.

An honest media would expose this gambit as raw exploitation of a self-generated crisis. But, instead, it treats his euphemistic calls for tax hikes—he wants any deal to include a "revenue component"—as the epitome of reasonableness, and has assisted him in turning the discussion into a referendum on Republican flexibility.

Obama is, in effect, asking overtaxed Americans for yet another bailout, a bailout that will allow him to resume the very deficit spending that catapulted the country into this crisis in the first place. Republicans have properly pointed out that tax increases will only make a bad economy worse. But the more fundamental argument against what Obama proposes is that it is unjust: Why should the American people have to pay more taxes for Washington's habitual mistakes?...

More: <http://spectator.org/archives/2011/07/21/an-intransigent-president>

Media mogul charged with first-degree Murdoch

by *Ann Coulter, 20 July 2011*

...In fact, it's quite easy to believe Murdoch was unaware of what *News of the World* reporters were doing—particularly considering the striking absence of any evidence to the contrary. Murdoch is an American who owns television networks, satellite operations and newspapers all over the world. As he said in his testimony this week, News Corp. has 53,000 employees and, until its recent demise, News of the World amounted to a grand total of 1 percent of News Corp.'s operations.

Why wasn't Les Moonves responsible for CBS anchor Dan Rather trying to throw the 2004 presidential election with phony National Guard documents one month before the election? Moonves was president, CEO and director of CBS, a company with half as many employees as News Corp. And his rogue employee constituted a much bigger part of CBS' business than News of the World did of the Murdoch empire.

And yet no one asked if Moonves was aware that his network was about to accuse a sitting president of shirking his National Guard duty. Moonves wasn't dragged before multiple congressional panels. Nor was MSNBC tracking his every bowel movement on live TV. No one remembers the biggest media scandal of the last 30 years as "The Les Moonves Scandal."

What about all the illegally obtained information regularly printed in the *Times*? Was Pinch Sulzberger unaware his newspaper was publishing classified government documents illegally obtained by Julian Assange? Did he know that in 2006 the *Times* published illegally leaked classified documents concerning a government program following terrorists' financial transactions; that in 2005 it revealed illegally obtained information about a top-secret government program tracking phone calls connected to numbers found in Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's cell phone; and, that, in 1997, the paper published an illegally obtained phone call between Newt Gingrich and Republican leaders?...

Read it all: <http://www.anncoulter.com/columns/2011-07-20.html>

If you read nothing else this week, read this. It is aggressive, it is right on target, and it is inspiring.

2012: The End of the World As We Know It

by *Peter Ferrara, 20 July 2011*

Like a replicating amoeba, America is pulling apart into two separate cultures. One is strongly committed to the birth of an even more robust, pro-growth, entrepreneurial capitalism. The other thinks Che Guevara and Karl Marx had important social insights relevant to America today, and wants to follow the path of Juan Peron 's Argentina, if not Hugo Chavez 's Venezuela. This is the stark choice facing the American people in 2012.

This is also why the vast majority of the American heartland feels more cultural affinity with the people of New Zealand and Australia than with the people of San Francisco and Seattle, at least as reflected by the majority of those two benighted cities. But the replicating amoeba analogy is not apt, because amoebas split into two equal new entities. What the American people are about to demonstrate in 2012 is that the heartland's vision of a booming economy restoring America's traditional world-leading prosperity and superpower might is shared by far more citizens than you might think, and that the long outdated socialist vision of the "progressive" American Left, for whom that traditional American prosperity and superpower status is a moral embarrassment, is fading into oblivion.

These separating cultures are reflected in the American media. Committed "progressives" can remain safely untouched by reality in the party-controlled cocoon of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, CNN, and the three copycat networks. There America faces no debt crisis, taxes are lower than they have been in decades, the "rich" pay no taxes, life on the planet faces extinction due to global warming unless we repent for the industrial revolution, and there are no foreign threats to our national security.

To the heartland, those media institutions seem like a foreign press without even the cultural competence to report on America accurately. That is why these media institutions are all veering into bankruptcy. **These media can shelter their audiences from knowledge of reality, but not the consequences of it...**

Continue: <http://spectator.org/archives/2011/07/20/2012-the-end-of-the-world-as-w#>

Explaining Obama's tax-hike obsession

by James Pethokoukis, 20 July 2011

...Obama's tax obsession becomes understandable when you realize the long game he's playing: Big Taxes to fund Big Government. Decade after decade. See, it's an almost universal belief among left-of-center journalists, economists, policymakers and politicians that Americans must pay higher taxes in coming years to cover the medical expenses of its aging population—not to mention all sorts of brand new social spending and green "investment." Dramatically higher taxes. On everybody. And if we have a debt crisis, maybe those tax increases come sooner rather than later. And it's not even a secret, really...

...Three liberal think tanks recently devised budgets to put the U.S. government on a sustainable fiscal path through 2035. Their plans, collectively, called for Washington to collect an average of 23.6 percent of GDP vs. the post-World War II average of 18.5 percent. To put that in further perspective, the highest level of tax revenue that Uncle Sam has ever taken is 20.9 percent in 1944.

And to reach such a stratospheric level of taxation, these groups are calling for unprecedented tax hikes via millionaire surtaxes, higher taxes on alcohol and tobacco, securities transaction taxes, higher taxes on capital gains, higher taxes on corporations, higher death taxes, carbon taxes, and gasoline taxes. None of which, supposedly, would hurt economic growth. Even worse, all those tax hikes would still fail to balance the budget. And when you move past 2035, taxes would almost certainly need to go even higher...

Read the rest: <http://blogs.reuters.com/james-pethokoukis/2011/07/19/explaining-obamas-tax-hike-obsession/>

The Gang of Six disaster: the worst plan so far

by James C. Capretta, 20 July 2011

...But now, along comes the Gang of Six plan, and some Republicans are apparently intrigued by it. They shouldn't be. It's a terrible, terrible plan. It will hand the president a huge strategic victory and deliver nothing that the GOP should be seeking in this fight. It's far, far worse than anything we have seen thus far, and certainly much worse than the McConnell plan. In a nutshell, the Gang of Six plan would have three parts. ..

...In short, the Gang of Six has essentially offered a plan in which Republicans would hand over control of the budget process to Democratic senators and hope for the best. Enough said.

Republicans need to quickly get their bearings and figure out how they want to play the endgame. At this stage, any version of a "grand bargain" will play completely into the president's hands. It will lead to a massive tax increase, with nothing meaningful on entitlement reform to show for it. The president would get a strategic victory, having forced Republicans to vote for a tax increase without giving up anything real on the spending side. And the conservative coalition would be at war with itself. So drop the idea of a grand bargain...

...What conservatives should be doing is seizing the initiative in the House. They should move immediately to pass a small debt-limit increase, on the order of \$500 billion, coupled with a reasonable set of spending cuts, including caps on discretionary spending. They should then send that to the Senate as the starting point for discussions. Doing this now would increase Speaker Boehner's leverage immensely, as he would become the only person in the room who had shown by his actions that he doesn't want a default. Moreover, at this late stage, there's a very real chance it would become the vehicle for getting past August 2...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/272311/gang-six-disaster-worst-plan-so-far-james-c-capretta>

Conventional wisdom frames a faulty storyline to suit Obama on debt

by Peter Wehner, 19 July 2011

...Most of the commentators framing this debate are acting on liberal precepts. They accept, in the main, Obama's view of the world. And so they believe his negotiating position is fairly reasonable while the Republican approach is utterly irresponsible. What makes this whole thing somewhat amusing is people like Schieffer are so blind to their biases they don't consider themselves anything other than objective. And so the storyline of this debate is that Obama has offered compromises and Republicans have been obstinate.

Let me offer another storyline for consideration: During an unprecedented two-year spending binge, the Republican Party has offered a concrete plan to raise the debt ceiling without raising taxes. But Barack Obama, a man of the left, has stubbornly insisted that taxes be raised — not because they are economically helpful but because higher taxes are part of the liberal catechism.

The mainstream media won't accept this narrative, of course—but the public might be more open to it than most people—including some Republicans—might think.

More: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/07/19/conventional-wisdom-frames-a-faulty-storyline-to-suit-obama-on-debt/>

This clear explanation was posted the day before the House passed the bill.

Understanding Cut, Cap, and Balance

by Keith B. Hennessey, 18 July 2011

<http://keithhennessey.com/2011/07/18/understanding-cut-cap-and-balance/>

House GOP passes 'Cut, Cap and Balance' plan; trims spending by \$6 trillion

Associated Press, 19 July 2011

Defying a veto threat, the Republican-controlled House voted Tuesday night to slice federal spending by \$6 trillion and require a constitutional balanced budget amendment to be sent to the states in exchange for averting a threatened Aug. 2 government default. The 234-190 vote marked the power of deeply conservative first-term Republicans, and it stood in contrast to rising support at the White House and in the Senate for a late stab at bipartisanship to solve the nation's looming debt crisis...

More: <http://biggovernment.com/publius/2011/07/19/house-gop-passes-cut-cap-and-balance-plan-trims-spending-by-6-trillion/>

DeMint calls out McConnell-Reid debt plan

Heritage Foundation, 19 July 2011

Sen. Jim DeMint (R-SC) is no stranger to fights with party leadership. And he's not holding back in his criticism of the so-called "Plan B" that's being developed by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV). "It seems to be a cover-up," DeMint said this afternoon in an exclusive interview with Heritage. "It's like leaving the door to the federal vault open and looking the other way and saying we had nothing to do with the robbery."

Watch: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjN3XQC3JmY&feature=player_embedded

Mr. Geraghty points to polling data showing that the President is actually losing BOTH, at the present time.

Obama winning or tying the debt-ceiling fight, losing 2012 battle?

by Jim Geraghty, 19 July 2011

<http://www.nationalreview.com/campaign-spot/272174/obama-winning-or-tying-debt-ceiling-fight-losing-2012-battle>

News of the World vs. WikiLeaks

Only one placed at risk 'the lives of countless innocent individuals.'

by Bret Stephens, 19 July 2011

...Seen in this light, the damage caused by WikiLeaks almost certainly exceeded what was done by *News of the World*, precisely because Mr. Assange and his media enablers were targeting bigger—if often more vulnerable—game. The Obama administration went so far as to insist last year that WikiLeaks "[placed] at risk the lives of countless innocent individuals—from journalists to human rights activists to soldiers." Shouldn't there be some accountability, or at least soul-searching, about this, too?

Don't count on it: It would require too much introspection among people whose primary emotional mode is furious, and perpetual, self-righteousness. As for *News of the World*, the media has alighted on one of its convenient little narratives...

Read the rest: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303795304576453722472758028.html>

SEIU dragged in bogus witness to smear Gladney

by Jim Hoft, 13 July 2011

<http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2011/07/breaking-on-gladney-trial-seiu-thugs-dragged-in-witness-to-testify-who-was-not-at-the-scene-of-crime/>

Commencement address at Eureka College

by Ronald Reagan, 9 June 1957

...It was some time later, under the guise of a jurisdictional strike involving a dispute between two unions, that we saw war come to Hollywood. Suddenly there were 5,000 tin-hatted, club-carrying pickets outside the studio gates. We saw some of our people caught by these hired henchmen; we saw them open car doors and put their arms across them and break them until they hung straight down the side of the car, and then these tin-hatted men would send our people on into the studio. We saw our so-called glamour girls, who certainly had to be conscious of what a scar on the face or a broken nose could mean careerwise, going through those picket lines day after day without complaint. Nor did they falter when they found the bus which they used for transportation to and from work in flames from a bomb that had been thrown into it just before their arrival. Two blocks from the studio everyone would get down on hands and knees on the floor to avoid the bricks and stones coming through the windows. And the 5,000 pickets out there in their tin hats weren't even motion picture workers. They were maritime workers from the water-front—members of Mr. Harry Bridges' union.

We won our fight in Hollywood, cleared them out after seven long months in which even homes were broken, months in which many of us carried arms that were granted us by the police, and in which policemen lived in our homes, guarding our children at night. And what of the quiet film technician who had left our town before the fighting started? Well, in 1951 he turned up on the Monterey Peninsula where he was involved in a union price-fixing conspiracy. Two years ago he appeared on the New York waterfront where he was Harry Bridges' right hand man...

...Remember that every government service, every offer of government financed security, is paid for in the loss of personal freedom...

...This democracy of ours which sometimes we've treated so lightly, is more than ever a comfortable cloak, so let us not tear it asunder, for no man knows once it is destroyed where or when he will find its protective warmth again.

Read it all: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/reagan-eureka/>

NOTE: There are a few instances of confusing punctuation in the first fifth of the speech, and unfortunately they've been replicated in every full version currently on the Web. I may post a corrected edition someday soon. But anyway, it's still an inspiring and interesting speech. —Don John

Dissembler in Chief

by Jeffrey H. Anderson, 17 July 2011 (July 25 issue)

...To be responsible, a leader should express ideas to the American people in clear and informative language. Yet the deficit debate has been marked by Obama's fondness for referring to "revenues" (taxes), "investments" (spending), the need to "reduce spending in the tax code" (increase taxes), and the importance of "further improving Medicare" (cutting Medicare) by further empowering the Independent Payment Advisory Board, whose cuts—at least under current law—would go to fund Obamacare, not cut the deficit.

He has misled people and incited envy by repeatedly suggesting that wealthier Americans don't pay their fair share of taxes. Yet Congressional Budget Office (CBO) figures show that if the citizenry is divided into quintiles by income,

the top two quintiles pay 99 percent of all federal income taxes, and the top 1 percent pays 40 percent. Nor is this merely reflective of disparities in income: The top two quintiles make three times as much money as the bottom three quintiles but pay 75 times as much in income taxes...

...He has yet to submit a single debt ceiling proposal to Congress for a vote. Likewise, he has yet to submit a budget to Congress that would cut federal spending by so much as \$1. He did submit a budget (defeated in the Senate 97 to 0) earlier this year that he described as reducing deficits by "roughly \$1 trillion." But the CBO scored it and said it would *increase* deficits by \$2.8 trillion—and that's even compared to current law, which would already lead to \$6.7 trillion in new deficits...

...As for Obama's "balanced approach," according to White House figures, the highest percentage of the gross domestic product that Americans have ever paid in taxes is 20.9 percent, at the height of World War II. Obama's budget calls for spending an average of 24 percent over ten years—a tally that, pre-Obama, we last hit during that same war. So Obama's idea of a "balanced approach" involves spending at the highest rate since World War II and taxing at the highest rate in American history...

More: http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/dissembler-chief_576913.html

Presidential flummery and questions left unasked

by Hugh Hewitt, 18 July 2011

...Finally from a member of the increasingly supine White House press corps came a question that demanded of the president specificity as to his alleged willingness to "upset his base."

Tapper asked the president on Friday to "tell us one structural reform that you are willing to make to one of these entitlement programs that would have a major impact on the deficit?"

The president spoke a long time in response but provided no such specificity about even one such reform, revealing again that the would-be Emperor of the Big Deal has no plan beyond a political operation to assign blame for any unpleasant consequences of a collision with the existing debt ceiling...

...The few honest brokers like Tapper get a question a month, which is buried under an avalanche of asides and self-referential quips about AARP cards and the president's wealth.

The key questions are what federal expenditures does the president want to cut and by how much, and what taxes does he seek to raise, by how much, and what revenue would those hikes generate? Search for any article that begins with those facts and you will have found the rarest of Manhattan-Beltway media elite products, an unspun account of the president's "plan."

There is no such plan, of course, any more than there is a budget from the Democrat-controlled Senate. This massive abdication of responsibility, of basic seriousness, goes unreported because it does not reflect well on President Obama and the White House press corps knows that access depends on not embarrassing the boss...

More: <http://washingtosexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/07/presidential-flummery-and-questions-left-unasked>

Labor's new strategy: Intimidation for dummies

Pressure manual advocates bullying of employers and their families.

by F. Vincent Vernuccio, 16 July 2011

In the past decade, unions have become increasingly desperate to obtain new dues-paying members. An example of how desperate can be found in a 70-plus-page intimidation manual from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which only recently came to light in a pending court case.

The new union tactic is to use pressure on corporate boardrooms as a means of organizing entire companies nationwide rather than recruiting workers on a site-by-site basis; in short, to organize employers rather than employees. To create this pressure, unions attempt to push businesses to the edge of bankruptcy, with little regard for the welfare of employer and employee. They attempt to strong-arm businesses into agreeing to take away the secret ballot for employees in union-organizing elections via card check. They also try to force employers to restrict their own speech on union issues so that workers will not get both sides of the story on unionization. Among the SEIU's demands is that employers agree to bargain only with it, to the exclusion of all other unions, regardless of what workers want.

SEIU is in federal court defending itself against charges of racketeering and extortion filed by one of its unionizing targets, the catering company Sodexo Inc. Sodexo's court discovery recently revealed an SEIU "Contract Campaign Manual" on "Pressuring the Employer." Union pressure is nothing new, but what SEIU recommends is not limited to organizing drives and strikes. Rather, the pressure takes the form of a so-called corporate campaign, whereby the union

allies itself with outside third parties to raise intimidation to a new level.

Read on: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/jul/15/labors-new-strategy-intimidation-for-dummies/#start>

How many lawmakers does it take to...

by Jeff Jacoby, 17 July 2011

...The use of efficiency mandates to snuff out the standard light bulb was an exercise of unadulterated crony capitalism. It came about after big bulb manufacturers, frustrated by their customers' refusal to switch from cheap throwaway incandescents to the far more profitable compact fluorescents touted by greens, decided to play hardball.

"So some years ago," the *New York Times Magazine* noted last month, "Philips [Electronics] formed a coalition with environmental groups, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, to push for higher standards. 'We felt that we needed to ... show that the best-known lighting technology, the incandescent light bulb, is at the end of its lifetime,' says Harry Verhaar, the company's head of strategic sustainability initiatives."

Other corporations joined the plot, lobbying Congress to croak a product Americans overwhelmingly like and compel them to buy the more expensive substitute the industry was eager to sell them. The entire scheme, a lobbyist for the National Electrical Manufacturers Association testified candidly in 2007, was "at the industry's initiative." Unable to convince consumers to voluntarily abandon Edison's light bulb, Big Business got the government to force the issue...

More: http://articles.boston.com/2011-07-17/bostonglobe/29784800_1_incandescent-light-60-and-40-watt-bulbs-halogen

Five falsehoods of the debt debate

by Daniel J. Flynn, 18 July 2011

<http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=44903>

A fling with the Welfare State

From the best of intentions to bankruptcy and recriminations.

by Noemie Emery, 17 July 2011 (July 25 issue)

The intentions of Democrats are only the best. They want all of the old to have lavish retirements, all of the young to have scholarships, verse-penning cowboys to have festivals funded by government, and everyone to have access to all the best health care, at no cost to himself. In the face of a huge wave of debt swamping all western nations, this is the core of their argument: They want a fair society, and their critics do not; they want to help, and their opponents like to see people suffer; they want a world filled with love and caring, and their opponents want one of callous indifference, in which the helpless must fend for themselves. ("We must reject both extremes, those who say we shouldn't help the old and the sick and those who say that we should," quips the *New Yorker's* Hendrik Hertzberg.) But in fact, everyone thinks that we "should" do this; the problem, in the face of the debt crisis, is finding a way that we can. It is about the "can" part that the left is now in denial: daintily picking its way through canaries six deep on the floor of the coal mine, and conflating a "good" with a "right."

Ever since Franklin D. Roosevelt linked "freedom from want" to "freedom of speech" and "freedom of worship," the left has been talking of everything that it thinks would be nice to have in terms of an utter and absolute right...

More: http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/fling-welfare-state_576909.html

What the Debt Limit battle is all about

by Michael Barone, 18 July 2011

It's hard to keep up with all the arguments and proposals in the debt limit struggle. But what's at stake is fundamental.

The bedrock issue is whether we should have a larger and more expensive federal government. Over many years, federal spending has averaged about 20 percent of gross domestic product. The Obama Democrats have raised that to 24 or 25 percent. And the president's budget projects that that percentage will stay the same or increase far into the future. In the process, the national debt as a percentage of gross domestic product has increased from a manageable 40 percent in 2008 to 62 percent this year and an estimated 72 percent in 2012. And it's headed to the 90 percent level that

economists Kenneth Rogoff and Carmen Reinhart have identified as the danger point, when governments face fiscal collapse...

More: <http://www.creators.com/conservative/michael-barone/what-the-debt-limit-battle-is-all-about.html>

Get ready for a 70% marginal tax rate

Some argue the U.S. economy can bear higher pre-Reagan tax rates. But those rates applied to a much smaller fraction of taxpayers than what we're headed for without spending cuts..

by Michael J. Boskin, 18 July 2011

President Obama has been using the debt-ceiling debate and bipartisan calls for deficit reduction to demand higher taxes. With unemployment stuck at 9.2% and a vigorous economic "recovery" appearing more and more elusive, his timing couldn't be worse.

Two problems arise when marginal tax rates are raised. First, as college students learn in Econ 101, higher marginal rates cause real economic harm...

Continue: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304911104576443893352153776.html>

Blaming it all on the Tea Party

by James W. Ceaser and John York, 16 July 2011

...Despite the accident of its name, the Tea Party is not a political party, but a political movement, according to Peter Berkowitz, "one of the most spectacular grass roots political movements in American history." A feature of such movements in American politics, whether on the Left or the Right, is that they are unformed and inchoate. Their boundaries—who is in and who is out—remain ill-defined, as there is no authoritative organizational structure that exercises control of the "members." It's therefore almost always possible for interested investigators to find, somewhere, what they are looking for. So the Tea Party movement has had its share of ideologues (Ron Paul) and flakes (Christine O'Donnell)—although the same might be said, respectively, of the Democratic Party's Sheila Jackson Lee and Anthony Weiner...

Read it all: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/07/15/blaming-it-all-on-the-tea-party/>

Panic at the White House?

Gloomy Goldman Sachs sees high unemployment, possible recession

by James Pethokoukis, 16 July 2011

Last night in a new report, Democrat-friendly Goldman Sachs dropped an economic bomb on President Obama's chances for reelection...

More: <http://blogs.reuters.com/james-pethokoukis/2011/07/16/panic-at-the-white-house-gloomy-goldman-sachs-sees-high-unemployment-possible-recession/>

The 'BBC Left' is using hacking to get revenge

Left-wing politicians and broadcasters do not want to debate ideas but they do want to remove their opponents.

by Janet Daley, 16 July 2011

...This has gone way, way beyond phone hacking. It is now about payback. Gordon Brown's surreal effusion in the House last week may have made it embarrassingly explicit, but the odour of vengeance has been detectable from the start: not just from politicians who have suffered the disfavour of Murdoch's papers, or the trade unions (and their political allies) who have never forgiven him for Wapping, but from that great edifice of self-regarding, mutually affirming soft-Left orthodoxy which determines the limits of acceptable public discourse—of which the BBC is the indispensable spiritual centre. The influence of the BBC as a monitor of what is politically admissible is almost incalculable: the entire Tory modernisation project was effectively made necessary (as its chief architects often admit) by the need to get a fair hearing on its news coverage.

But the power of the BBC—and its historical hatred for the "Murdoch empire"—is just one aspect of a larger battle which has now leapt across the Atlantic, where the target is not newspapers which can be legitimately charged with

having committed unconscionable acts, but Fox News. Its offence is to have filled such a huge gap in the market for television news and current affairs that it has swept all before it. Its raucous Right-wing orientation is, in fact, matched by an equally raucous Left-wing equivalent in the cable news channel MSNBC, so why should anyone who believes in open and free debate among news providers object to this?

The problem is that Fox's audience share is enormous, by far the largest of any cable news channel, whereas MSNBC's is tiny, the smallest of any cable news channel. People are voting with their remotes for the kind of opinions they want to hear and the result is infuriating for the Left-liberal axis—and particularly for the Obama White House, which has made no secret of its desire to shut Fox News down...

Read on:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/janetdaley/8642161/Phone-hacking-The-BBC-Left-is-using-hacking-to-get-revenge.html>

Don't let the response to *News of the World* go too far

Washington Post editorial, 16 July 2011

The press scandal that has convulsed the British political establishment this month is first of all about the criminal acts of a tabloid newspaper, *News of the World*, which hacked the private telephones of celebrities, politicians and — most revoltingly — crime victims, including a teenage girl who had been murdered. Though contemptible, such excesses by tabloids are hardly new, in Britain or other countries. But because *News of the World* forms part of the multinational media empire headed by Rupert Murdoch, the affair has touched off a larger backlash against what is regarded as the excessive power of his News Corp., particularly in Britain...

...It would be easy, however, for the reaction to the scandal to go too far, driven by the long-standing antipathy among the media and political left for Mr. Murdoch and his rightward-leaning organs. Calls by some Democrats in Congress for the Justice Department to investigate News Corp. for violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, for example, are premature at best; Britain has good bribery laws and is perfectly capable of following up allegations of payoffs to its police or others.

Similarly, suggestions that Britain should replace the newspaper industry's self-regulatory body with official regulation are misguided and dangerous. Britain's biggest media problem is not too much freedom but too little: Onerous libel laws deter critical reporting about public figures and arguably drive journalists to measures such as phone hacking to obtain lawsuit-proof stories. That's obviously no excuse for the inexcusable. But once they are done flaying Mr. Murdoch, the country's political leaders would do well to address that larger issue too.

More: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/dont-let-the-response-to-news-of-the-world-go-too-far/2011/07/15/gIQAtdBnII_story.html

The expanding catalogue of Obamacare fables

by *Michelle Malkin*, 15 July 2011

...Expanding government control over health care means never having to say you're sorry for impugning private insurers. Democrats have dragged every available human shield into the contentious debate over Obama's federal takeover of health care. Personal anecdotes of dying family members battling evil insurance execs deflect attention from the cost, constitutionality and liberty-curtailling consequences of the law. The president's Dunham sham-ecdote is just the latest entry in an ever-expanding catalogue of Obamacare fables...

The truth about Otto Radatz, Robin Beaton, John Brodniak, Marcelas Owens, Natoma Canfield—and Obama's own mother, Stanley Ann Dunham: <http://michellemalkin.com/2011/07/15/the-expanding-catalogue-of-obamacare-fables/>

Obama bailout chief changes story:

Maybe I did say, 'I did this all for the unions'

by *Byron York*, 15 July 2011

Ron Bloom, the top White House auto bailout official who has flatly denied accusations that he once said his work on the bailouts was "all for the unions," now admits that he might, in fact, have said those words. Just a few weeks ago, in sworn testimony before the House Committee on Government Oversight and Reform, Bloom said denied four times that he said "I did this all for the unions" at a July 2009 party attended by most of the bailout team. But in a new letter to committee chairman Rep. Darrell Issa, Bloom writes that he does not recall making the comment, but "given the amount of time that has passed since the dinner in July 2009 and the fact that others may have a different recollection, I cannot say with absolute certainty that I did not make the alleged comment."

Here is the background...

Read on: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/blogs/beltway-confidential/2011/07/obama-bailout-chief-changes-story-maybe-i-did-say-i-did-all-union>

The Mideast is about to have a financial crisis of its very own. And it could be a massive one.

Caution: Storm Approaching

by Caroline Glick, 15 July 2011

...Since Mubarak was overthrown in February, Egypt's foreign currency reserves have plummeted from \$36bn to \$25-28bn. Last month Tantawi rejected an IMF loan offer of \$3bn, claiming he would not accept any conditions on the loans. Instead he accepted \$4bn in loans from Saudi Arabia and another \$2.34bn from the Gulf States.

And still, Egypt's foreign currency reserves are being washed away. As Goldman explained, the problem is capital flight. Due in no small part to the protesters in Tahrir Square calling for the arrest of all those who did business with the former regime, Egypt's wealthy and foreign investors are taking their money out of the country.

At the Arab Banking Summit in Rome last month, Jordan's Finance Minister Mohammed Abu Hammour warned, "There is capital flight and \$500 million a week are leaving the Arab world."

According to Goldman, "Although Hammour did not mention countries in his talk... most of the capital flight is coming from Egypt, and at an annual rate roughly equal to Egypt's remaining reserves." What this means is that in a few short months, Egypt will be unable to pay for its imports. And consequently, it will be unable to feed its people.

Egypt is far from alone. Take Syria. There too, capital is fleeing the country as the government rushes to quell the mass anti-regime protests. Just as Egyptian and Tunisian protesters hoped that a new regime would bring them more freedom, so the mass protests sweeping Syria owe in part to politics. But like the situation in Egypt and Tunisia, Syria's economic woes are dictating much of what is happening on the ground and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future...

More: <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Article.aspx?id=229458>

The MSM's 'Media Matters' blackout

While they scramble to bury Rupert Murdoch, they ignore the blatant violation of tax-exempt status

by George Soros' pet outfit.

by Seton Motley, 13 July 2011

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/the-msms-media-matters-blackout/?singlepage=true>

No bargaining with Barack Obluffer

by Mark Steyn, 16 July 2011

...Meanwhile, the World's Greatest Orator bemoans the "intransigence" of Republicans. OK, what's your plan? Give us one actual program you're willing to cut, right now. Oh, don't worry, says Barack Obluffer. To demonstrate how serious he is, he's offered to put on the table for fiscal year 2012 spending cuts of (stand well back now) \$2 billion. That would be a lot in, say, Iceland or even Australia. Once upon a time it would have been a lot even in Washington. But today \$2 billion is what the Brokest Nation in History borrows every 10 hours. In other words, in less time than he spends sitting across the table negotiating his \$2 billion cut, he's already borrowed it all back. A negotiation with Obama is literally not worth the time.

In order to fund Obamacare and the other opiates of Big Government dependency, the feds need to take 25 percent of GDP, now and forever: The "new normal." It can't be done. Look around you. The new normal's already here: flat-line jobs market, negative equity, the dead parrot economy. What comes next will be profoundly abnormal. His name was Obamandias, King of Kings. Look upon his works, ye mighty, and despair. Round the decay of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare, the lone and level sands stretch far away.

Do they still teach Shelley in high school? Or just the "diversity manual" about "social justice" the Omaha Public Schools paid for with \$130,000 of "stimulus" funding?

The full column: <http://www.ocregister.com/opinion/government-308436-debt-year.html>

Rep. West: Obama 'needs to admit' his economic policies 'have failed' America

Freeing Al Qaeda?

DOJ Moves to Cut Prison Term for Muslim Brotherhood Terrorist

by Frank Gaffney 15 July 2011

Just when you thought it was not possible for the Holder Justice Department to become any more hostile to the national and homeland security interests of the American people, along comes yet another travesty. This one threatens both, as it apparently would involve turning loose in America a convicted terrorist known to be a top Muslim Brotherhood (MB or *Ikhwan* in Arabic) operative and al Qaeda financier: Abdurahman Alamoudi...

More: <http://bigpeace.com/fgaffney/2011/07/15/freeing-al-qaeda-2/>

If Obama stiff-arms us, we'll go to the people

by Senator Mitch McConnell, 15 July 2011

...With the government expected to spend \$1.4 trillion more than it takes in this year alone, the White House presented us with two bad options: a so-called "big deal" that, even if you accept its numbers, would have only lowered our debt from \$26 trillion to about \$22 trillion over the next 10 years; and a smaller deal that would cut \$2 billion next year out of a \$3.7 trillion budget.

Another catch: Both offers came with massive tax hikes — which we know, and the president has acknowledged, will hurt job growth.

When Republicans refused both proposals, the president responded that he only wants to tax "the rich," but, again, the facts are clear. Raising taxes on the "top 2%" would not only create yet another roadblock for small businesses to create jobs, it would come up about \$10 trillion short on our bills.

So the president can claim he only wants to tax jet owners, but Washington's deficits and debt are so big that pretty soon he'll have no choice but to sock it to families flying in coach as well. He can claim he is willing to make concessions, but Republicans will not deceive Americans by calling what he refers to as concessions anything other than a preservation of the status quo...

More: http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2011-07-15-mcconnell-obama-debt-ceiling-negotiations_n.htm

Muslim Inbreeding: Impacts on intelligence, sanity, health and society

by Nicolai Sennels, 10 Aug 2010

Massive inbreeding within the Muslim culture during the last 1.400 years may have done catastrophic damage to their gene pool. The consequences of intermarriage between first cousins often have serious impact on the intelligence, sanity, and health of their offspring, and on their surroundings...

...Muslim culture still practices inbreeding and has been doing so for longer than any Egyptian dynasty. This practice also predates the world's oldest monarchy (the Danish) by 300 years.

A rough estimate shows that close to half of all Muslims in the world are inbred: In Pakistan, 70 percent of all marriages are between first cousins (so-called "consanguinity") and in Turkey the amount is between 25-30 percent (*Jyllands-Posten*, 27/2/2009 "More stillbirths among immigrants"). Statistical research on Arabic countries shows that up to 34 percent of all marriages in Algiers are consanguine (blood-related), 46 percent in Bahrain, 33 percent in Egypt, 80 percent in Nubia (southern Egypt), 60 percent in Iraq, 64 percent in Jordan, 64 percent in Kuwait, 42 percent in Lebanon, 48 percent in Libya, 47 percent in Mauritania, 54 percent in Qatar, 67 percent in Saudi Arabia, 63 percent in Sudan, 40 percent in Syria, 39 percent in Tunisia, 54 percent in the United Arab Emirates and 45 percent in Yemen (*Reproductive Health Journal*, 2009 "Consanguinity and reproductive health among Arabs"). The number of blood-related marriages is lower among Muslim immigrants living in the West. Among Pakistanis living in Denmark the amount is down to 40 percent and 15 percent among Turkish immigrants (*Jyllands-Posten*, 27/2 2009 "More stillbirths among immigrants").

More than half of Pakistani immigrants living in Britain are intermarried: "The research, conducted by the BBC and broadcast to a shocked nation on Tuesday, found that at least 55% of the community was married to a first cousin. This is thought to be linked to the probability that a British Pakistani family is at least 13 times more likely than the general population to have children with recessive genetic disorders." (*Times of India*, 17/11 2005 "Ban UK Pakistanis

from marrying cousins”). The lower percentages might be because it is difficult to get the chosen family member into the country, or because health education is better in the West...

Who'd have thought? <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2010/08/islam-and-inbreeding.html>

Paul Ryan on the Debt Negotiations and Medicare

The Hugh Hewitt Show, 14 July 2011

PR: ...Liberals want big government, and they don't want to cut spending. And there are a lot of tantrums surrounding those facts. And Harry Reid just wants us to raise the debt limit. And he doesn't like the idea of curtailing spending. Just so you know where we are today, or no, more importantly, why we are where we are today, is because of the spending he blew out of Congress over the past two years. And there's all this talk about getting balance in this package, meaning raising taxes. Let's never forget the fact that the first two years of the President's presidency, they passed all these tax increases that kick in, in 2013.

So people don't know this necessarily, yet, but the U.S. economy is going to get hit starting in 2013, you know, a little more than a year from now, with about a \$1.5 trillion dollar tax increase. And it's a tax increase that uniquely hits job creators, small businesses. More than half our jobs come from successful small businesses. They file as individuals. They're the ones that bear the brunt of this, and we wonder why we're not creating jobs today, because we're going to have a huge tax increase that's already going to hit these businesses, and they're saying yeah, we spent all this money, now help us raise some more taxes on top of this to pay for it. And we're just not going to go down that path...

The complete interview: <http://www.hughhewitt.com/blog/g/932aa1d6-ed53-4cce-acb6-629214212cb8>

The Marilyn Monroe Doctrine

There was a time when those who targeted Americans paid a price. That was our policy — and our reputation.

by Clifford D. May, 14 July 2011

...A top American official has now confirmed what only a few analysts — e.g. Michael Ledeen, a scholar at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies — have long alleged: that Iran is not just threatening America — Iran is waging war against America and has been for decades? Iran sent its terrorist proxy, Hezbollah, to slaughter U.S. Marines in Beirut in 1983, collaborated with al-Qaeda to mass-murder Americans at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, facilitated attacks on the American troops who brought down Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and is now again targeting Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan as well.

Why didn't George W. Bush, when he was president, make Iran pay a price for spilling American blood? Why isn't Barack Obama doing so now? I'm guessing that advisers to both counseled against “widening” the conflict...

...And, by the way, the response need not be boots on the ground in Iran. We could go much further than we have to cripple Iran's economy. And imagine if, any time American servicemen in Iraq or Afghanistan were killed by an Iranian-manufactured rocket, roadside bomb, or explosively-formed projectile (designed to penetrate armor), one of the factories where those weapons were being produced was, without fanfare, reduced to rubble. America-haters would yell what was yelled at Marilyn Monroe/Elsie Marina. But they'd get the message that, as a matter of both principle and policy, Americans don't let their enemies get away with killing them...

Read the rest: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/271844/marilyn-monroe-doctrine-clifford-d-may>

Barack Obama's future looks precarious as America faces its most important presidential election since 1980

by Nile Gardiner, 14 July 2011

If his presidency does fall in 2012, which now looks an increasingly strong possibility according to some surveys, President Obama will only have himself to blame. He has spent the best part of the last two and a half years blaming America's economic ills on the Bush administration, and more recently upon the Republican-dominated House of Representatives. But the American people don't seem to be buying it. You can only get so far by trying to shift responsibility to the shoulders of others when you are ultimately in charge of running the country, and have been for 30 months, which is an extremely long time in politics.

Gallup's **stunning poll** today will send a shiver down the spine of the White House, as it looks ahead to November next year. **According to Gallup**, a “Republican Party's candidate for president” currently beats Obama among registered

voters by an eight point margin — 47 percent to 39 percent. Obama trails a generic Republican candidate by an even greater margin **among independent voters** — by 44 percent to 34 percent. In a sister poll **also released today by Gallup**, Americans' satisfaction with their country fell to just 16 percent in July, the lowest level since February 2009. **According to RealClear Politics**, which aggregates several national polls, a mere 29 percent of Americans believe the country is moving in "the right direction."

More: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/nilegardiner/100097071/barack-obama%E2%80%99s-future-looks-precarious-as-america-faces-its-most-important-presidential-election-since-1980/>

The Comedian-In-Chief

by Michael A. Walsh, 14 July 2011

...Then-Sen. Obama had it right back in 2006: "The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. . . Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means that the buck stops here."

That was then, this is now, and politics is still the name of the game. What's going on in Washington isn't a serious conversation about how to halt and *reverse* the ruinous growth of federal spending, but the usual jockeying for position as election season approaches. How else to explain Obama's adamant refusal to put some serious numbers on the table? The administration's talks with the GOP leadership broke down over the weekend largely because the president is only willing to offer—wait for it—a grand total of \$2 billion in real spending cuts in 2012.

That's it—\$2 billion with a "b," out of a projected deficit of more than a trillion dollars. No wonder Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said that no solution to the debt problem is possible as long as Obama is in office.

Yet McConnell isn't much better. With Republicans terrified that they'll be blamed if Grandma doesn't get her Social Security check, he has floated a "last resort," Rube Goldbergian plan. He'd allow Obama to raise the debt ceiling on his own, three times at up to \$900 billion a pop, subject to an all-but-impossible congressional veto—all in the hopes that the public (which opposes raising the debt limit by a 2-to-1 margin) will blame the president.

Time for the Republicans to man up and end this laugh riot. Do they really think the public would blame them if *Obama* directs the Treasury Department not to issue Social Security checks? If *Obama* holds up military pay or executes any of the sky-is-falling scenarios he and Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner have been floating?

Just to be clear: If the debt limit isn't raised, the Treasury can still cover obligations like debt service. The government takes in \$200 billion a month. It can still spend—it just can't spend *as much*. And it's the *Executive Branch* that must decide which checks don't go out.

The GOP needs to hold the line: No tax hikes, no more borrowing to spend on unreformed, unaffordable programs. Americans aren't stupid: They know where the buck stops. And where the jokes need to stop, too...

More: http://www.nypost.com/f/print/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/the_comedian_in_chief_dUjUIGMZt4xcT4awrHrqbN

Are the rich undertaxed?

The Democrats' class-warfare rhetoric is too rich for most Americans.

by Michael G. Franc, 14 July 2011

...Our tax code already ranks among the most "progressive" in the industrialized world. While it's true that the "rich" have been earning a steadily increasing share of all income over the last three decades, they have shouldered a disproportionate share of the overall tax burden. Today the wealthiest 1 percent of American households earn 20 percent of all income — more than twice the share they earned in 1980 and no doubt a class-warfare crime of the first magnitude. But they pay 38 percent of all income taxes, up from the 19 percent they paid in 1980. This, despite Congress's halving top marginal tax rates since the Carter years.

The lower marginal tax rates that have prevailed since Reagan's time have resulted in a lower tax burden on not only rich, but also middle- and lower-income Americans. Back in 1981, the bottom half of wage earners paid 7.45 percent of all taxes; today, their share is barely a third of that (2.7 percent).

None of this, of course, comports with the liberal class-warfare narrative...

Read it all: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/271843/are-rich-undertaxed-michael-g-franc>

The myth of Obama's great temperament

by Jennifer Rubin, 14 July 2011

Who's irresponsible?

by Mona Charen, 15 July 2011

...Obama submitted a proposed budget in February that didn't come close to accounting for the structural increase in spending his health care plan would impose forever on the U.S. economy. The Democrat-dominated Senate voted it down 97-0. Two months later, with much fanfare, the president declared his February budget to be superceded by a new approach to the deficit problem—a highly tendentious and partisan speech. When members of the House Budget Committee asked Douglas Elmendorf, director of the Congressional Budget Office, to evaluate the president's "budget framework," Elmendorf was at a loss: "We don't estimate speeches. We need much more specificity than was provided in that speech for us to do our analysis."

The Republicans, by contrast, passed a budget within three months of retaking a majority in the House. The Ryan budget was hardly a libertarian's dream—it permits federal spending to continue to increase by 2.8 percent per year for 10 years and contemplates permitting government spending to amount to about 20 percent of GDP. But the Obama/Democratic de facto budget will increase spending by 4.7 percent per year, keeping spending as a percentage of GDP at more than 24 percent by 2021. Since tax revenues have averaged about 18 percent of GDP since World War II, Obama's budget, even with dramatic tax increases, ensures fiscal insanity.

Obama's two chosen chairmen of the deficit commission, Democrat Erskine Bowles and Republican Alan Simpson, lauded the Ryan/Republican budget as "a serious, honest, straight-forward approach." The president's budget, they said, "goes nowhere close."...

More: <http://www.creators.com/opinion/mona-charen/who-s-irresponsible.html>

The Intransigent meet the Unserious

Democrats go hardball on tax hikes while Republicans play softball.

by Michael Tanner, 13 July 2011

...Why the insistence on tax hikes? Democrats know that, according to the Congressional Budget Office, tax revenues will return to their historic average of 18 to 19 percent of GDP by the end of the decade. They know this will happen even if the Bush tax cuts are extended and the alternative minimum tax is fixed. The only reason, therefore, for tax increases would be to enable more government spending.

The president is now calling for a "big" deal that would reduce the debt by \$4 trillion over *ten* years, while we'll borrow more than a third of that this year. In fact, over those ten years, we are expected to run up more than \$13 trillion in new debt.

It's also important to remember that the president is not offering \$4 trillion in spending cuts. The deal he has proposed includes more than \$1 trillion in tax hikes. Another \$1 trillion is assumed savings on interest payments. Thus, what is really on the table is barely \$2 trillion in actual spending reductions. What the president is really offering is closer to \$2 in spending reductions for every \$1 in tax hikes, not the 4:1 ratio reported by the media. Moreover, that is over ten years, meaning the cuts would actually be just \$200 billion per year. We will pay more than that this year in interest on what we have already borrowed.

As minimal as these cuts are, they are actually even less than they appear...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/271746/intransigent-meet-unserious-michael-tanner>

Leadership by Default

National Review editorial, 13 July 2011

...Obama is at it again, saying fine things about cutting trillions of spending without making any public disclosure of what specifically he would cut. At the same time he is portraying the Republicans as obstructionists who are threatening Grandma's Social Security checks. In light of all this, Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell is preparing for the worst with a "contingency plan" if the situation remains deadlocked.

The Kentucky Republican has proposed a convoluted scheme whereby the debt ceiling would increase and the president would have to submit specific spending cuts. Congress would have the power to keep the debt ceiling from rising if it amassed a two-thirds majority that found those cuts inadequate. The goal is to keep the government from

hitting the debt ceiling, defaulting on its bonds, or interrupting popular programs on which millions of people rely, while also holding the president accountable for his fiscal choices.

That's a highly optimistic gloss on it, anyway. In reality, everyone would consider the Republicans partly responsible for an increase in the debt ceiling if they adopt this course; everyone would consider them to have lost their nerve for a fight; everyone would expect the spending cuts not to happen; and everyone would be right. Which is why it does not appear that House Republicans, or even all Senate Republicans, are going to follow this course.

The alternative is for Republicans to take the initiative. They should continue trying to reach a deal with the president. But they should also pass legislation through the House that raises the debt ceiling, cuts spending, and implements reforms. For good measure, they should clarify that if the government ever does run up against the debt limit, bondholders and Social Security recipients will be the first to be paid off...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/271755/leadership-default-editors>

Florida Senator Marco Rubio blasts Barack Obama's demagoguery on the debt ceiling

Hugh Hewitt Show, 12 July 2011

...HH: Do you think the President understands the underlying economics, Senator Rubio, and is just demagoguing it? Or is he fundamentally misinformed about how capitalism works?

MR: I think there are three things going on here. Number one, I think he's a prisoner to extremist elements in his own base who not only, they don't care that the taxes don't solve any problems. They want their pound of flesh. They want to punish somebody, they want class warfare. That's what they believe in. And this is their chance to do it, and they're putting pressure on him to do that. So I think that's his first problem.

His second problem is that I think he's surrounded by a bunch of people who philosophically do not believe fully in the free enterprise system, and in fact, they'd like to see government play a greater role. And they see this downturn in the economy, and crisis such as this, as an opportunity to exert more government involvement in our economy. And that's the second problem.

And his third problem is a level of incompetence. I think the President, quite frankly, is not up to the job. And if you look at every measure of quality of life in America today, unemployment is higher. The debt is higher. The only thing lower is the value of your home. If you look at every measurable economic thing in America today, they are all worse than they were the day he took over. Two and a half years into his presidency, things continue to get worse, not better, and it's because the President is incompetent in his job as president. He is not, he doesn't know what he's doing...

The rest: <http://www.hughhewitt.com/transcripts.aspx?id=0a0c7843-e683-470f-a471-9bb45f246614>

The president's story of his dying mother's battle with an insurance company was (to put it politely) a lie.

Fresh doubt cast on Obama's health care story

by Byron York, 12 July 2011

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/politics/2011/07/fresh-doubt-cast-obamas-health-care-story>

Thankfully, three years after this story was written, Geert Wilders is neither dead nor defeated, but successful.

Why Spinoza was not murdered

by Arthur Legger, March 2008

If you like to think of Holland as the cradle of free speech and the Enlightenment, don't read this:

"Nobody needs permission beforehand to publish by print thoughts or feelings—while taking into consideration every person's responsibility according to the law." (*Article 7, Dutch Constitution*)

Again the ruthless reflex sets in. Because that lies at the core of our Dutch character: the social annihilation of the deviating individual—including a neat political murder, every now and then (we never go after a group, that is not done after our very active partaking in the Holocaust)...

Holland's true history: <http://www.sappho.dk/why-spinoza-was-not-murdered.htm>

On Liberty and Abortion

by Andrew Klavan, 11 July 2011

...For all that, I was for many years in sympathy with *Roe*'s argument: people have a right to privacy and abortion is a private decision. I now find it impossible to continue in that belief. This is painful for me not only because it seems to violate my natural libertarianism but also because a lot of the women I know and love have had abortions and it simply isn't in my heart to condemn them — or indeed anyone — for what I know was a painful, sometimes devastating, decision.

Nonetheless, I've come to see that every single argument in favor of unlimited abortion simply skips over the decisive question: is an unborn child a human being or not? You can't say killing a human being is a private matter...

More: <http://pajamasmedia.com/andrewklavan/2011/07/11/on-liberty-and-abortion/?singlepage=true>

Pot meet kettle (*New York Times* edition)

by Roger Kimball, 10 July 2011

...Joe Nocera's emetic piece is characteristic of the sanctimonious but hypocritical moralizing that debases the *Times* these days. "Say what you like about the *News of the World*," wrote the *London Telegraph*, a competitor, "but their allegations were always backed up with evidence." You can't say the same of the *New York Times*.

More: <http://pajamasmedia.com/rogerkimball/2011/07/10/pot-meet-kettle/?singlepage=true>

The Great Madness of 2004-2010

by Victor Davis Hanson, 9 July 2011

...In this second-stage madness, suddenly mediocrities like Timothy Geithner were deemed messiahs, tax-cheating or not. Tax-delinquents Hilda Solis and Tom Daschle were not quite tax delinquents. Geniuses like Peter Orszag, Larry Summers, Christina Romer, and Austin Goolsbee (as either formal or informal advisors), were going to apply Paul Krugman-like Keynesian borrowing ("stimulus") to save us from the Bush "he did it" meltdown. Money was a construct and need not be paid back — whether at the Federal Reserve or at your own credit card, home mortgage, or tax problem level.

Relief was finally here. You see borrowing was not really printing money but a new sort of math in which the "people" would be saved from Wall Street chicanery by brilliant new stimulatory theories. Borrowing money "created" more money; spending "money" was stimulus that made even more money. Most of the debate centered around the pitifully small size of the new deficits: a three-year plan to print \$5 trillion was deemed conservative or too timid by many of the Obama geniuses. Joe Biden, given his sterling credentials and vast knowledge (re: his call for Bush to rally the people — as FDR supposedly did as president "in 1929" and "on television" no less) would oversee the trillion-dollar borrowing to ensure it was "shovel-ready."

Amid all this, the Pied Piper began to bother a few on the hard left with a new tune: Guantanamo did not close "within the year." Renditions and tribunals were embraced. Predators, under Harold Koh's brilliant legal defenses, killed five times more than Bush had dared, including U.S. citizens. The Patriot Act was now A-OK. Troops should not have left Iraq by March 2008, but rather according to the Bush-Petraeus plan. Escalation was the new plan in Afghanistan. And, of course, bombing started up against Libya and on the sly in Yemen. But now there were no *Harper's* mad op-eds, no anguished exegeses in the *New Yorker*, no Dark Ages have returned glum to be found in the *New York Times*...

More: <http://pajamasmedia.com/victordavishanson/the-great-madness-of-2004-10/?singlepage=true>

Obama's Marxist immersion shows in presser

by Ann Barnhardt, 11 July 2011

In this morning's press conference, Obama let slip a telling expression. To give context to this quote, Obama earlier made multiple mentions of the fact that he was a "best-selling author" and was personally wealthy due to income from "his" books. It would seem that Jack Cashill's work has gotten under the Usurper's skin. Here is Obama clearly paraphrasing Marx...

Very clearly: http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2011/07/obamas_marxist_immersion_shows_in_presser.html

Aside from a strange and unwarranted slap at Margaret Thatcher, this is an outstanding piece.

The multi-layered betrayal of Britain

by Paul Weston, 11 July 2011

...Who would be young in Britain today? Youngsters have been schooled in liberal/progressive ideology from the moment they set foot in kindergarten. Although filled with a wholly misguided sense of self-esteem, they require remedial classes in reading and writing when they go to university (as some 50% now do) and have no conception of what they do *not* know.

They view their historic culture as one of imperialism, oppression and racism. They have no notion of respect, civility, dignity, Christianity, duty, honour, integrity or patriotism. Propagandised all their lives in the Socialist ideologies of moral and cultural relativism and multiculturalism, they are blissfully unaware that everything they believe in can only lead to the loss of everything they presently take for granted.

When they leave university they take with them debts in the tens of thousands of pounds and compete for jobs that pay salaries that can never enable them to buy the immigration-driven grotesquely-priced houses that were once affordable to their parents. They turn to drink and drugs in the moral and spiritual vacuum built for them by the Socialist Left, and stagger around the streets of British cities and towns in a booze-fuelled orgy of tattooed promiscuity and violence that shocks and horrifies the rest of the civilised world.

They do not understand that their own world is rapidly changing. The last fifty years saw a peaceful and relentless rise in prosperity, but that is now over. Where once there were ten workers to every retiree the ratio will soon be only two-to-one. Their future is therefore bankrupt. There will be no pensions when they are old. They may well have to work until they drop, and already there is talk of raising the retirement age to seventy. They are the lost generation, and these poor, deluded, Socialist-brainwashed children do not even know it...

Read it all: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/07/multi-layered-betrayal-of-britain.html#more>

Google's treachery: weaponizing Islamic propaganda

by Pamela Geller, 11 July 2011

Yesterday I posted on the Gaza jihadists using Google earth to target and rocket [Southern Israel here](#). Ralph B sent me the two screen captures below of Google Earth's map of Israel and environs, complete with all their "Global Awareness" options, featuring what can only be labeled Palestinian propaganda enabled by American leftists in the "*give peace Jew-hatred a chance*" mode...

...[Here is the propaganda website](#) spewing "every human has rights" claptrap (not in Islam, they don't)... Whitewashing the "culture" that straps homicide bombs on babies and uses children as human shields and schools to launch rockets.

More: http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/2011/07/googles-treachery-weaponizing-islamic-propaganda.html

A world food crisis?

by S. Fred Singer, 11 July 2011

Forecasting world famines has become a favorite pastime for some: from the Reverend Thomas Malthus and more recently Paul Ehrlich to the Club of Rome and the Paddock brothers in the 1970s—and of course, to Lester Brown, about once every decade. The latest disaster forecast comes to us from climate alarmists who focus on a world food crisis, supposedly as a consequence of global warming (GW). While there may well arise problems about world food, it is more than likely that a global warming—if it does take place—will increase food production rather than lower it...

Continue: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/07/a_world_food_crisis.html

Taxes upon taxes upon . . .

Obama wants \$1 trillion in taxes on top of what he's already signed.

Wall Street Journal editorial, 11 July 2011

...There are numerous other new taxes in the bill, all adding up to some \$438 billion in new revenue over 10 years. But even that is understated because by 2019 the annual revenue increase is nearly \$90 billion, or \$900 billion in the 10 years after that. Yet Mr. Obama wants to add another \$1 trillion in new taxes on top of this.

The economic ironies are also, well, rich. Mr. Obama is now pushing to reduce the payroll tax by two-percentage points for another year to boost the economy, but he's already built in a big increase in that same payroll tax for 2013. So if a payroll tax cut creates jobs this year, why doesn't a payroll tax increase destroy jobs after 2013?

Mr. Obama is also touting spending cuts he's willing to make in entitlements in return for bigger tax increases, yet the spending increases built into ObamaCare aren't even up for discussion in the debt-limit talks...

... We think this was the President's spend-and-tax plan from the very first. Run up spending and debt in the name of stimulus and health-care reform, then count on Wall Street bond holders and the political establishment to browbeat Republicans into paying for it all. He apparently didn't figure on the rise of the tea party, or 1.9% GDP growth and 9.2% unemployment two years after the recession ended.

Last November Republicans won the House and landslide gains in many states in large part because of the deep unpopularity of the stimulus and ObamaCare. Mr. Boehner has a mandate for spending cuts and repealing the Affordable Care Act. If Republicans instead agree to raise taxes in return for future spending cuts that may or may not happen, they will simply be the tax collectors for Mr. Obama's much expanded entitlement society.

More: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303812104576438130028027412.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

Learning from the worst presidents

by Ron Lipsman, 4 July 2011

... Who were our worst presidents? An immediate problem in addressing the question is that in most of the well-known surveys that rank our presidents, the overwhelming majority of the opinions were solicited from leftist historians and political science professors. Thus, biased thinking skews the results. For example, Calvin Coolidge is typically cast as a horrible president, while Woodrow Wilson is extolled as a great one. It is said that Coolidge was absent while business ran roughshod over the working man, complicit in the rich virtually escaping federal taxation, and indifferent to the plight of American minorities. Wilson was heralded for expanding the rights of women, modernizing America's antiquated constitutional structure, and improving the condition of the poor.

These assessments are colored by the political tendencies of those providing the judgments. In fact, Coolidge presided over one of the greatest periods of prosperity in the history of our nation, and almost all of his actions—and in many instances, wise inactions—helped to steer the economy and social fabric of the country in a favorable direction.

Wilson, on the other hand, led us into a gruesome world war that served only as an appetizer for a more horrific reprise, shepherded in the 16th and 17th constitutional amendments that haunt us to this day, incarcerated innocent Americans for disloyalty, and bequeathed to us the Federal Reserve...

Read the rest: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/07/learning_from_the_worst_presidents.html

The Sugar Daddy has run out of sugar; now we need new leaders

by Sarah Palin, 9 July 2011

... It's a matter of public record that I did not go to Harvard Law School, but I can add.

The same "experts" who got us into this mess are now telling us that the only way out of our debt crisis is to "increase revenue," but not by creating more jobs and therefore a larger tax base; no, they want to "increase revenue" by raising taxes on job creators who are taxed enough already! As Margaret Thatcher said, "The trouble with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money." That's where we are now. Hard working taxpayers have been big government's Sugar Daddy for far too long, and now we're out of sugar. We don't want big government, we can't afford it, and we are unwilling to pay for it.

This debt ceiling debate is the perfect time to do what must be done. We must cut. Yes, I'm for a balanced budget amendment and for enforceable spending caps. But first and foremost we must cut spending, not "strike a deal" that allows politicians to raise more debt! See, Washington is addicted to OPM—Other People's Money. And like any junkie, they will lie, steal, and cheat to fund their addiction. We must cut them off and cut government down to size.

To paraphrase Hemingway, people go broke slowly and then all at once. We've been slowly going broke for years, but now it's happening all at once as the world's capital markets are demanding action from us, yet Obama assumes we'll just go borrow another cup of sugar from some increasingly impatient neighbor. We cannot knock on anyone's door anymore. And we don't have any time to wait for Washington to start behaving responsibly. We'll be Greece before these D.C. politicians' false promises are over. We must force government to live within its means, just as every business and household does.

We can't close our \$1.5 trillion deficit overnight, but we must get as close as we can as soon as we can. Little nibbles here and there over 10 years (spun to sound like they're huge budget cuts) aren't anywhere near enough. I know

from experience that cutting government spending isn't easy. As governor, I made the largest veto cuts in my state's history, and I didn't make many friends doing it...

More: https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=10150235296718435

No big budget deal? Blame Obama, not Boehner

by James Pethokoukis, 10 July 2011

President Barack Obama could have done two things that might have saved his Mother of All Budget Deals.

First, he could have embraced market-centered, consumer-focused reforms to Medicare. That was about as likely as him accepting an Obamacare rollback. Second, he could have agreed — as House Speaker John Boehner and Republicans suggested — to sharply reduce tax rates in return for fewer special tax deductions/breaks/loopholes/subsidies. Recall that is what his own **debt commission** recommended...

... Obama sees a need for a permanently bigger government and a lot more tax revenue to fund it. Had Obama agreed with his own debt commission and Republicans, a big agreement was possible. Or he could have proposed real reforms to entitlements. But he declined and there wasn't a mega-deal. Don't blame Boehner for that.

More, including charts: <http://blogs.reuters.com/james-pethokoukis/2011/07/10/no-big-budget-deal-blame-obama-not-boehner/>

Whittaker Chambers and totalitarian Islam

by Andrew G. Bostom, 9 July 2011

...From the time of Chambers's break with the Communist party in late 1938, till his death nearly 23 years later, Chambers was consumed by the West's abnegation of its own institutions — which had been rooted for two millennia in a belief in the Judeo-Christian God — and their threatened active destruction by the votaries of mass secular totalitarian movements, notably Fascism and Communism...

2,880 words: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/271417/whittaker-chambers-and-totalitarian-islam-andrew-g-bostom>

This was written about last week's press conference.

But it's equally applicable to Obama's lame charade of July 11.

Groundhog Day in July

by John Hayward, 8 July 2011

...The press conference was the usual mix of pathetic excuses and tortured attempts to turn evidence of his failure into reasons to give the President more money and power to play with. Obama described himself as "President in the wake of one of the worst economic downturns in our lifetimes," as if he just now arrived on the scene to find all this economic wreckage strewn across the landscape, and today is Day One of his attempt to help clean up...

...What does Obama think is causing our current economic difficulties? "Over the past few months, the economy has experienced some tough headwinds—from natural disasters, to spikes in gas prices, to state and local budget cuts that have cost tens of thousands of cops, and firefighters, and teachers their jobs."

You miserable, greedy, self-centered private-sector monsters. Your insistence on making government smaller is the only reason we don't have Bush-era employment! And how could Obama and the Democrats have possibly known that choking off the supply of oil would cause gas prices to rise? They don't teach stuff like that in economics class!...

...You know what really makes the market feel "uncertain," Mr. President? The knowledge that a desperate ideologue, in command of a vast, opaque, and unaccountable federal apparatus, could turn on them in a split-second and crush them...

More: <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=44732>

The Education of a Compassionate Conservative

by Ed Kaitz, 4 July 2011

...Indeed, the "compassion" card is the Holy Grail to a progressive Democrat. It's a philosophical ace in the hole that has allowed Democrats to rhetorically smother and intimidate Republicans for generations. It's an idea, as Ronald Reagan should have known, more formidable than the Soviet military. It's the reason a socialist like Barack Obama was

swept into office in America a mere twenty years after communism was "defeated." It's the reason why Whittaker Chambers argued that for Communists, "the sense of moral superiority ... [allows them] to berate their opponents with withering self-righteousness."...

3900 fascinating words: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/07/the_education_of_a_compassionate_conservative.html

Here are the two earliest versions of this classic piece I could find:

History Lesson

by Jackhole, 16 June 2005

Humans originally existed as members of small bands of nomadic hunters/gatherers. They lived on deer in the mountains during the summer and would go to the coast and live on fish and lobster in the winter...

More: <http://jackhole.net/2005/06/history-lesson.html>

Political History Capsule

by Byron "Jug" Varner, 22 Dec 2005 (US Navy pilot, 1944-71. Lived 1923-2006)

...The two most important events in all of history were the invention of beer and the invention of the wheel. The wheel was invented to get man to the beer. These were the foundation of modern civilization and together were the catalyst for the splitting of humanity into two distinct subgroups...

More: http://www.keepingapace.com/blogarchives/humor/juggles_14.php

Hat tip: Rosemary

How to measure the deal on the Debt Ceiling

Washington Examiner editorial, 8 July 2011

...Since 1960 federal spending as a percentage of gross domestic product has averaged 20.3 percent while federal revenues averaged 18 percent. A 2.3 percent gap between revenues and outlays is not ideal, but it's manageable over time. The federal government is experiencing historic budget deficits now because, thanks to the recession, federal revenues have dropped to 14.8 percent of GDP, while federal spending under President Obama has soared to 24.7 percent. That is an unsustainable 10 point gap between what the politicians are spending and what the people pay in taxes.

If Congress leaves tax rates as they are today, revenues will likely rebound to their historic 18 percent average by 2018. But over the same period, federal spending is set to rise to 26 percent of GDP, six points higher than the historic average of 20 percent of GDP. That would still leave an eight-point gap between spending and revenues. Unless the government increases taxes to collect far above the record high of 20.6 percent of GDP in 2000, the United States will have to get serious about cutting spending. And the cuts that are being floated by the Obama White House are not serious cuts...

More: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/2011/07/how-measure-deal-debt-ceiling>

Where's the outrage about budget impasse?

Investor's Business Daily editorial, 8 July 2011

...The spirit called for under the present conditions — a job-scarce economy battered into the doldrums and a government on its way toward the fiscal cliff — is not one of compromise but of righteous intransigence, not unlike the thinking behind the U.S. winning the Cold War.

The expenditures of the unfettered Democratic control of the White House and Congress that ended six months ago were insane, and no Republican need apologize for insisting that they be rolled back unaccompanied by tax increases of any kind...

..."Constructive meetings" between GOP leaders and the White House should ring the alarm bells. In May, the budget deal to avoid a government shutdown, with a promise of \$38.5 billion in spending cuts, was soon found by the Congressional Budget Office to boost spending by \$3.2 billion over the rest of the current fiscal year.

The GOP should present a simple and reasonable public demand for a first step toward fiscal sanity: **restore** government spending to 2008 levels, all deals aside...

More: <http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=577636&p=1>

Obama's debt plan fails the truth test

by Nolan Finley, 7 July 2011

Credit counselors offer standard advice to clients overwhelmed by debt: Tear up the credit cards and start paying down the balance before spending another dime on nonessentials.

That's just common sense. Yet President Barack Obama is trying to sell us on the opposite approach for an overextended federal government. He wants us to issue him another credit card while he keeps spending as if the bills will never come due.

Obama has no credibility in the current showdown over raising the debt ceiling because he's pitching a bundle of fibs to cover the reality that he doesn't believe government spending is a problem...

More: <http://www.detnews.com/article/20110707/OPINION03/107070334/1008/OPINION01/Obama%E2%80%99s-debt-plan-fails-the-truth-test>

Romney's right: it is worse now

Investor's Business Daily editorial, 7 July 2011

...There are 2 million fewer private-sector jobs now than when Obama was sworn in, and the unemployment rate is 1.5 percentage points higher. There are now more long-term unemployed than at any time since the government started keeping records. The U.S. dollar is more than 12% weaker. The number of Americans on food stamps has climbed 37%. The Misery Index (unemployment plus inflation) is up 62%. And the national debt is about 40% higher than it was in January 2009.

In fact, reporters who bother to look will discover that Obama has managed to produce the worst recovery on record.

By this point in the Reagan recovery after the 1981-82 recession, for example, unemployment had been knocked down to 7.4% from a peak of 10.8%, and quarterly GDP growth averaged a screaming 7%.

Under Obama's recovery, we're stuck with 9.1% unemployment, and an economy that's managed to eke out an average of just 2.8% growth since the recession ended two years ago.

Meanwhile, 70% of small businesses report that they've delayed hiring thanks to economic uncertainties, and more than three-quarters say the country is still in a recession. And a forthcoming report by Stanford University economist John Taylor finds that the stimulus was a bust, noting that while backers claim the economy "would have been worse" had Obama not stepped in, "the results do not support that view."...

Read the rest: <http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=577501&p=1>

Obamacare tragedy primed to further explode the deficit

by Peter Ferrara, 6 July 2011

President Obama bludgeoned Obamacare through Congress on the claim, backed by CBO, that it would not add to the deficit, even though it adopts or wildly expands three entitlement programs. As I discuss in my new book, *America's Ticking Bankruptcy Bomb*, close analysis of the CBO score and additional new data indicates that, quite to the contrary, Obamacare will likely add \$4 to \$6 trillion to the deficit over its first 20 years, and possibly more.

Of course, the deficit is not the biggest problem. Even bigger is that regardless of the deficit, Obamacare involves trillions of increased government spending and taxes. Worst of all is that it involves a loss of control over, and the quality of, our own health care. All of this is ultimately a tragedy because as my book also explains, the uninsured could all easily be covered without any individual or employer mandate for just a small fraction of the cost of Obamacare, as discussed below.

CBO made three enormous conceptual errors in scoring the program as not adding to the deficit...

More, including some good solutions: <http://spectator.org/archives/2011/07/06/obamacare-tragedy-primed-to-fu/print>

Do we really have a revenue problem?

by Ed Morrissey, 7 July 2011

...Take a look at the trends here, again remembering that the data is all in 2010 dollars. In fifty years, we have

tripled overall federal revenue, and prior to the current recession/stagnation we had *quadrupled* it. The current trough from the 2007 peak resulted from the fall in economic activity, not from tax cuts or any other intervention. It's similar to what happened in the prior trough, when the 2000-1 recession and the 9/11 attacks cut economic activity through 2003.

For that matter, look what happened to federal revenue after the much-maligned Bush tax cuts took full effect in 2003. Economic activity expanded rapidly — and so did federal revenues. In fact, the economy during that period boomed, and receipts from both personal and corporate taxes peaked as a result. The Bush tax *rates*, as they are properly called today, did not create a revenue vacuum; they helped produce an expansion that enhanced rather than lost revenue.

Now, let's put the data in this chart with one showing the rate of spending in inflation-adjusted 2010 dollars...

...While revenues have tripled during this period, federal spending has more than *quintupled*. The economic expansion of the 1990s (including the dot-com bubble) temporarily raised revenue above the spending trendline, but the slope on spending increased in the early 2000s, and practically launched spaceward in 2007 when Democrats took control of Congress. Had spending increased at a rate of inflation from 2001 forward, we would probably not be in deficit at all. Had it stayed at the rate of inflation from 2006 forward, we'd probably be looking at historically average deficits in terms of GDP. But the chart shows very, very clearly that we have a recession problem combined with both a short- and long-term problem with expanding federal budgets — and the latter is the reason why we have a fiscal crisis, not some presumed revenue starvation...

With two good charts: <http://hotair.com/archives/2011/07/07/do-we-really-have-a-revenue-problem/>

Obamanomics continues to damage the economy

by Ross Kaminsky, 8 July 2011

This morning, the Labor Department released the worst **employment report** since September of last year, with the economy creating only 18,000 jobs in June versus a Marketwatch consensus estimate of 125,000 jobs. (Yahoo Finance and Bloomberg had slightly lower estimates, but the report was a disaster by any measure.)...

...Barack Obama's economic advisor Austan Goolsbee called the report a "call to action" and then laid out several policy suggestions (more below). Goolsbee then blamed the economic slowdown on a "terrible oil price shock and a slowdown in the growth rate." The problem for the Obama Administration is they they're to blame for both.

Releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve showed **Obama's economic ignorance and desperation**. In fact, despite a 2% drop in oil prices on today's weak report, oil is still almost \$3 per barrel higher than when that policy was announced. Oil prices are driven by big-picture supply and demand. As long as the Obama Administration is a barrier to creating new supply, the path of least resistance for oil prices is upwards. As for the slowdown in growth, that was just an odd comment, basically saying that the economic slowdown was due to the fact that economic growth slowed. Not much I can add to such wisdom except to say that the Administration's economic policies are obviously failing.

CNBC reporters asked Goolsbee *twice* whether the Obama Administration has any culpability. Goolsbee eventually said "Yes, we take responsibility." That's a start...and perhaps this kind of semi-honest talk will get the last victims of Bush Derangement Syndrome to recognize that this economy is no longer George W. Bush's fault or problem.

Goolsbee called for these five policy actions: (1) Extend the payroll tax cut, (2) Pass free trade agreements, (3) Create an infrastructure bank, (4) Pass a patent reform bill, (5) Pass balanced bipartisan deficit reduction agreement. He claimed these "would create hundreds of thousands of jobs if not millions." Let's take these on:

Brutal: <http://spectator.org/blog/2011/07/08/obamanomics-continues-to-damag#>

Ship of Useful Idiots?

by Margaret Wentz, 7 July 2011

...This year's useful idiots included the usual aging peaceniks, left-wing university types, a few Jewish radicals, and the kind of people who show up to protest against logging and genetically modified foods. It doesn't seem to bother them that Gaza is controlled by Hamas, widely regarded as a terrorist group. Hamas is dedicated to the destruction of Israel. It endorses *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a notorious anti-Semitic forgery that describes Zionist plans for world domination. (Too bad the journalists didn't ask about that.) Hamas is backed by Iran. Its leader, Khaled Meshal, is based in Syria, where, as you may recall, the regime of Bashar al-Assad is busy killing its own people. Hamas was among the few groups in the world to condemn the killing of Osama bin Laden.

Israel's blockade exists to stop rampant weapons-smuggling into Gaza. But the activists are unruffled by the Hamas connection. To them, the terrorists are all in Israel. They regard the suffering of Gazans as equivalent to the suffering of southern U.S. blacks under segregation, and the Gaza flotilla as the moral equivalent of freedom marches in Alabama.

One of the passengers aboard the Tahrir was David Heap, a university professor whose father took part in the civil-rights movement. Mr. Heap says his father, too, was “ridiculed when he went to Selma to join Martin Luther King.”

Alas, Khaled Meshaal is no Martin Luther King. And Gaza isn't 1960s Alabama...

More: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/opinion/ship-of-useful-idiot/article2089019/>

The Elmendorf Rule

by Charles Krauthammer, 7 July 2011

...President Obama assailed the lesser mortals who inhabit Congress for not having seriously dealt with a problem he had not dealt with at all, then scolded Congress for being even less responsible than his own children. They apparently get their homework done on time.

My compliments. But the Republican House did do its homework. It's called a budget. It passed the House on April 15. The Democratic Senate has produced no budget. Not just this year, but for two years running. As for the schoolmaster in chief, he produced two 2012 budget facsimiles: The first (February) was a farce and the second (April) was empty, dismissed by the CBO as nothing but words untethered to real numbers.

Obama has run disastrous annual deficits of around \$1.5 trillion while insisting for months on a “clean” debt-ceiling increase, i.e., with no budget cuts at all. Yet suddenly he now rises to champion major long-term debt reduction, scorning any suggestions of a short-term debt-limit deal as can-kicking...

...And what have been Obama's own debt-reduction ideas? In last week's news conference, he railed against the tax break for corporate jet owners — six times.

I did the math. If you collect that tax for the next 5,000 years — that is not a typo — it would equal the new debt Obama racked up last year alone. To put it another way, if we had levied this tax at the time of John the Baptist and collected it every year since — first in shekels, then in dollars — we would have 500 years to go before we could offset *half* of the debt added by Obama last year alone.

Obama's other favorite debt-reduction refrain is canceling an oil-company tax break. Well, if you collect that oil tax and the corporate jet tax for the next 50 years — you will not yet have offset **Obama's deficit spending** for *February 2011*.

More: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-elmendorf-rule/2011/07/07/gIQAPagk2H_story.html?hpid=z3

Assimilation's failure, terrorism's rise

by Kenan Malik, 7 July 2011

...In place of citizenship and a genuine status in society, the state “allowed” immigrants to keep their own culture, language and lifestyles. One consequence was the creation of parallel communities. Without any incentive to participate in the national community, many Turks became dangerously inward-looking. Today, almost a third of Turkish adults in Germany regularly attend mosque, a higher rate than elsewhere in Western Europe and higher than in many parts of Turkey. The increasing isolation of second-generation German Turks has made some more open to radical Islamism. The uncovering last year of German jihadis fighting in Afghanistan should therefore have come as no surprise.

In Britain, the promotion of multicultural policies led to the de facto treatment of individuals from minority groups not as citizens but simply as members of particular ethnic units. In Germany, the formal denial of citizenship to immigrants led to the policy of multiculturalism. In both cases this has resulted in the creation of fragmented societies, the scapegoating of immigrants and the rise of both populist and Islamist rhetoric.

In neither Britain nor Germany did multiculturalism create militant Islam, but in both it helped clear a space for it among Muslims. The challenge facing Europe today, therefore, is how to reject multiculturalism as a political policy while embracing the diversity that immigration brings. No country has yet succeeded in doing so...

Read the rest: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/07/opinion/07malik.html?_r=2&ref=todayspaper

Gunwalker: the ATF's Kenneth Melson blows the whistle on the Justice Department

A blockbuster development in the Operation Fast and Furious scandal.

by Hans A. von Spakovsky, 6 July 2011

...The details of Operation Fast & Furious just keep getting worse from the standpoint of prosecutorial ineptitude and incompetence. But with Melson's testimony, it is also appears that the Justice Department and specifically Deputy

Attorney General James Cole have been obstructing Congress and engaging in a cover-up to prevent Congress and the public from finding out just how much the leadership of the Justice Department was involved in this expanding scandal.

More: <http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/gunwalker-the-atf%e2%80%99s-kenneth-melson-blows-the-whistle-on-the-justice-department/?singlepage=true>

There has been no Global Warming since 1998

by James Delingpole, 6 July 2011

The headline of this post really shouldn't be controversial. It chimes perfectly with what Kevin "null hypothesis" Trenberth wrote in that notorious 2009 Climategate email to Michael Mann: "The fact is that we can't account for the lack of warming at the moment and it is a travesty that we can't."

And it's what **Phil Jones admitted** in a BBC interview when he said that there had been no "statistically significant" warming since 1995.

Why then am I mentioning it now? W-e-l-l, because just as ze war is to the Germans, Chappaquiddick is to the Kennedy family and that Portland masseuse incident to Al Gore, so the recent lack of warming is to the, er, Warmists. They hate it. It's an affront to everything they believe in. Damn it, if the world isn't warming with the alacrity they'd prefer, how are they going to keep the funding gravy train going, and how are they going to persuade an increasingly sceptical populace that the "science" is "settled", the debate over and the time for action is now? That's why they can't reminded of the truth often enough. It's like salting the slugs that are ruining your garden: necessary, but also kind of fun too...

Continue: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/jamesdelingpole/100095506/there-has-been-no-global-warming-since-1998/>

Illiberal Immigration

by Victor Davis Hanson, 7 July 2011

...Something here once again has proven illiberal: Does a liberal-sounding but exploitative Mexican government cynically encourage its expatriates to scrimp and save in America only to send huge sums of money back home to help poor relatives, so that Mexico City need not? In turn, do an increasing number of illegal aliens count on help from the American taxpayer for food, housing, legal, and education subsidies in order to free up \$20 billion to send home?

The paradoxes and confusion never end these days. Do today's immigration activists work to grant amnesty on the basis of a legal philosophy and principled support for open borders, or just because of shared ethnic identity? If there were now 11 million East Africans in America illegally, would today's Hispanic immigration lobbyists seek amnesty, bilingual services in Swahili, and yet more illegal immigration from Kenya and Uganda? Would they ever seek racially blind legal immigration into the U.S., based on education and skills rather than point of origin?

The yearly arrival of hundreds of thousands from Latin America, mostly without English-language skills, high-school diplomas, or legality, has also challenged old ideas of everything from the assessment of U.S. poverty rates to affirmative action. Once an impoverished resident of Oaxaca crosses the border, does his lack of education and his modest income immediately help cement the charge that the American Latino population has not achieved economic parity?...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/271209/illiberal-immigration-victor-davis-hanson>

Justice Justice

by Zombie, 29 June 2011

...In fact, the abuse of "justice" has become so widespread that you can immediately identify the political slant of any group just by looking for the word "justice" in their name or literature; if they prominently feature justice, then they're left-wing; if they don't, then they're not.

Of course, this was part of the plan from the beginning: to use language as a weapon. Find a word that everybody likes, with a universally positive vibe, and then use it relentlessly and ungrammatically as a catch-all euphemism for socialist goals. We want justice, thus we must be the good guys! And any group that isn't for some kind of justice must therefore be in favor of injustice, and as a result must be the bad guys.

Don't think for one minute that such linguistic gymnastics are accidental. The left puts an immense amount of effort into branding and framing and public perception. And they're quite self-congratulatory about the whole process: they invariably think their wordsmithery has worked to shift public opinion leftward.

But of course those of us outside the bubble see that it doesn't work at all. When you abuse a word like "justice" (or another good example, "rights"), all you succeed in doing is to contaminate the word's original connotation. So that by now, when average Americans see the word "justice" in a political context, they don't get a warm and fuzzy feeling like they used to, but instead see a giant flashing neon sign that says "LEFTIST EUPHEMISM."

Each word only has so much accumulated credibility that you can expend before you drain it dry. Poor old "justice." By now it has been so misused and molested that it's not only been drained dry, it's acquired an entirely new connotation — and not a good one...

Read the rest: <http://www.zombietime.com/zomblog/?p=1767>

(Hat tip: Ann Marie)

Casey Anthony: The system worked

by Alan Dershowitz, 7 July 2011

"This case [is] about seeking justice for Caylee." So argued the prosecutor in the Casey Anthony murder case.

He was wrong, and the jury understood that. A criminal trial is never about seeking justice for the victim. If it were, there could be only one verdict: guilty. That's because only one person is on trial in a criminal case, and if that one person is acquitted, then by definition there can be no justice for the victim in that trial.

A criminal trial is neither a whodunit nor a multiple choice test. It is not even a criminal investigation to determine who among various possible suspects might be responsible for a terrible tragedy. In a murder trial, the state, with all of its power, accuses an individual of being the perpetrator of a dastardly act against a victim. The state must prove that accusation by admissible evidence and beyond a reasonable doubt...

More: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303544604576429783247016492.html?mod=WSJ_newsreel_opinion

Time for U.S. manufacturers to declare independence—from government

by Timothy P. Carney, 4 July 2011

...Here's a typical example of how Ex-Im works: Luxembourg's CargoLux (an air cargo carrier) is looking to buy Boeing jets with General Electric engines. The companies have lined up JP Morgan to finance the deal. Ex-Im is considering offering a loan guarantee.

The Ex-Im guarantee lowers the interest rate JP Morgan charges, thus lowering the effective price CargoLux would pay. This helps Boeing beat out heavily subsidized European jetmaker Airbus.

Boeing, GE and Ex-Im will all say this isn't a taxpayer subsidy or corporate welfare because it comes "at no cost to the taxpayer": Congress recently moved Ex-Im's subsidies off-budget so that new loans and guarantees are covered by fees and the repayments of old loans and guarantees.

So, Ex-Im claims to be "profitable" and not reliant on taxpayers in its work to grease the wheels of commerce through financing. If you lived through the housing crisis, this probably sounds familiar.

Ex-Im is the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac of the export industry. But where Fannie and Freddie's guarantee was only implicit, Ex-Im is explicitly backed by the full faith and credit of the United States. In other words, if CargoLux doesn't pay, Ex-Im cuts a check to JP Morgan.

If something bad happened, like widespread economic or political turmoil in countries where Ex-Im has outstanding loans, guarantees or insurance products—such as Greece, Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Argentina, China, Brazil, Ivory Coast, Iceland, Ireland, Saudi Arabia or Russia—and the result was a surge in defaults by foreign buyers, American taxpayers would bear the brunt. Ex-Im's defenders say their controls are too strong and that won't happen. Fannie Mae's defenders said the same thing...

More: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/politics/2011/07/time-us-manufacturers-declare-dependence-government>

The local government pension squeeze

by Steven Malanga, 27 June 2011

...Costa Mesa, Calif. (population 110,000) made news earlier this year when it sent layoff notices to 43% of its employees. In 10 years, the city's annual pension bill increased to \$15 million from \$5 million and now consumes 16% of the city's \$93 million budget. In nearby Anaheim, pensions already account for 22% of its \$252 million budget. San Jose's pension costs for police and firefighters have quadrupled in a past decade. Without reform, the city estimates that

its yearly pension costs, \$63 million in 2000, will swell to \$650 million in 2015.

Elsewhere the numbers are even scarier. Chicago's unfunded public pension fund liabilities are estimated by Joshua Rauh of Northwestern University and Robert Novy-Marx of the University of Rochester at \$44 billion—nearly eight times annual city tax revenues. New York City's annual pension contributions were \$1.5 billion (6% of city revenues) in 2002. They've exploded to an estimated \$8.4 billion (18% of city revenues) in 2012.

School districts in New York State contributed \$900 million last year to the state's teacher pension system, but districts may have to spend as much as \$4.5 billion on pensions within five years to meet rising costs, according to a December 2010 study by the Manhattan Institute. Local property taxes would have to increase an average of 3.5% a year just to pay for those added pension costs, the study estimated.

Local governments have contributed to their budget nightmares by expanding hiring and wages well beyond the growth in population and private wage gains during recent boom years...

More: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304070104576399530309071422.html>

"This is the meaning of Social Justice. It means actions by the State in the name of Justice, which is to say under complete protection and immunity from review. Its end is dictatorship."

—David Mamet, *The Secret Knowledge*

Why won't the GOP agree to a tax increase?

by Jay Cost, 6 July 2011

...The budget battle that is brewing in Washington actually has three levels to it. The first is the battle over the debt ceiling, and the desire for congressional Republicans to extract as much as they can from Obama on spending cuts. The second is longer term, and involves keeping the United States out of some sort of Greek-style catastrophe. And the third involves an age-old ideological conflict that has defined the two-party system for some time: how much money should the federal government take in revenues and distribute in outlays?

Turn down the volume on the liberal hyperbole, where every Republican in Congress secretly wants to destroy Social Security, and it is not hard to discover the position of the Grand Old Party. Over the last forty years, the federal government has taken in about eighteen percent of GDP in taxes and spent about twenty percent of GDP in outlays, so why not just keep doing that?

Now, I know what you're thinking: *Oooh...those Republicans are so radical! How dare they want to tax and spend as much as the country has taxed and spent over the last half century! How on earth can we continue to fund food safety and the weather service? How will we rebuild our crumbling infrastructure?* I know it's crazy, but those zany GOPers believe that the federal government can indeed find a way to meet its obligations on consumer safety, highways and transportation, social welfare, national defense, and so on without redistributing more than twenty cents of every dollar, just as it has for the last forty years.

The Democratic position is that the federal government should take in more and spend more—just how much more depends on how far to the left any given Democrat is. Let's keep this in mind as we now consider the projections of the Congressional Budget Office for the next eighty years...

More, including a chart of Federal revenue and spending:

http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/morning-jay-should-gop-agree-raise-taxes_576334.html

Rush Limbaugh, Dana Loesch, and others were talking about this last week. It's nice to learn that a legendary artist came to his senses and died "in a state of grace," as it were, and no doubt regretted writing such rubbish as *Imagine* and *Woman is the Nigger of the World*.

Lennon was a closet Republican: Assistant

28 June 2011

John Lennon was a closet Republican, who felt a little embarrassed by his former radicalism, at the time of his death—according to the tragic Beatles star's last personal assistant. Fred Seaman worked alongside the music legend from 1979 to Lennon's death at the end of 1980 and he reveals the star was a Ronald Reagan fan who enjoyed arguing with left-wing radicals who reminded him of his former self...

More: <http://www.torontosun.com/2011/06/28/lennon-was-a-closet-republican-assistant>

How blacklisting blacklists blacklist

by John Nolte, 26 May 2011

Today's entertainment-industry conservatives can only wish they lived under the same type of blacklist practiced in the 1950s. As terribly misguided as that was, there was at least an honesty to it. There was an *actual list* and when you were on it you were told you were on it and understood why your phone had stopped ringing. This gave its victims something to fight against and better yet, no one tried to stereotype them as untalented, paranoid whiners for daring to mention its existence.

Today's Progressive Hollywood Blacklist is a much more insidious thing. By design it functions in a way that still punishes those who stray from the ideological plantation but like the elephant behind Jimmy Durante, remains hidden well enough in plain sight so that when you try to point it out, the progressive blacklisters can say, "What elephant?" even as they laugh in your face...

Read on: <http://bighollywood.breitbart.com/jjmolte/2010/05/26/how-blacklisting-blacklists-blacklist-patrick-goldstein-movieline-huffpo-ew/>

Politics versus Reality

The facts are there, but they mean nothing if they are ignored.

by Thomas Sowell, 5 July 2011

...Most of those who favor simply raising tax rates on "the rich"—or who say that we cannot afford to allow the Bush "tax cuts for the rich" to continue—show not the slightest interest in the history of what has actually happened when tax rates were raised to high levels on "the rich," as compared to what has actually happened when there have been "tax cuts for the rich."...

...Since there are various countries, such as Canada and Britain, that have the kind of government-controlled medical systems that some Americans advocate, you might think that there would be great interest in the quality of medical care in these countries.

The data are readily available as to how many weeks or months people have to wait to see a primary care physician in such countries, and how many additional weeks or months they have to wait after they are referred to a surgeon or other specialist. There are data on how often their governments allow patients to receive the latest pharmaceutical drugs, as compared to how often Americans use such advanced medications.

But supporters of government medical care show virtually no interest in such realities. Their big talking point is that the life expectancy in the United States is not as long as in those other countries. End of discussion, as far as they are concerned...

Read the rest: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/271038/politics-vs-reality-thomas-sowell>

Obama's economists: 'Stimulus' has cost \$278,000 per job

The stimulus is now causing the economy to shed jobs.

by Jeffrey H. Anderson, 3 July 2011

...The "stimulus" has added or saved just under 2.4 million jobs — whether private or public — at a cost (to date) of \$666 billion. That's a cost to taxpayers of \$278,000 per job...

...Over the past six months, the economy would have added or saved more jobs *without* the "stimulus" than it has with it...

...Again, this is the verdict of Obama's own Council of Economic Advisors, which is about as much of a home-field ruling as anyone could ever ask for...

...Obama's "stimulus" has actually undermined the economy's recovery — while leaving us (thus far) \$666 billion deeper in debt...

...**The actual employment numbers** from the administration's own Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the unemployment rate was 7.3 percent when the "stimulus" was being debated. It has since risen to 9.1 percent. Meanwhile, the national debt at the end of 2008, when Obama was poised to take office, was \$9.986 trillion (see [Table S-9](#)). It's now **\$14.467 trillion — and counting...**

More: http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/obama-s-economists-stimulus-has-cost-278000-job_576014.html

Gross media ignorance

by Walter E. Williams, 5 July 2011

There's little that's intelligent or informed about *Time* magazine editor Richard Stengel's article "One Document, Under Siege" (June 23, 2011). It contains many grossly ignorant statements about our Constitution. If I believed in conspiracies, I'd say Stengel's article is part of a leftist agenda to undermine respect for the founding values of our nation.

Stengel says: "The framers were not gods and were not infallible. Yes, they gave us, and the world, a blueprint for the protection of democratic freedoms—freedom of speech, assembly, religion—but they also gave us the idea that a black person was three-fifths of a human being, that women were not allowed to vote and that South Dakota should have the same number of senators as California, which is kind of crazy. And I'm not even going to mention the Electoral College."

My column last week addressed the compromise whereby each slave was counted as three-fifths of a person for the purposes of determining representation in the House of Representatives and Electoral College. Had slaves been counted as whole people, slaveholding states would have had much greater political power. I agree the framers were not gods and were not infallible, but they had far greater wisdom and principle than today's politicians...

Many more stupid errors corrected: <http://www.creators.com/conservative/walter-williams/gross-media-ignorance.html>

Gay marriage across the land: not so darn fast

by Dennis Byrne, *Chicago Tribune* 5 July 2011

The recent legalization of same-sex marriage in New York proves that it's no longer an issue in the United States, right? Gay marriage will eventually, but certainly, become widely accepted everywhere, right?

Not if the American people have anything to say about it. So far, the question has been put directly to American voters 31 times, and 31 times voters have said marriage is a one-man and one-woman deal...

Continue: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/ct-oped-0705-byrne-20110705,0,7574485.column>

Burning down the house

by George F. Will, 1 July 2011

...Most explanations of the financial calamity have been indecipherable to people not fluent in the language of "credit default swaps" and "collateralized debt obligations." The calamity has lacked human faces. No more.

Put on asbestos mittens and pick up *Reckless Endangerment*, the scalding new book by Gretchen Morgenson, a New York Times columnist, and Joshua Rosner, a housing finance expert. They will introduce you to James A. Johnson, an emblem of the administrative state that liberals admire.

The book's subtitle could be: "Cry 'Compassion' and Let Slip the Dogs of Cupidity." Or: "How James Johnson and Others (Mostly Democrats) Made the Great Recession." The book is another cautionary tale about government's terrifying self-confidence. It is, the authors say, "a story of what happens when Washington decides, in its infinite wisdom, that every living, breathing citizen should own a home..."

Definitive: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/burning-down-the-house/2011/06/30/AGeRSGuH_story.html

Attorney General Eric Holder wasted a two-year investigation on CIA misdeeds that never happened

New York Daily News editorial, 3 July 2011

A special prosecutor has dashed the fondest hopes of opponents of the war on terror by concluding that the CIA's program of so-called enhanced interrogations of Al Qaeda operatives after 9/11 was not shot through with criminality after all...

...The big takeaway is that interrogations that produced valuable intelligence, including information that led to the killing of Osama Bin Laden, were perfectly lawful. And the American Civil Liberties Union and others who continue to decry supposed widespread criminal brutality need to come to grips with reality.

Read the rest: http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2011/07/03/2011-07-03_holders_tortured_probe.html

The Jobless Summer

Why only one in four teens is employed.
Wall Street Journal editorial, 1 July 2011

...The lousy economic recovery explains much of this decline in teens working, and some is due to increases in teen summer school enrollment. Some is also cultural: Many parents don't put the same demands on teens as they once did to get out and work.

But Congress has also contributed by passing one of the most ill-timed minimum wage increases in history. One of the first acts of the gone-but-not-forgotten Nancy Pelosi ascendancy was to raise the minimum wage in stages to \$7.25 an hour in 2009 from \$5.15 in 2007. Even liberals ought to understand that raising the cost of hiring the young and unskilled while employers are slashing payrolls is loopy economics.

Or maybe not. The Center for American Progress, often called the think tank for the Obama White House, recently recommended another increase to \$8.25 an hour. Though the U.S. unemployment rate is 9.1%, the thinkers assert that a rising wage would "stimulate economic growth to the tune of 50,000 new jobs." So if the government orders employers to pay more to hire workers when they're already not hiring, they'll somehow hire more workers. By this logic, if we raised the minimum wage to \$25 an hour we'd have full employment.

Back on planet Earth, the minimum wage increase has coincided with the plunge in the percentage of working teens. Before the most recent wage hikes, roughly seven million teens were working. Now there are closer to five million with a job and paycheck...

More: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304447804576411903821123330.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

The Decline of Faith

by Tom Bethell, June 2011 issue

...If Bell's message is that his parishioners are all going to enjoy an eternity of bliss whether they go to church or not, it's only a matter of time before they stop going. "The doctrine of universal salvation turns out to be as deterministic as the more strident forms of scientific materialism," Ross Douhat wrote.

Rob Bell represents "the tragedy of non-judgmental mainline liberalism," said R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I agree with that. Meanwhile I keep thinking of C. S. Lewis's reminder: "All the most terrifying passages in the New Testament come from the mouth of Our Lord."

It should be clear by now that the theological liberalism that has dominated our age undermines religious faith, much as secular liberalism, intended to improve society, will end up bankrupting it.

Consider the Church of England, where every progressive cause is embraced. Gay bishops? Who, in our current climate, would dare to disapprove? Out of 60 million people in the United Kingdom, only 1.1 million, or about 2 percent, go to church every week. Once it was 10 times that. Even its leaders seem to have stopped believing in it. Declining congregations and growing costs make the C. of E. an unsustainable venture without the recovery of faith.

The trends in America are similar, although less advanced...

The Catholic Church has likewise declined, and the sex abuse scandal is only partly to blame. One in 10 Americans now identify themselves as ex-Catholics, and one of three raised as Catholic have defected. The Jesuits, by far the most liberal order, have fallen from 8,400 members in 1965 to 2,650 in 2010. Social justice, which really means income redistribution, is their foremost article of faith.

[N.B.: It was around 1965 that the Jesuits turned seriously Left. —Don John]

All the most liberal orders of nuns—the ones who threw away their habits in the 1960s and adopted a vaguely feminist mission of peace and social justice—are withering away. Urgent fund-raising appeals are needed to preserve their elderly remnant. On the other hand, the orders that have restored the habit and insist on a strict interpretation of their respective rules are thriving...

More: <http://spectator.org/archives/2011/06/29/the-decline-of-faith>

Union curbs rescue a Wisconsin school district

by Byron York, 1 July 2011

"This is a disaster," said Mark Miller, the Wisconsin Senate Democratic leader, in February after Republican Gov. Scott Walker proposed a budget bill that would curtail the collective bargaining powers of some public employees.

Miller predicted catastrophe if the bill were to become law—a charge repeated thousands of times by his fellow Democrats, union officials, and protesters in the streets.

Now the bill is law, and we have some very early evidence of how it is working. And for one beleaguered Wisconsin school district, it's a godsend, not a disaster.

The Kaukauna School District, in the Fox River Valley of Wisconsin near Appleton, has about 4,200 students and about 400 employees. It has struggled in recent times and this year faced a deficit of \$400,000. But after the law went into effect, at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, school officials put in place new policies they estimate will turn that \$400,000 deficit into a \$1.5 million surplus. And it's all because of the very provisions that union leaders predicted would be disastrous...

Read on: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/politics/2011/06/union-curbs-rescue-wisconsin-school-district>

Jon Stewart can't move past his flawed Fox interview

Comedian can't let go after being called out on his lies. (includes video)

by David Zurawik, 29 June 2011

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/entertainment/tv/z-on-tv-blog/bal-jon-stewart-chris-wallace-fox-interview-lie-20110628,0,789937.story>

Fourth of July special

"It does not take a majority to prevail, but rather an irate, tireless minority, keen on setting brush fires of freedom in the minds of men." —Samuel Adams (1722-1803)

City Upon a Hill

One of the Great Communicator's best speeches EVER. It was delivered at the first annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), on 25 January 1974. It's a superb elucidation of what America, and Americans, are all about.

Read it all: http://reagan2020.us/speeches/City_Upon_A_Hill.asp

All Honor to Jefferson

Address by Jean Yarbrough at Hillsdale College, 16 Apr 2009

<http://www2.hillsdale.edu/news/imprimis/archive/issue.asp?year=2009&month=05>

Remembering What the Declaration of Independence is Not

by Bruce Walker, 3 July 2009

http://www.americanthinker.com/2009/07/remembering_what_the_declarati_1.html

Speech on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

by Calvin Coolidge, 5 July 1926

...Under a system of popular government there will always be those who will seek for political preferment by clamoring for reform. While there is very little of this which is not sincere, there is a large portion that is not well informed. In my opinion very little of just criticism can attach to the theories and principles of our institutions.

There is far more danger of harm than there is hope of good in any radical changes. We do need a better understanding and comprehension of them and a better knowledge of the foundations of government in general. Our forefathers came to certain conclusions and decided upon certain courses of action which have been a great blessing to the world.

Before we can understand their conclusions we must go back and review the course which they followed. We must think the thoughts which they thought. Their intellectual life centered around the meeting-house. They were intent upon religious worship. While there were always among them men of deep learning, and later those who had comparatively large possessions, the mind of the people was not so much engrossed in how much they knew, or how much they had, as in how they were going to live. While scantily provided with other literature, there was a wide acquaintance with the Scriptures. Over a period as great as that which measures the existence of our independence they were subject to this discipline not only in their religious life and educational training, but also in their political thought.

They were a people who came under the influence of a great spiritual development and acquired a great moral power.

No other theory is adequate to explain or comprehend the Declaration of Independence. It is the product of the spiritual insight of the people. We live in an age of science and of abounding accumulation of material things. These did not create our Declaration. Our Declaration created them. The things of the spirit come first. Unless we cling to that, all our material prosperity, overwhelming though it may appear, will turn to a barren sceptre in our grasp. If we are to maintain the great heritage which has been bequeathed to us, we must be like-minded as the fathers who created it. We must not sink into a pagan materialism. We must cultivate the reverence which they had for the things that are holy...

4,400 wonderful words: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=408#axzz1R5Xi83U6>

'All men are created equal' is not hypocrisy but vision

by *Jeff Jacoby*, 4 July 2010

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2010/07/04/all_men_are_created_equal_is_not_hypocrisy_but_vision/

"Never Forget: They Kept Lots of Slaves"

The latest maneuver in the culture wars, and how it is distorting our thinking about the Founding Fathers.

by *Michael Knox Beran*, 29 Dec 2003

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/208977/147-never-forget-they-kept-lots-slaves-148/michael-knox-beran>

Make Mine Freedom

a *John Sutherland* production, 1948

<http://nationaljuggernaut.blogspot.com/2009/09/this-cartoon-seemed-far-fetched-in-1948.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVh75ylAUXY>

(Hat tip: Tony C.)

Endowed by their Creator with certain WHAT?

Unalienable vs Inalienable.

by *Mark Liberman*, 20 June 2011

<http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=3207>

An exceptional Fourth of July

by *Victor Davis Hanson*, 30 June 2011

...There has never been any nation even remotely similar to America. Here's why. Most revolutions seek to destroy the existing class order and use all-powerful government to mandate an equality of result rather than of opportunity—in the manner of the French Revolution's slogan of "liberty, equality and fraternity" or the Russian Revolution's "peace, land and bread."

In contrast, our revolutionaries shouted "Don't tread on me!" and "Give me liberty or give me death!" The Founders were convinced that constitutionally protected freedom would allow the individual to create wealth apart from government. Such enlightened self-interest would then enrich society at large far more effectively than could an all-powerful state.

Such constitutionally protected private property, free enterprise and market capitalism explain why the United States—with only about 4.5 percent of the world's population—even today, in an intensely competitive global economy, still produces a quarter of the world's goods and services. To make America unexceptional, inept government overseers, as elsewhere in the world, would determine the conditions—where, when, how and by whom—under which businesses operate.

Individual freedom in America manifests itself in ways most of the world can hardly fathom...

Wonderful: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/270797/exceptional-fourth-july-victor-davis-hanson>

Harvard study: 4th of July events only help Republicans

by *Jim Hoft*, 1 July 2011

Washington Whispers reported on the study: "Democratic political candidates can skip this weekend's July 4th parades. A new Harvard University study finds that July 4th parades energize only Republicans, turn kids into

Republicans, and help to boost the GOP turnout of adults on Election Day. 'Fourth of July celebrations in the United States shape the nation's political landscape by forming beliefs and increasing participation, primarily in favor of the Republican Party,' said the report from Harvard."...

Oh well: Democrats always have May Day, and Cinco de Mayo!

More: <http://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2011/07/harvard-study-4th-of-july-events-only-help-republicans-video/>

The Obama Doctrine Defined

by Douglas Feith & Seth Cropsey, July 2011

...There is political benefit and little downside in his accepting unilateral action in principle while his administration does whatever it can to discredit and preclude it.

The key to impeding U.S. “unilateralism”—and to implementing Obama’s strategic vision generally—comes through deepening American involvement with multinational institutions. That is how Obama can bind the United States beyond his own term. He favors cooperation with the International Criminal Court and pledges “rededication” to the United Nations organization. He champions progressive treaties and has declared it a priority to win Senate approval of the nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the UN treaty on the rights of women.

Obama is also committed to legitimating the “transnational law” movement, a vehicle for political progressives to constrain the power of democratically elected government officials...

...Two points are notable here. The first is that judges should use the concept of “international comity” to constrain the power of the executive branch. It is a vague and open-ended notion that allows judges to legislate undemocratically from the bench.

The second point to note is the disapproving reference to “preserving American autonomy.” Traditional American policy, with long-standing bipartisan support, has been to safeguard the president’s authority and ability to act independently to defend the country’s national-security interests. It was a Democratic president, Harry Truman, who ensured that the United Nations Charter gave the United States a veto over resolutions of the Security Council, the only UN body that can make legally binding decisions. He favored international cooperation but not at the expense of American freedom of action or of the president’s constitutional authority to act as he or she sees fit to defend the country or advance its interests. John F. Kennedy did not seek UN permission to “quarantine” Cuba, nor did President Bill Clinton obtain UN authorization for the U.S.-led intervention in Kosovo. Harold Koh, however, writes of American autonomy as a problem to be solved rather than a principle to be preserved...

4,600 words: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/the-obama-doctrine-defined/>

Harry Reid Opens Mouth - Lies About Federal Deficit

jackohoft, 1 July 2011

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFQczI05XXg&feature=player_embedded

Actions speak louder than words, Mr. President

TheNRSC, 30 June 2011

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=kiO2iwAgbFs

Obama Isn't Working: Allentown, PA

mittromney, 29 June 2011

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-44o5Dn6V98>

Senate Republicans shred Obama for hypocrisy, gutlessness on debt talks

by Guy Benson, 30 June 2011

http://townhall.com/tipsheet/guybenson/2011/06/30/video_senate_republicans_shred_obama_for_hypocrisy_gutlessness_on_debt_talks

GOP Senators tell Dem leaders: allow budget work next week (33:11)

BudgetGOP, 30 June 2011

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=boDPS2gN8jA#at=134

Citing evidence they call 'contradictory' to Kagan's confirmation testimony, 49 lawmakers call for Judiciary Committee investigation

by Terence P. Jeffrey, 1 July 2011

Forty-nine members of the U.S. House of Representatives—including the chairman of the House Oversight Committee, the chairman of the Republican Policy Committee and two presidential candidates—are pointing to evidence they say is "contradictory" to Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan's confirmation testimony and calling for the House Judiciary Committee to investigate the matter.

The lawmakers also say they believe that evidence already made public shows that Kagan must recuse herself from any court cases involving the health care bill signed into law by President Barack Obama while she was serving as Obama's solicitor general.

"We respectfully call upon the House Judiciary Committee to promptly investigate the extent to which U.S. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan was involved in preparing a legal defense of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) during her tenure as Solicitor General," the 49 lawmakers wrote in a letter to Rep. Lamar Smith (R.-Texas), the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and Rep. John Conyers (D.-Mich.), the ranking member of the committee.

"Contradictory to her 2010 confirmation testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, recently released Department of Justice (DOJ) documents indicate that Justice Kagan actively participated with her Obama Administration colleagues in formulating a defense of PPACA," the letter said...

More: <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/breaking-49-house-members-call-investiga>

For whom the Greek bell tolls

by Steve Forbes, 1 July 2011 (July 18 issue)

...Belt-tightening alone, particularly higher taxes, won't make Greece into a worthy debtor. Tax and structural reforms should be on the list of requirements before there are further bailouts.

The Greeks are accused—and rightly so—of not paying taxes. Other countries in the region suffered from the same malaise. Their solution? They junked their old tax codes and replaced them with a simple, easy-to-enforce flat tax. While the top tax rate in Greece is almost 50%, in neighboring Bulgaria, which enacted a flat tax, it's 10%; Albania, 10%; Romania, 16%. These countries are growing, while Greece is contracting.

Everyone should also stop pretending that Greece's debt doesn't need to be restructured. There's plenty of precedent for this, particularly various Latin American debt crises we faced in the 1980s and early 1990s. Done right, this will not bring down the commercial banking system.

Greece badly needs internal changes. Property rights, for example, are primitive. Experts estimate the government owns some \$500 billion worth of property, yet it has no effective procedures for registering property. Figuring out who owns what can get a bit murky. This is a no-brainer: Get the property situation sorted out and the government could rake in countless billions in leases or in sales to developers.

Bottom line: Austerity alone won't work, politically or economically. Cutbacks must be accompanied by tax reform à la the flat tax, positive structural changes to encourage growth and the restructuring of debts. Greece's poor leadership may be an extreme case, but the Greek disease clearly infects all leaders of developed countries today.

More: <http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2011/0718/opinions-steve-forbes-fact-comment-greek-bell-tolls.html>

Corporate jets and tax breaks

Obama takes demagogic dishonesty to a new level.

by Jonah Goldberg 1 July 2011

...More broadly, no one threw a flag on his claim that "every single observer who's not an elected official, who's not a politician," agrees with him on the burning need to raise taxes as part of any budget deal. This is a good example of Obama's most grating tic, his need to claim that all reasonable and serious people agree with him and anyone who disagrees must be doing so for base or ideological motives.

No one queried why he talks about the need to raise taxes on "millionaires and billionaires" but the fine print of his proposals defines millionaires and billionaires as people who make \$200,000 a year as individuals or \$250,000 as joint-filing couples. Jay Duckson at Central Business Jets tells the Wall Street Journal that the starting price for a private jet is

\$10 million dollars. Annual upkeep and fuel is about \$500,000. You do the math.

This points to what is most offensive about Obama's focus-grouped class-warfare rhetoric: the total incoherence of the underlying policies...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/270907/corporate-jets-and-tax-breaks-jonah-goldberg>

An obsession with corporate jets

by Andrew Cline, 30 June 2011

Who knew that straw men could fly jets? To justify his destructive economic policies over the past two years, President Obama has set fields full of straw men aflame. Not surprisingly, the economy continues to struggle. Burning political props, it turns out, doesn't create jobs. Alas, the president has not noticed. During his press conference yesterday, the president presented his newest straw man: the tax-escaping corporate jet owner.

For a president who boasts constantly of all the taxes he has cut, it seems odd that Obama would advocate not just undoing one of his own stimulus-based tax changes, but would single it out as an unfair advantage for the super-rich. It seems odd until one realizes that this is President Obama we are talking about. This is the same man who campaigned in 2008 against a federal health insurance mandate, only to embrace the idea almost immediately after taking office. This is the man who promised that one of his first official acts as president would be to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay. More than two years into his presidency, it is still open.

These were not just campaign promises broken. They were telling signs of how this politician operates. Obama did not believe a word of what he said about the impracticality of Hillary Clinton's individual mandate. He simply deployed the argument he thought most effective against it. Likewise, Gitmo. If he really believed that the prison at Guantanamo Bay was a betrayal of America's core values, it would be closed by now. He is the commander in chief. It is a military prison. He could close it. But he never meant what he said. It was a straw man to use against President Bush.

And so are the evil corporate executives in their three-piece suits filling the cabins of their corporate jets with smoke from cigars they light from the corners of flaming \$100 bills. They are not preventing Congress from funding child safety programs. Their tax advantage, which the president supported only two years ago, amounts to roughly \$3 billion over 10 years. The federal debt rises by \$3.9 billion a day. This is chump change by Washington standards. And the president knows it...

More: <http://spectator.org/archives/2011/06/30/obamas-obsession-with-corporat>

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They're still fighting for us.

Soldiers' Angels

Wounded Warrior Project

Fisher House: help military families

Disabled American Veterans

Our Military

Be sure to read these superb pieces:

The Descent of Liberalism *by Michael Knox Beran*

The State Despotism *by Mark Steyn*

Seen, and Not Seen *by Frédéric Bastiat (July 1850)*

100 Stimulus Projects: A Second Opinion *by Sen. Tom Coburn*

Just Make Stuff Up *by Victor Davis Hanson*

What would real health care reform look like? *by Ronald Bailey*

Health Care Mythology *by Clifford Asness*

And here's what a trillion dollars looks like.