

Gibson Guitar to Uncle Sam—“From my cold, dead hands”

by Bob Barr, 31 Aug 2011

Are you a guitar owner? More important, do you own a guitar made by Gibson, one of the most well-known American guitar manufacturers? If so, listen up; you may be in Uncle Sam's cross hairs—as a criminal.

Just ask Henry Juskiewicz, Chairman and CEO of Gibson Guitars.

Last week, heavily armed federal agents raided two guitar manufacturing facilities in Tennessee owned by Gibson — one in Nashville, another in Memphis. The feds were not acting on a tip that an al Qaeda cell was holed up in the buildings; or that Mexican drug cartel gangs were lurking inside. It was actually something far more serious; far more serious, that is, to a bunch of federal bureaucrats with nothing better to do...

More: <http://blogs.ajc.com/bob-barr-blog/2011/08/31/gibson-guitar-to-uncle-sam-%E2%80%93-%E2%80%9Cfrom-my-cold-dead-hands%E2%80%9D/>

Dana Loesch got REALLY teed-off about it. Go [here](#) and listen to August 26/Part 2, just past the halfway point.

Adult language. *Angry* adult language.

Obama at a loss

Applying business sense to government can get U.S. back on track.

by Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI), 29 Aug 2011

When stock prices were plunging earlier this month, President Obama strode to the teleprompter and utterly failed to calm the markets or the American people. Sadly, they saw what I saw—and have come to exactly the same conclusion: Mr. Obama does not know what to do. He never did.

Since taking office in admittedly tough economic conditions, the president has taken America 180 degrees in the wrong direction. His failed \$825-billion stimulus, Obamacare, Dodd-Frank and the explosion of his administration's other job-killing regulations have combined to put a stranglehold on our economy. Until these policies are reversed, the lack of confidence that dampens consumption, business investment and job creation will be the order of the day. Unfortunately, Mr. Obama is blinded by ideology and refuses to acknowledge the harm his agenda has wreaked on America and our economic future.

Fortunately, some in Congress understand the harm his agenda is causing and are working hard to reverse course.

As a thought experiment, imagine how much uncertainty would be removed and the level of confidence that would return if the entire Obama agenda were repealed tomorrow. A pretty pleasant thought, isn't it? ...

Specifics: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/aug/29/obamas-economic-policy-last-chance/print/>

(Hat tip: Jim D.)

Outstanding new conservative books:

[Left Turn: How Liberal Media Bias Distorts the American Mind](#) by Tim Groseclose

[After America](#) by Mark Steyn

[The Secret Knowledge: On the Dismantling of American Culture](#) by David Mamet

[Your Teacher Said WHAT?!](#) by Joseph and Blake Kernen

[Reckless Endangerment](#) by Gretchen Morgenson and Joshua Rosner

'Green jobs' promise something for nothing

by David Freddoso, 31 Aug 2011

Spanish economist Gabriel Calzada caused the central economic planners' heads to explode in March 2009 when he released a study showing every "green job" the Spanish government was creating with its regime of open-ended subsidies was simultaneously devouring enough resources to create 2.2 jobs in Spain's private sector.

"Green jobs," the professor concluded, were economic losers, destroyers of wealth and productivity. What's worse, 70 percent of them were short-lived installation gigs, not long-term jobs at all.

Spain's socialist government, which had presented "green jobs" as the way out of the country's economic problems (perhaps that sounds familiar), reacted to Calzada's study with fury. The Industrial Ministry took the incredible step of trying to make his university disavow his work. But behind the scenes, the same government officials were quietly

coming to the same conclusions as Calzada...

More: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/08/green-jobs-promise-something-nothing>

House Gov't Oversight & Investigations Chairman Darrell Issa on the growing Fast and Furious scandal

Hugh Hewitt Show, 30 Aug 2011

...DI: Hugh, the real story here is a little bit like Iran Contra. Somebody thought up a silly idea, and they allowed it to go forward. And now they're trying to say well, it wasn't a bad idea, it was just poorly executed. No, this was a bad idea. But if you remember Iran Contra, unlike Iran Contra, they were not trying to rescue hostages. There were no freedom fighters in South America. This was a completely elective program, one in which they delivered weapons deliberately through a channel that they knew was going to end up in the hands of drug cartels. And at least two federal agents have paid with their life, plus countless Mexican citizens, many of them innocent, plus, probably some federal Mexican federal agents are dead because we were reckless...

Read all about it: <http://www.hughhewitt.com/transcripts.aspx?id=131ae193-fde4-4946-9051-16d819ecb55b>

Rep. West threatens in letter to leave Congressional Black Caucus over tea party bashing

by Caroline May, 31 Aug 2011

...The freshman congressman declared, "It is unconscionable when a fellow CBC Member, Congressman Andre Carson, comes to South Florida and claims that some in the Tea Party would love to see black Americans 'hanging on a tree.' It is appalling to hear another CBC colleague, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, say 'The Tea Party can go straight to hell.'"

West added that Carson's comments, which caricature the tea party movement as a group of racists, are "baseless" and "desperate." West reiterated that the movement is focused on fiscal responsibility and American exceptionalism and wrote that the the CBC should be working to end the "balkanisation" of America.

"As a member of the CBC, I look forward to working with you to help end this practice. All of us, especially Congressman Carson, Congresswoman Waters and others who have engaged in racially-motivated rhetoric, should follow the example of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., not the example of Reverend Jeremiah Wright," West added...

More: <http://dailycaller.com/2011/08/31/rep-west-to-reconsider-cbc-membership-if-tea-party-bashing-not-condemned/>

Update: Wausau, Wis. mayor tells Labor Day union sponsors to invite GOP pols or pay all costs

by Tom Blumer, 31 Aug 2011

The plot thickens...

<http://newsbusters.org/blogs/tom-blumer/2011/08/30/update-wausau-wis-mayor-tells-labor-day-union-sponsors-invite-gop-pols-o#ixzz1WZU1fglW>

Re: The Anti-Science Smear

by Jonah Goldberg, 30 Aug 2011

...Why does the Left get to pick which issues are the benchmarks for "science"? Why can't the measure of being pro-science be the question of **heritability of intelligence**? Or the existence of fetal pain? Or the distribution of cognitive abilities among the sexes at the extreme right tail of the bell curve? Or if that's too upsetting, how about dividing the line between those who are pro- and anti-science along the lines of support for **geoengineering**? Or — coming soon — the role cosmic rays play in cloud formation? Why not make it about support for nuclear power? Or Yucca Mountain? Why not deride the idiots who oppose genetically modified crops, even when they **might prevent blindness in children**?

Some of these examples are controversial, others tendentious, but all are just as fair as the way the Left framed embryonic stem cell research and all are more relevant than questions about evolution...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/275903/re-anti-science-smear-jonah-goldberg>

Sun causes climate change shock

by James Delingpole, 27 Aug 2011

If Michael Crichton had lived to write a follow-up to *State of Fear*, the plotline might well have gone like this: at a top secret, state of the art laboratory in Switzerland, scientists finally discover the true cause of "global warming." It's the sun, stupid. More specifically—as the Danish physicist Henrik Svensmark has long postulated—it's the result of cosmic rays which act as a seed for cloud formation. The scientists working on the project are naturally euphoric: this is a major breakthrough which will not only overturn decades of misguided conjecture on so-called Man Made Global Warming but will spare the global economy trillions of dollars which might otherwise have been squandered on utterly pointless efforts to reduce anthropogenic CO2 emissions. However, these scientists have failed to realise just how many people—alarmist scientists, huckster politicians, rent-seeking landowners like (the late Michael Crichton's brilliant and, of course, entirely fictional creation) the absurd, pompous Sir Reginald Leeds Bt, green activists, eco-fund managers, EU technocrats, MSM environmental correspondents—stand to gain from the Man Made "Climate Change" industry. Their discovery must be suppressed at all costs. So, one by one, the scientists on the cosmic ray project find themselves being bumped off, until only one man remains and must race against time to prove, etc, etc...

Except of course in the real world the second part wouldn't happen. No one would need to go to the trouble of bumping off those pesky scientists with their awkward, annoying facts and their proper actual research. That's because the MSM and the scientific "community" would find it perfectly easy to suppress the story anyway, without recourse to severed brake cables or ricin-impregnated hand-washes or staged "suicides."

This is exactly what has happened with **the latest revelations from CERN** over its landmark **CLOUD experiment...**

Read on: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/jamesdelingpole/100102296/sun-causes-climate-change-shock/>

Obama's Magical Misery Tour

Uploaded by mnmajoritydotorg on Aug 16, 2011

Watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gTon6TOFKc&feature=email>

(Hat tip: J.F.K.)

The racial violence that dares not speak its name

by John T. Bennett, 30 Aug 2011

...It cannot be emphasized enough that these attacks often occur in suburban areas where the black groups have to leave their own neighborhoods and purposefully travel to areas that are predominantly non-black, to attack non-black victims. For instance, in one of the many flash mob [attacks in Chicago](#), Trovulus Pickett, 17, is part of a group that attacked and robbed several victims, including a 68-year-old doctor. The attacks occurred in the North side, which is [15 miles away](#) from [Pickett's home](#). This indicates a serious level of planning and potential racial targeting. If these were just run-of-the mill robberies, it wouldn't be too surprising. But the social problem we're looking at is large groups, sometimes [numbering in the hundreds](#), sometimes [armed](#), engaging in racially-focused violent crimes.

There is quite simply no way for a politically correct society to grasp these events, much less effectively deal with them. Liberals have reached the depths of self-deception and self-censorship in response. The [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), and the [Chicago Tribune](#), have all openly stated that they will refuse to report on the racial facts of these violent crimes. The [Los Angeles Times explains](#) that they don't want to "unfairly stigmatize racial groups." They prefer the soft bigotry of low expectations instead.

These flash mobs have turned the comfortable narrative of racism on its head. Politicians, the media, academics, and the legal community do not have the capacity to face the issue. The reigning dogma of white racism is too deeply entrenched. There is a small grievance industry built around condemning white racism and intolerance, [real](#) or [imagined](#). Indeed, the welfare state itself is in large part based on the assumption that whites need to give more to achieve racial equality, as reflected in President Obama's lament that the civil rights movement [didn't focus on economic redistribution...](#)

Details: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/the_racial_violence_that_dare_not_speak_its_name.html

White House bluster hides truth

by Steve Huntley, 30 Aug 2011

...No doubt these events did create drag for the economy. But Democrats never cut that kind of slack for President George W. Bush. They constantly talk about him inheriting a surplus from the Clinton years but ignore that he also inherited a deteriorating economy that produced a recession in March of 2001 just weeks after he was sworn in.

Liberals ignore the economic devastation of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks in New York and Washington. Air traffic was grounded for days, commerce came practically to a halt. But none of that was allowed to intrude into the left's narrative of Bush squandering the surplus.

Hurricane Katrina was a convenient cudgel to pound Bush over the failure of government to respond effectively to the disaster, though it was the Democratic-run governments of New Orleans and Louisiana, the first responders, that were the most guilty. Here again the Democratic narrative leaves out the economic consequences of Katrina. The point is that any president has to deal with "head winds" to the economy from unexpected and uncontrollable events domestic and foreign. What's remarkable about this presidency is the never-ending whining about them. This finger-pointing is just passing the buck to avoid responsibility for policies that have failed to revive the economy and, worse, served to prolong the economic suffering...

More: <http://www.suntimes.com/news/huntley/7345664-452/white-house-bluster-hides-truth.html>

Science getting settled

New, convincing evidence indicates global warming is caused by cosmic rays and the sun — not humans.

by Lawrence Solomon, 27 Aug 2011

The science is now all-but-settled on global warming, convincing new evidence demonstrates, but Al Gore, the IPCC and other global warming doomsayers won't be celebrating. The new findings point to cosmic rays and the sun — not human activities — as the dominant controller of climate on Earth.

The research, published with little fanfare this week in the prestigious journal *Nature*, comes from über-prestigious CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, one of the world's largest centres for scientific research involving 60 countries and 8,000 scientists at more than 600 universities and national laboratories. CERN is the organization that invented the World Wide Web, that built the multi-billion dollar Large Hadron Collider, and that has now built a pristinely clean stainless steel chamber that precisely recreated the Earth's atmosphere.

In this chamber, 63 CERN scientists from 17 European and American institutes have done what global warming doomsayers said could never be done — demonstrate that cosmic rays promote the formation of molecules that in Earth's atmosphere can grow and seed clouds, the cloudier and thus cooler it will be. Because the sun's magnetic field controls how many cosmic rays reach Earth's atmosphere (the stronger the sun's magnetic field, the more it shields Earth from incoming cosmic rays from space), the sun determines the temperature on Earth...

More: <http://opinion.financialpost.com/2011/08/26/lawrence-solomon-science-now-settled/>

Mr. Rusher, who died at 87 this past April, was one of the founding fathers of modern American conservatism. Read more about him [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

The Long Detour

by William Rusher, 13 July 2005

In 1964 the American conservative movement made its first bid for national political power, by seizing control of the Republican Party and nominating Senator Barry Goldwater as its candidate for president. The attempt failed disastrously: Goldwater carried only six states and won just 38% of the popular vote.

But far from disappearing, the conservative movement actually seemed strengthened by its defeat. It continued to grow, organizing the supporters who had cut their teeth in the Goldwater campaign, developing the issues that would make it more relevant in the years ahead, and grooming candidates and spokesmen who could carry its banner. Just four years later in 1968, it had a new national champion in the governor of the nation's largest state, who had been elected in 1966 by a margin of one million votes over the incumbent Democrat. If ever a new political movement seemed poised to take over the governance of America, it was conservatism in 1968.

Yet at just that moment, history paused in what seemed its inevitable course. The conservative movement would be compelled to spend 16 years, from 1964 to 1980, waiting in the wings for its victory. The Republican Party would win (albeit narrowly) in 1968 to be sure, then overwhelmingly in 1972, only to witness in 1974 the first presidential resignation in American history, and then spend six years in the wilderness licking its wounds. The Democrats, despite the growing unpopularity of liberalism, managed to duck the bullets and continue to control both Houses of Congress and even, from 1976 to 1980, the White House. The whole political history of the United States seemed to hiccup and stall,

while the country contended, for 16 precious years, with the phenomenon and consequences of one strange, stubborn, and ambiguous man...

Read on: http://www.claremont.org/publications/crb/id.1098/article_detail.asp

A short primer on the National Debt

With a return to 1990s growth rates, the debt-to-GDP ratio could drop to 56.7%, about where it was in 2000, in just one decade.

by *John Steele Gordon*, 29 Aug 2011

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903480904576510660976229354.html>

Losing Malmo

And Brussels, and Rome, and Amsterdam...

by *Andrew C. McCarthy*, 27 Aug 2011

...An Islamic enclave in the West may as well be the West Bank, and the authorities the IDF. They are regarded no differently. That is why, as Soeren Kern of the Madrid-based Strategic Studies Group [notes](#), "Fire and emergency workers . . . refuse to enter Malmo's mostly Muslim Rosengard district without police escorts." And sensibly so: When firefighters attempted to extinguish a blaze at the city's main mosque, local Muslims pelted them with stones.

There is a simple reason why this has happened to Malmo, and why it is happening in Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, etc. The European Union forced on its member states the same approach to their swelling Muslim populations that the Obama administration is now trying to strong-arm American cities and states into adopting. It is a suicide theory, holding that the only threat to our security is "violent extremism."...

Read it all: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/275686/losing-malmo-andrew-c-mccarthy>

Europe needs a revolution

by *Pat Condell*, 25 Aug 2011

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3u9LB32YYM&feature=player_embedded

A Changing Europe

by *Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff*, 26 Aug 2011

Tonight we are talking about a changing Europe, and I will keep short because I am convinced that we have a lot to talk about but I will now present my most important points. First of all I want to say that I completely agree that Europe is changing, a change that I personally, in view of the future, do not agree with.

Europe is changing, European society is changing from a free society to one that is based on Sharia law. You will ask how I come to this conclusion with the 500,000 Muslims who have lived in Austria for more than 10 years; but it doesn't need 500,000 Muslims: even 50,000 or 100,000 are sufficient to mount the pressure that we are all feeling and seeing.

We live in a democracy with the principle of separation of church and state. The teachings of Islam, however, do not recognize this separation. Quite on the contrary. And different to Christianity and Judaism. This Islamic concept is called *Din wa daula*, the unity of church and state, of politics and religion in Islam. Its teachings include a complete system for world, state, economy and society, and this system is based on solely on the Quran and the Sunna, the way of the prophet, which includes everything he ever said or did.

Sharia, for those of you who do not know this yet, is the Islamic law, and what is so insidious about this Islamic law is that it concerns not only Muslims, because in that case I would have very few concerns about this Islamic law, but that Sharia concerns Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In this way any interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims are regulated and encoded...

Continue: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/08/esw-europe-is-changing.html#more>

A gay man is harassed by Muslims. This has to be a tough call for liberals. Oh wait. I know: it's Bush's fault.

“The Jews are paying you”

Baron Bodissey, 26 Aug 2011

Paris Dipersico is a young Canadian author. Raised in a Muslim home, he wrote a memoir entitled *Wake Up Call* to give an account of his experiences and take a hard look at Islam. For his temerity he was abducted and assaulted by two Muslims, who were certain that he must be in the pay of “the Jews” to write such blasphemies.

Video: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/08/jews-are-paying-you.html>

Political Quotients

Peter Robinson interviews UCLA professor Tim Groseclose, author of

Left Turn: How Liberal Media Bias Distorts the American Mind

22 Aug 2011

Watch: [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) [Part 3](#) [Part 4](#) [Part 5](#)

Real Science

is a remarkable Climate website run by Steven Goddard. The link below will take you directly to what I consider the most enjoyable part: news clippings of weather anomalies and heat waves going back to the 18th century. But I urge you to check out the whole thing.

<http://stevengoddard.wordpress.com/bad-weather/>

The Desperation-of-Deprivation Myth

The West has incentivized non-productivity on an industrial scale.

by Mark Steyn, 27 Aug 2011

...The preceding film had shown a neat subdivision of pleasant red-brick maisonettes set in relatively landscaped grounds. There was grass, and it looked maintained. Granted, it was not as bucolic as my beloved New Hampshire, but, compared to the brutalized concrete bunkers in which the French and the Swedes entomb their seething Muslim populations, it was nothing to riot over. Nonetheless, someone explained that these riotous Mancunian youth were growing up in “deprivation,” and the rioters themselves seemed disposed to agree. Like they say in *West Side Story*, “I’m depraved on account of I’m deprived.” We’ve so accepted the correlation that we don’t even notice that they’re no longer deprived, but they are significantly more deprived.

In fact, these feral youth live better than 90 percent of the population of the planet. They certainly live better than their fellow youths halfway around the world who go to work each day in factories across China and India to make the cool electronic toys young Westerners expect to enjoy as their birthright. In Britain, as in America and Europe, the young take it for granted that this agreeable division of responsibilities is as permanent a feature of life as the earth and sky: Rajiv and Suresh in Bangalore make the state-of-the-art gizmo, Kevin and Ron in Birmingham get to play with it. That’s just the way it is. And, because that’s the way it is, Kevin and Ron and the welfare state that attends their every need assume ’twill always be so.

To justify their looting, the looters appealed to the conventional desperation-of-deprivation narrative: They’d “do anything to get more money.” Anything, that is, except get up in the morning, put on a clean shirt, and go off to do a day’s work. That concept is all but unknown to the homes in which these guys were raised...

Read it all: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/275679/desperation-deprivation-myth-mark-steyn>

Flashback: Obama in 2008: Adding \$4 trillion to national debt ‘unpatriotic’

by Matt Cover, 24 Aug 2011

...“The problem is, is that the way Bush has done it over the last eight years is to take out a credit card from the Bank of China in the name of our children, driving up our national debt from \$5 trillion dollars for the first 42 presidents—number 43 added \$4 trillion dollars by his lonesome, so that we now have over \$9 trillion dollars of debt that we are going to have to pay back—\$30,000 for every man, woman and child,” Obama said on July 3, 2008, at a campaign event

in Fargo, N.D.

"That's irresponsible. It's unpatriotic," said candidate Obama. However, in less than three years in office, Obama has driven up the national debt by \$4 trillion himself...

More: <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/flashback-obama-2008-adding-4-trillion-n>

The story includes this video, uploaded by maywhitley31 on 23 Aug 2011:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=1kuTG19Cu_Q

The Great Political Migration

Millions of people are, for good reason, abandoning big-government blue states for low-tax red ones. Michael Medved on the demographic shift shaking up the electoral map.

by Michael Medved, 27 Aug 2011

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/08/27/census-data-shows-people-are-moving-from-blue-to-red-states.html>

Libyan good guys, bad guys might surprise us

by David Warren, 26 Aug 2011

...In trying to follow what has been happening in and around Tripoli, these last few days, I've been struck by the naiveté of media both East and West. There is less difference between them than first meets the eye. Al Jazeera and the BBC are apt to provide the same wrong information, in live time. So, for that matter, do Fox News and CNN, across the left-right divide in America.

The issue is not crude bias. It is, so far as I am able to understand, the compounded effect of two large factors. Journalists fail to self-criticize, because we belong to a particular, now globalized, class, that is self-referential, like all classes. We assume that others either think as we do; or are beyond the pale.

And this is compounded by the nature of our trade. We must seem to know what we are talking about. "The news must always sound important," as the late Indian national broadcaster Latika Ratnam once told me, while explaining why the late Walter Cronkite could sound most credible, when he was least well informed.

Those hoping to retain authority must avoid contradicting themselves. Once you have said something is so, it must continue to be so, despite evidence to the contrary. You must stick with what you have already reported, for as long as you can, to avoid the naked emperor problem...

More: <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Libyan+good+guys+guys+might+surprise/5297441/story.html>

Traveling back to the future on inter-city buses

The private sector again shows the road forward.

by Michael Barone, 25 Aug 2011

...The buses have bathrooms, AC power outlets, and free Wi-Fi. They're not as fast as the much more expensive Acela train, but they tend to run on schedule.

Bus travel used to be decidedly downscale, with a clientele that scared off middle-class travelers. That's because, back in the days of heavily regulated transportation, bus lines followed the passenger railroad model, with stations in central cities, routes with multiple stops, fares propped up by monopolies, and operators with no economic incentive to provide comfortable or pleasant service.

Chinatown and Megabus operators ditched this model for one that works for travelers for whom money is scarce and time plentiful. Who needs a station? Inter-city buses can occupy curb space briefly just as city buses do. Who needs multiple stops? You can make money on people who want to go from one specific location to another.

Needless to say, the cost to the taxpaying public is minimal. City streets and interstate highways already exist, and maintenance gets financing from gas taxes. And the system has enormous flexibility. If fewer passengers want to line up in Chinatown and more on the Upper West Side, the bus can change stops.

Private bus operators have effectively taken a 100-year-old technology, the bus, and adapted it seamlessly to the 21st century. Compare high-speed rail. It is tethered to enormous stations that must be built or refurbished and limited to particular routes that, once the rails are laid down, cannot be changed except at prohibitive expense...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/275477/traveling-back-future-inter-city-buses-michael-barone>

The writer is a former editor of *New Scientist* magazine. In the book *The Chilling Stars: A New Theory of Climate Change*, he and Henrik Svensmark said that cosmic rays amplify small changes in the sun's irradiance, creating 1- to 2-degree Celsius cycles in temperatures on earth.

The global warmists' dam breaks

CERN experiment confirms cosmic ray action.

by Nigel Calder, 24 Aug 2011

...In an early-morning experimental run at CERN, starting at 03.45, ultraviolet light began making sulphuric acid molecules in the chamber, while a strong electric field cleansed the air of ions. It also tended to remove molecular clusters made in the neutral environment (n) but some of these accumulated at a low rate. As soon as the electric field was switched off at 04.33, natural cosmic rays (gcr) raining down through the roof of the experimental hall in Geneva helped to build clusters at a higher rate...

...Retracing those 14 years, what if physics had functioned as it is supposed to do? What if CLOUD, quickly approved and funded, had verified the Svensmark effect with all the authority of CERN, in the early 2000s. What if the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had done a responsible job, acknowledging the role of the Sun and curtailing the prophecies of catastrophic warming?

For a start there would have no surprise about the "travesty" that global warming has stopped since the mid-1990s, with the Sun becoming sulky. Vast sums might have been saved on misdirected research and technology, and on climate change fests and wheezes of every kind. The world's poor and their fragile living environment could have had far more useful help than precautions against warming.

And there would have been less time for so many eminent folk from science, politics, industry, finance, the media and the arts to be taken in by man-made climate catastrophe. (In London, for example, from the Royal Society to the National Theatre.) Sadly for them, in the past ten years they've crowded with their warmist badges into a Hall of Shame, like bankers before the crash.

More, including graph: <http://calderup.wordpress.com/2011/08/24/cern-experiment-confirms-cosmic-ray-action/>

Crime and the Great Recession

Jobs have fled, lawbreaking hasn't risen—and criminologists are scratching their heads.

by James Q. Wilson, Summer 2011 issue

During the seventies and eighties, scarcely any newspaper story about rising crime failed to mention that it was strongly linked to unemployment and poverty. The argument was straightforward: if less legitimate work was available, more illegal work would take place. Certain scholars agreed. Economist Gary Becker of the University of Chicago, a Nobel laureate, developed a powerful theory that crime was rational—that a person will commit crime if the expected utility exceeds that of using his time and other resources in pursuit of alternative activities, such as leisure or legitimate work. Observation may appear to bear this theory out; after all, neighborhoods with elevated crime rates tend to be those where poverty and unemployment are high as well.

But the notion that unemployment causes crime runs into some obvious difficulties. For one thing, the 1960s, a period of rising crime, had essentially the same unemployment rate as the late 1990s and early 2000s, a period when crime fell. Further, during the Great Depression, when unemployment hit 25 percent, the crime rate in many cities went down...

...At the deepest level, many of these shifts, taken together, suggest that crime in the United States is falling—even through the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression—because of a big improvement in the culture. The cultural argument may strike some as vague, but writers have relied on it in the past to explain both the Great Depression's fall in crime and the sixties' crime explosion. In the first period, on this view, people took self-control seriously; in the second, self-expression—at society's cost—became more prevalent. It is a plausible case...

More: http://www.city-journal.org/2011/21_3_crime-decline.html

CERN scientists question AGW models

by Rick Moran, 26 Aug 011

The scientists at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) have made an historic contribution to the global warming debate. Using a Proton Synchrotron accelerator, the scientists have determined that cosmic rays are probably as responsible, or more responsible for cloud formation on earth than any human activity...

Continue: http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2011/08/cern_scientists_question_agw_models.html

Answering Jonathan Alter's challenge

by Peter Wehner, 26 Aug 2011

“Tell me again why Barack Obama has been such a bad president?” Jonathan Alter writes in his column.

Alter tells us he's not talking here about Obama as a tactician and communicator, and he's not interested in hearing ad hominem attacks or about people's generalized “disappointment.” (Neither am I.) He wants to know on a substantive basis why Obama should be judged to have failed so far. In Alter's words, “Your mission, Jim [or anyone else for that matter], should you decide to accept it, is to be specific and rational, not vague and visceral.”

Consider the mission accepted...

Devastating: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/08/26/jonathan-alter-challenge/>

The wacky world of liberal fundamentalism

by Robert Weissberg, 25 Aug 2011

http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/the_wacky_world_of_liberal_fundamentalism.html

A terrific speech at the Reagan Library. But all the mainstream media covered was Nancy Reagan's stumble.

Conservatism is about empowering people to catch up

by Senator Marco Rubio, 24 Aug 2011

Full text & video: http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2011/08/24/rubio_conservatism_is_about_empowering_people_to_catch_up.html

Big business for the Federal government

Las Vegas Review-Journal editorial, 26 Aug 2011

Back in 2000, after numerous documented abuses, Congress reformed the nation's asset forfeiture laws in an effort to better protect the innocent. A decade later, it appears time to revisit the issue.

For those unfamiliar with civil forfeiture, it is a powerful law enforcement tool that allows the government to seize an individual's assets—cash, property, virtually anything—even if the owner of the items confiscated is never convicted or even charged with a crime...

Read on: <http://www.lvrj.com/opinion/big-business-for-the-federal-government-128451238.html>

Richard Friedman—as he was called when I first met him, way before the Texas Jewboys graced the concert stage—is a former liberal, and comes from a thoroughly liberal family.

Kinky for Perry

by Kinky Friedman, 24 Aug 2011

Rick Perry has never lost an election; I've never won one. Maybe that's what's wrong with the world. On the other hand, I've long been friends with Bill Clinton and George W., and Rick Perry and I, though at times bitter adversaries, have remained friends as well. It's not always easy to maintain friendships with politicians. To paraphrase Charles Lamb, you have to work at it like some men toil after virtue.

I have been quoted as saying that when I die, I am to be cremated, and the ashes are to be thrown in Rick Perry's hair. Yet, simply put, Rick Perry and I are incapable of resisting each other's charm. He is not only a good sport, he is a good, kindhearted man, and he once sat in on drums with ZZ Top. A guy like that can't be all bad. When I ran for governor of Texas as an independent in 2006, the Crips and the Bloods ganged up on me. When I lost, I drove off in a 1937 Snit, refusing to concede to Perry. Three days later Rick called to give me a gracious little pep talk, effectively talking me down from jumping off the bridge of my nose. Very few others were calling at that time, by the way. Such is the nature of winning and losing and politicians and life. You might call what Rick did an act of random kindness. Yet in my mind it made him more than a politician, more than a musician; it made him a mensch.

These days, of course, I would support Charlie Sheen over Obama...

Read the rest: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/08/24/kinky-friedman-rick-perry-s-got-my-vote.html#comments>
(Hat tip: Jim D.)

This demolition of the so-called "reality based" Left is so delicious that I can almost taste those juicy ribs.

Feeding the masses on unicorn ribs

by Walter Russell Mead, 19 Aug 2011

...What worries me isn't that the President's team advised him to make a few speeches on this subject; if a candidate can't throw chum to the base now and then what's the point of having elections? What worries me is that they didn't understand that making something this bogus a central plank of his actual governing plan on an issue as vital as jobs would have serious costs down the road.

Many liberals want green jobs to exist so badly that they don't fully grasp how otherworldly and ineffectual this advocacy makes the President look to unemployed meat packers and truck drivers.

Let me put it this way. A GOP candidate might feel a need to please creationist voters and say a few nice things about intelligent design. That is politics as usual; it gins up the base and drive the opposition insane with fury and rage. No harm, really, and no foul.

But if that same politician then proposed to base federal health policy on a hunt for the historical Garden of Eden so that we could replace Medicare by feeding old people on fruit from the Tree of Life, he would have gone from quackery-as-usual to raving incompetence. True, the Tree of Life approach polls well in GOP focus groups: no cuts to Medicare benefits, massive tax savings, no death panels, Biblical values on display. Its only flaw is that there won't be any magic free fruit that lets us live forever, and sooner or later people will notice that and be unhappy.

Green jobs are the Democratic equivalent of Tree of Life Medicare; they scratch every itch of every important segment of the base and if they actually existed they would be an excellent policy choice. But since they are no more available to solve our jobs problem than the Tree of Life stands ready to make health care affordable, a green jobs policy boils down to a promise to feed the masses on tasty unicorn ribs from the Great Invisible Unicorn Herd that only the greens can see...

More: <http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2011/08/19/feeding-the-masses-on-unicorn-ribs/>

Left and Right going nuclear on Rick Perry

by Douglas MacKinnon, 26 Aug 2011

When you hear every single liberal media outlet in the country say, "We will know more about Rick Perry after we vet his 11 years in office," you need to understand that what they vindictively mean is: "President Obama and his followers will be proud of us after we are done with the mother of all smearing campaigns against the conservative governor of Texas."

Not since Ronald Reagan has a Republican candidate for president evoked such outright fear and loathing from the mainstream media and the far-left. They are flat-out petrified of Perry and are desperately trying to kill off his candidacy before it can take hold. Why?

Simple. As they suspiciously heap praise on the likes of Jon Huntsman and even Mitt Romney, they increasingly worry that Perry has the best chance to defeat their handpicked socialist messiah now occupying the Oval Office. With exactly that mission in mind, an editor of a major newspaper told me: "We plan to declare war on Rick Perry and do all in our power to crush him."

There you have it. No pretense of integrity, professionalism or of unbiased news-gathering. This particular newspaper plans to use its very considerable resources to destroy the Perry campaign before it gains momentum. Period.

Beyond the usual suspects in the far-left media, many in the GOP establishment such as Karl Rove, are doing all they can to derail the Perry campaign. Again, why? ...

More: <http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=582833&p=1>

Earthquake economics: view from the epicenter

by Robert Tracinski, 26 Aug 2011

...Of course, Krugman is pretty hard to parody these days. This is the same guy who **posited** the "stimulative" effect of the following policy: "If we discovered that, you know, space aliens were planning to attack and we needed a massive buildup to counter the space alien threat and really inflation and budget deficits took secondary place to that, this slump would be over in 18 months....There was a *Twilight Zone* episode like this in which scientists fake an alien threat in order to achieve world peace."

Yes, that's right. Now he's getting his economics from John Maynard Keynes by way of Rod Serling. Laugh if you

like, but on a grimmer note, this is the same pseudo-economist who saw a bright side to the 9/11 attacks because "all of a sudden, we need some new office buildings" and "rebuilding will generate at least some increase in business spending." All of this is a basic economic fallacy, which goes to show that the Nobel Prize in economics is worth about as much as the Nobel Peace Prize these days. This is the Fallacy of the Broken Window. The fallacy was memorably explained in Henry Hazlitt's classic introduction to economics, *Economics in One Lesson*...

...The Fallacy of the Broken Window is the basic premise on which America's national economic policy is currently built. One of the recent fads among the left-leaning commentariat is to **deny** that the national economy works the same way as a household budget. This is one of the cheap ways that dishonest statist economists try to get us to ignore the obvious, common-sense flaws in their theories...

Read it all: http://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2011/08/26/earthquake_economics_the_vew_from_the_epicenter.html

[Mr. Tracinski should also have cited Frederic Bastiat's 1850 masterpiece "**That Which Is Seen, and That Which Is Not Seen.**"]

Bill Keller, Just Asking Questions

by Alana Goodman, 25 Aug 2011

New York Times executive editor Bill Keller, who never expressed much curiosity about the religion of Democratic presidential candidates, is suddenly burning to find out more about the Republican field's religious beliefs...

...It will be interesting to see how the left responds. When Obama's spiritual adviser Jeremiah Wright and his father's Muslim religion came under fire in 2008, the immediate response was to condemn it as similar to the anti-Catholic paranoia JFK dealt with in the 1960 election. Of course, none of the current Republican candidates claim to rely on a vehemently anti-American pastor for spiritual guidance...

...Not that there's anything wrong with questioning a candidate's religion. Byron York did it well when he gave Bachmann a chance to explain whether being "submissive" in marriage meant she would defer to her husband if she became president. But in his column, Keller seems more interested in mocking and smearing the candidates than asking legitimate questions.

"I care a lot if a candidate is going to be a Trojan horse for a sect that believes it has divine instructions on how we should be governed," writes Keller, as if this is actually a realistic threat we should all be worried about.

I'm sure Keller would also "care a lot" if Obama was a secret Muslim intent on destroying America and replacing it with a socialist empire/American caliphate. But he wouldn't innocently write about this unfounded concern in a column. Why? Because there's no evidence of it. Just like there's not a shred to suggest that Romney, Perry or Bachmann are Trojan horses for some bizarre Christian theocratic conspiracy.

More: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/08/25/keller-new-york-times-religion/>

Fault Line

25 Aug 2011

President Obama has just confirmed that this week's DC earthquake occurred on a rare and obscure fault-line, apparently known as "Bush's Fault." Obama also announced that Attorney General Holder, the Secret Service, and Rep. Maxine Waters continue an investigation of the quake's suspicious ties to the Tea Party. Conservatives, however, have proven that it was actually caused by the founding fathers rolling over in their graves.

(Hat tip: Tony, Dave, and Marilyn)

And that reminds me of a remarkable essay which provided one of the very best explanations of the Crash of 2008, as well as a thorough gutting of the smug and stupid *New York Times*:

Who caused the global economic crisis? (Hint: it wasn't George W. Bush)

by Roger Kimball, 22 Dec 2008

<http://pajamasmedia.com/rogerkimball/2008/12/22/who-caused-the-global-economic-crisis-hint-it-wasnt-george-w-bush/?singlepage=true>

Which brings us to Roger's most recent column on economics.

Why hasn't the economic recovery that Obama promised happened?

by Roger Kimball, 20 Aug 2011

Part of the answer came in the mail yesterday. Something called "Quicken Loans" ("Engineered," the letter promised, "to Amaze™") arrived with the rest of the junk mail offering me an "excellent refinance opportunity." It turns out that I'm "pre-qualified" for gobs of cash at a special low, low interest rate. Apparently, all I need to do is call their

800 number to discuss my “specific situation” and then toddle around and help myself to the lucre...

More: <http://pajamasmedia.com/rogerkimball/2011/08/20/why-hasnt-the-economic-recovery-that-obama-promised-happened/>

Congressperson Waters is reliably dishonest, cynical, and hypocritical on all occasions.

Kerosene Maxine to Tea Party: "Go to hell!"

by Larry Elder, 25 Aug 2011

<http://patriotpost.us/opinion/larry-elder/2011/08/25/kerosene-maxine-to-tea-party-go-to-hell/>

Hike taxes, hemorrhage jobs

Investor's Business Daily editorial, 25 Aug 2011

...Illinois is in a huge financial hole, but the first rule of holes is that when you're in one you stop digging. When you tax something you get less of it, and that includes economic activity. Revenues grow when you expand the tax base, rather than raising tax rates through the proverbial roof. It's a lesson lost on blue states such as Illinois, deep in red ink, and nationally on President Obama and his administration.

The ways of Illinois and Washington stand in stark contrast with Texas, a right-to-work state with no income tax that does not impose unions or harsh regulatory burdens on businesses or their employees.

It recently added to its business-friendly climate with "loser-pays" tort reform legislation.

Texas eschews while Illinois embraces the Obama model of more government, more unions, more central planning, higher taxes. So it's not surprising that while Obama's Illinois founders, Texas has created 40% of all new jobs since June 2009, says Texas Gov. Rick Perry, citing numbers from the Dallas Federal Reserve.

As President Obama rode into his home state of Illinois recently in his Canadian-made bus, he said nothing of Illinois' economic implosion or the fact that copying his high-tax mantra helped create it.

More: <http://ptest.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/ArticlePrint.aspx?id=582595&p=1>

Rick Perry: Is the press being fair and accurate in its coverage of him?

If Obama was too much loved by mainstream press, is Perry too much reviled?

by David Zurawik, 21 Aug 2011

I doubt this modest request will be heard over the fevered roar for the scalp of Texas Gov. Rick Perry that the media has been sounding since he announced his candidacy for president. There is almost a palpable bloodlust to bring this guy down—and it is being sounded by parts of the mainstream press that should know better.

My modest proposal: Let's just try and be fair. Let's do a little self-ethnography from time to time and ask why we feel like it is open season on this guy and his campaign—and it is OK to drop some of the usual standards of fairness in trying to bring him down.

Let's also think back to 2008 and reflect on the way we covered candidate Obama, and ask ourselves if we are treating Perry the same way we treated the senator from Illinois. Really, think about it—and let's look in the mirror as we are doing so to see if we can hold our own gaze...

More: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/entertainment/tv/z-on-tv-blog/bal-rick-perry-barack-obama-be-fair-and-accurate-20110820,0,2098207.story>

Why Obama can't lead

by Michael Bargo Jr., 24 Aug 2011

President Obama's inability to be decisive and inept leadership stem not from his lack of executive experience, but from his grounding in a specific political culture, the one he sought out in Chicago. His entry and indoctrination into the political culture of black leadership there have not prepared him for a positive role as chief executive officer...

...In this political culture, the black political leader does not encourage his people to move forward, but rather convinces them that they *cannot* move forward. Whatever choices they make, their future is determined not by personal choice, but by the restrictive confines of white society. This is why actor-comedian Bill Cosby is viciously attacked when he suggests that African-Americans take responsibility for their own choices. His comments are perceived as an existential threat to the politics of black liberation and the entire political belief system that keeps the black political elites in power.

President Obama is constrained by the political paradigm of black leadership, since for him to be in control of the government would mean to betray his people. He would become the establishment "outsider" and he cannot do that. It would require the abandonment of his core beliefs. This is why he constantly blames former President Bush for the constraints that he still feels are holding him back. He is not in control; society and the world at large are. He blames the tsunami and Arab Spring for his economic failures. He leaves it to others (such as Senate leader Reid in the debt negotiations) to work out the details. The black political leader's handbook does not have a chapter on "owning" decisions.

His strategy is to highlight and blame the political context of his predicament, rather than make and own decisions. He cannot own his decisions since in his view, and the view of black politicians, only white society controls the process of decision-making. These decisions are by nature oppressive. There is no accommodation in black liberation rhetoric for "good" white establishment decisions. Obama then faces two constraints: he cannot personally become part of the oppressive establishment, and secondly, cannot engage in establishment decision-making. Whether he is consciously aware of these constraints, and chooses to go along with them, or is unaware of these constraints he imposes upon himself, does not matter. The effect is the same...

More: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/why_obama_cant_lead.html

The Downward Spiral

by Peter Ferrara, 24 Aug 2011

Accelerating downward spiral. That is what I have been predicting for the Obama Administration for over two years. And now it's happening. Events are spinning out of control. Rising inflation is restricting the Fed's options for keeping the economy high on monetary stimulus crack. The result? Fast developing market chaos.

On account of President Obama's economic policies, the economy never recovered from the last recession. Now it may go *back* into full scale recession before any recovery occurs. We may soon be living through a reenactment of the 1930s, not the 1970s. If we do not change course, there will be a double dip recession by 2013, directly caused by the economic policies Obama already has in place under current law.

And now we have riots in Obama's Amerika, kept quiet by the media, echoing the violence in London...

...What else is contributing to national events spinning out of control? How about President Obama's abusive, deceptive rhetoric?...

...*Race riots.* That is the only accurate way to characterize the actions of mostly minority flash mobs suddenly appearing from Chicago to Philadelphia to the D.C. suburbs to loot white-owned retail stores and even violently attack white citizens. The liberal mainstream media has tried to keep this quiet. But the awful truth is showing up on talk radio and in other alternative media. And if it doesn't stop suddenly, soon something will happen that cannot be covered up, and the whole country will be talking about it. These race riots are more modest versions of the violence and mayhem we have seen in London recently...

...Even self-defense in Britain is mostly illegal. Parliament as a result banned handguns in 1997. When former soldier Paul Clark turned into police a shotgun he found in his garden, he was arrested for not calling the police to come pick it up instead. But Malcolm reported, "The ban on handguns did not stop actual crimes committed with handguns. Those crimes rose nearly 40 percent... and doubled by a decade later."

What has happened in London will never quite happen here, because America has the Second Amendment, affirmed in 2008 by the Supreme Court. Millions of Americans in almost every state hold legal conceal and carry permits, carrying handguns that can be used in self-defense. Gunowners, Tea Party activists and other grassroots patriots should act today to strengthen the recognition of the right to self-defense in their states. If the flash mob riots don't stop, sooner or later a legally armed citizen is going to shoot someone in self-defense. Then the issue will explode in the national media. That is when grassroots and media conservatives are going to have to rally behind the shooter in support of the right to self-defense. That will powerfully frame another issue for the election...

Read the rest: <http://spectator.org/archives/2011/08/24/the-downward-spiral#>

Roman Sandals in hospital halls

by John F. Di Leo, 22 Aug 2011

...Illinois government is greedy for revenue. In a year when much of the American public has renounced liberalism and elected Republican legislatures and governors—and state capitals all around are tightening their belts and trying to cut taxes to invite business in—Illinois reelected its Republican-proof Democrat majorities and socialist governor, who jointly engineered a 67% tax rate increase in January. The crackdown on hospitals looks to be part of this effort to wring more blood from every stone in the state. The state says these hospitals don't provide "enough" charity

care, without defining how much is "enough."...

...Illinois tax functionaries haughtily remind us that property taxes are necessary for not only the state, but the cities and counties as well—that property taxes fund the public schools, the public roads, the police and fire commissions.

But do they forget that hospitals too are necessary? That hospitals provide jobs to their own employees and to supporting businesses as well, jobs that generate income taxes, payroll taxes, and local commerce? That hospitals purchase food, clothing, machinery, and drugs—purchases that generate sales taxes and keep suppliers in business too? That hospital employees pay property taxes on their homes, either directly as homeowners or indirectly as renters? That hospitals provide some of the best construction opportunities for a tortured building industry as they expand with necessary and complex new wings? Does the state forget that if they drive the hospitals out of business in an effort to confiscate a few hundred thousand more dollars in property taxes, they'll lose all those millions that the hospitals had enabled all these years?

In a ghastly recession with nearly double-digit acknowledged unemployment (worse still, in fact, in many of the communities where these targeted hospitals are located), do they really want to run the risk of putting many of these communities' largest employers out of business?

None of this appears to be a concern to the zero-sum mindset of the Illinois Department of Revenue. They have invented a new standard—that sufficient charitable donations are defined only by what the assessors feel is appropriate, without any clear targets or publicly available guidelines whatsoever.

In short, the Illinois Department of Revenue has made a conscious decision to join the federal onslaught on the health care industry by making that industry subject to the whim of a bureaucrat instead of the clear language of the written law...

More: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/roman_sandals_in_hospital_halls.html

The Breivik Portfolio, Part Three: the OIC connection

by Baron Bodissey, 22 Aug 2011

...The Organization of Islamic Cooperation does *not* pursue its goals in a straightforward fashion. If the OIC made all its moves in broad daylight where everyone could see what was happening, this article would not only be much shorter, it would be unnecessary...

...Each term in Article 22 is carefully chosen to reflect a specific provision of shariah. At first glance, much of what is written there may seem innocuous to non-Muslims. However, a closer examination of Islamic law reveals meanings that are in direct conflict with the UDHR, the United States Constitution, and human rights as they are generally understood by Westerners...

...In other words, by accepting the Cairo Declaration as an equal partner among various sets of rights, *non-Muslims would be implicitly affirming the precedence of shariah*. There would be no "equal treatment". A hierarchy would indeed be established, with Islam at the head, and any assertion to the contrary is deliberate deception on the part of the OIC...

...This is the heart of the matter. The Cairo Declaration insists that there must be exceptions to the right of free speech — hopefully "very few" — when defamation of Islam or the prophet is the issue. Most European countries, under the benevolent guidance of the EU, have already fallen into line on this requirement, as evidenced by the state prosecutions of Geert Wilders, Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff, Lars Hedegaard, Jussi Halla-aho, and numerous others.

The USA remains a stubborn holdout, thanks to an annoying little piece of paper known as the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. One of the primary goals of the OIC is to find a workaround for this problem, and the "test of consequences" may be the solution it has been looking for.

The idea is that the intent of the speaker and the meaning of what he says would no longer be the only issue. The judicial system would also be required to take the likely "consequences" of his speech into account when determining whether he is engaging in a form of protected expression. If he writes an article, performs a song, or draws a picture that is likely to anger a group of people and make them riot, then that is a *consequence* of his actions, and would justify restrictions on those particular instances of expression.

If the United States could be persuaded to adopt this test — supplementing the more familiar standard imposing a "test of content", which covers incitement and so on — then the OIC could implement its plan and eliminate "Islamophobia" in America without ever having to amend the Constitution or change any existing laws...

...Actually, the Obama administration was already on board with the program long before Anders Breivik chambered his first round on Utøya. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has been assiduously courting the OIC for months, and sealed the deal with the secretary general just a week before Mr. Breivik went on his murderous rampage. Below are excerpts from Mrs. Clinton's remarks at the "Organization of the Islamic Conference High-Level Meeting on Combating Religious Intolerance" in Istanbul on July 15, 2011...

4,300 words: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/08/breivik-portfolio-part-three-oic.html#more>

Meet the legal wonks who brought down the Flotilla

by Alana Goodman, 23 Aug 2011

At a radical left-wing coffee shop in Washington, D.C. last month, Code Pink founder and “Freedom Flotilla II” passenger **Medea Benjamin** woefully recounted the moment she realized her boat, the *Audacity of Hope*, wouldn’t be legally permitted to leave a port in Greece to sail to Gaza.

“There was something called a ‘complaint’ that was put against our boat,” Benjamin explained to a crowd of anti-Israel activists stuffed into the back room of the restaurant. “Well, it didn’t take long for somebody to uncover that the person, or entity, that lodged the complaint was none other than this right-wing Israeli law center based in Tel Aviv, that knew nothing about our boat and certainly had no interest in the passengers’ safety.”

The “right-wing” law center that caused Benjamin so much grief is **Shurat HaDin**—the Israeli group that single-handedly took down the “Freedom Flotilla II” simply by filing creative lawsuits. In total, nine out of the 10 boats in the flotilla never touched Israeli waters, largely due to Shurat HaDin’s work...

Read the rest: <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/08/22/shurat-hadin-flotilla/>

Annals of the Arab Spring: Al-Qaeda launches from Egypt to attack Israel

by Andrew C. McCarthy, 21 Aug 2011

...So to recap as we head into September, with the Muslim Brotherhood poised to take over Egypt and the Palestinians — encouraged by Israel’s enemies at the U.N. — poised to declare statehood unilaterally, we have al-Qaeda now active in Israel; a successful terrorist attack inside Israeli territory through Egypt; Israel and Egypt in a faceoff over the killing of Egyptian soldiers by Israel after those soldiers allowed (and perhaps even facilitated) an attack on Israel; and the Palestinians — with whom Israel is expected to make peace — celebrating the murder of a Jewish family and the killing of other Israelis.

John Hinderaker has been following events closely, and his posts are [here](#) and [here](#). Barry Rubin’s analysis is [here](#). As Barry says, “This isn’t just another terrorist attack — it’s a major escalation, a new phase in the Arab-Israeli conflict . . . it is the bitter fruit of the U.S.-backed downfall of the government of President Husni Mubarak in Egypt, opening the Egypt-Israel border as a new front in the war.”

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/275131/annals-arab-spring-al-qaeda-launches-egypt-attack-israel-andrew-c-mccarthy#>

Voting “No” on Voting

by Burt Prelutsky, 19 July 2011

Before we even get close to November 6, 2012, I’d like to suggest that everybody pledge not to pressure their friends and neighbors to get out and vote. There is absolutely nothing un-American about staying home and minding your own business on Election Day...

...There I am, faithfully watching CNN and FoxNews, reading a daily newspaper, keeping up on things political, and then, come Election Day, some lunkhead who’s spent the past four years watching wrestling on TV and reading Hustler gets shamed into voting, and he winds up canceling out my vote! Is that fair? Is that just? More importantly, is it good for America? I think not.

What possible good can come from the 50-60% of the electorate that prefers to sit things out on Election Day being herded like so many sheep to the polls? I mean, if you think the politicians we elect now are inept, lazy and corrupt, can you imagine what we’re going to wind up with when really dumb people start voting in record numbers?

It’s bad enough that the Democrats are constantly looking to extend voting privileges to felons, illegal aliens and the deceased, without letting them get away with the pretense that a national ID card smacks of fascism. In a society that already takes drivers licenses, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, cards for granted, it is sheer poppycock to pretend that a national identity card would do anything but make it harder for deadbeat dads to ditch their families, for killers like Whitey Bulger to disappear into the ether and for Democrats to steal elections.

Frankly, I think we should all be ashamed of the fact that in America you have to prove who you are in order to rent a video at Blockbuster, but not to cast a vote in a presidential election.

More: <http://www.westernfreepress.com/2011/07/19/voting-no%C2%9D-on-voting/>

Hat tip: S.K.C.

Spending, not entitlements, created huge deficit

by Byron York, 23 Aug 2011

It's conventional wisdom in Washingt

on to blame the federal government's dire financial outlook on runaway entitlement spending. Unless we rein in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, the conventional wisdom goes, the federal government is headed for disaster.

That's true in the long run. But what is causing massive deficits *now*? Is it the same entitlements that threaten the future? ...

Read on: <http://campaign2012.washingtonexaminer.com/article/york-spending-not-entitlements-created-deficits>

Obama's henchmen actually do something right. Or is this some kind of misdirection?

FCC finally kills off Fairness Doctrine

by Brooks Boliek, 22 Aug 2011

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0811/61851.html>

Qaddafi wanes, and now things get interesting

by Victor Davis Hanson, 22 Aug 2011

...I predict that there will be a split between NATO and the rebels as the ring around the die-hards in Tripoli tightens. There will be lots of retribution, tribal infighting, and, I think, racially inspired brutality: The rebels will want to settle four-decade-old scores, and the Europeans and Americans might not want to be seen nearby, much less be held responsible...

...As for outcomes, there are many scenarios, but these two may be the most likely: either a sort of on-again-off-again chaos until a military-backed clique or strongman emerges and the same old cycle resumes, or some sort of constitutional system in a decidedly Islamic context, analogous to the Turkish model. In the latter case, we could expect the new state's foreign policy to be anti-Western, friendly to China and Russia, virulently and actively anti-Israel, and more accommodating with Iran and its subsidized terrorist appendages. Given Western insolvency, public weariness with the Middle East, the announced draw-downs in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the president's leading-from-behind diplomacy, I think the region will do pretty much what it wants without any worry whatsoever about U.S. feelings or interests.

On our end, it would seem wise to keep our defenses strong and ready, and finally start exploiting our own sizable fossil-fuel reserves (especially oil and gas offshore) in the Gulf, the West, and Alaska.

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/275217/qaddafi-wanes-and-now-things-get-interesting-victor-davis-hanson>

It's the Spending, Stupid

by Paul Kengor, 19 Aug 2011

...There are few constants in the universe: gravity, the sunrise, Democrats' class-warfare rhetoric. Add another constant: spending by the federal government; it rises every year. Significantly, revenues don't increase every year. The most dependable reason for declines in revenues is not a lack of tax increases, or high enough income-tax rates, but recessions. Since 1965, as the chart shows, annual revenues declined seven separate times.

At the start of the Great Society, in 1965, revenues and expenditures were nearly equal, with expenditures only slightly higher, leaving a manageable deficit of \$1.4 billion. By 2009, however, annual expenditures (\$3.5 trillion) had far outpaced annual revenues (\$2.1 trillion), leaving a record deficit of \$1.4 trillion.

Significantly, the biggest one-year drop in revenues was from 2008-9, when they declined from \$2.5 trillion to \$2.1 trillion. Worse, President Obama and the Democratic Congress, elected by a clueless American public, responded with an \$800-billion "stimulus" package that did not stimulate. In other words, they responded in the worst way: with another \$800 billion in government spending. That **gave us the record deficits/debt** we now face. The math is very simple. Government spending, which has hampered growth rather than spark growth, caused this fiscal crisis—not a lack of tax revenue.

It's crucial to realize that this spending addiction is a new thing in American history. Previous generations of politicians showed much more restraint. Prior to 1965, expenditures were not following an ever-upward trajectory; expenditures decreased year-to-year many times, including nearly two-dozen times between 1901 and 1965, and even including the administrations of big-government liberal presidents, like Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt. This

changed in the mid-1960s.

The federal government has a serious spending problem. Liberal Democrats either don't understand this or don't want to understand. How do we communicate the crisis to the wider public, beyond charts and data?

I suggest comparing the situation to a household...

A great essay: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/its_the_spending_stupid.html

My response to Buffett and Obama

Before you ask for more tax money from me, raise the \$2.2 trillion you already collect each year more fairly and spend it more wisely.

by Harvey Golub, 22 Aug 2011

What genuine fairness looks like: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903639404576516724218259688.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

Obama showing blacks how Big Government failed them

by Star Parker, 21 Aug 2011

...It is not hard to understand why black Americans were happy that a black man was elected president of the United States. It was kind of a final and most grand announcement that racism has finally been purged from America.

But for the highly politicized parts of black America, this was certainly not the only message. Because for the highly politicized parts of black America, the point has always been to keep race in American politics.

For black political culture that dominated after the Civil Rights Movement, the point was not just equal treatment under the law, but special treatment under the law. Plus the assumption that more black political power—defined by more blacks holding office—would mean that blacks would be better off.

In other words, post-Civil Rights Movement black political culture embraced an agenda exactly the opposite of what the civil rights movement was about. Its agenda was to get laws and policies that were not neutral but racially slanted and to put individuals in power based on their race and not on their character and capability...

More: <http://washingtosexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/2011/08/obama-showing-blacks-how-big-government-failed-them>

Chicken Little Gore goes on a tirade

by Jack Kelly, 21 Aug 2011

...According to global warming theory, carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels are trapping heat in the upper atmosphere, inexorably warming the planet. The theory ignored inconvenient facts:

- In the Medieval Warm Period (950-1250 AD), and the Roman Warm Period (250 BC-400 AD), there were no automobiles or factories, but temperatures were warmer than now.

- In geologic history, CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere were much higher, but temperatures often were lower. In the Late Ordovician Period, CO₂ concentrations were 12 times higher than they are today. The Late Ordovician Period was an ice age.

- Vostok (Antarctica) ice core samples indicate temperature changes have preceded changes in CO₂ concentrations by an average of 800 years. This couldn't happen if CO₂ caused temperature changes.

- CO₂ in the atmosphere has increased since 1998, but temperatures haven't.

Now a peer-reviewed study of NASA satellite data indicates the computer models warmists rely upon grossly exaggerate the amount of heat being trapped in the atmosphere. Mr. Gore's alarmist predictions have proved false. Polar ice caps are larger. So is the polar bear population (and the scientist upon whom Mr. Gore relied for his claim that the polar bear is endangered is facing accusations of scientific misconduct). The rise in sea levels—which has been going on since the end of the last ice age—is slowing down.

Mr. Gore can respond only with curses, and ever more hysterical predictions of imminent doom. His credibility is in tatters. In the public mind, he's gone from Nobel Prize winner to Chicken Little...

More: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11233/1168499-373-0.stm>

Wall Street and overseas fat cats feast on Federal Reserve cabbage

by John Hayward, 22 Aug 2011

...Let's see now: \$13 billion in interest over two years, earned by \$1.2 trillion in loans, works out to less than 0.5% in annual interest. Is that a good rate of return? Isn't the interest we're paying on the national debt—considered a phenomenally low rate that we're damned lucky to have—about nine times that high?

Well, never mind the rate of return, because it was essential to make those loans in the name of general financial stability. The government used force to distort the mortgage industry according to ideological demands, erasing the old standards for making sound, repayable loans. Numerous warnings about the dangers of this program were ignored throughout the Clinton and Bush Administrations, and in fact the critics were savaged as alarmists and heartless capitalists. The whole thing finally blew up, and the Fed found itself obliged to cover the losses of the American and foreign banks involved.

90% of the Federal Reserve's spending in the name of stability was kept secret from the American public, because "releasing the identities of borrowers and the terms of their loans would stigmatize banks, damaging stock prices or leading to depositor runs," according to the Bloomberg report. Your banking and borrowing decisions had to be made in government-enforced ignorance, because the illusion of stability had to be maintained, in the judgment of people you don't get to vote against...

...We've got over a trillion dollars of foreclosed real estate sitting around the United States, largely destroying the primary method middle-class Americans have used to accumulate real net worth. This is a real and lasting economic "transformation"—and not in a good way. Not only was the American public not consulted about it, they have been deceived and defrauded every step of the way, for the better part of two decades...

Read the rest: <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=45689>

Rick Perry keeps it simple

by David Warren, 21 Aug 2011

...For generations now, governments not only in the United States have eased their way out of solvency crises by stoking inflation, and by some plausible mixture of cosmetic budget cuts and real tax increases. To do otherwise, as even the Economist now says, is to display "economic illiteracy." Sophisticated people play with all the dials, on the economy machine, and those who refuse to touch certain dials are unsophisticated.

Observe, where all this sophistication has got us. There are some issues that are too simple for intelligent people to understand. Most moral issues are like that. The problem isn't distinguishing between right and wrong. That is not always as plain as day, but usually it is. The problem is finding a way to justify doing the wrong thing. And once you think you have found it, the people still arguing for doing the right thing may be dismissed as "simplistic."

On the grand economic questions, "simplisme" has long been decried. John Maynard Keynes, a truly brilliant man, and an entertaining one with wide cultural interests, made wonderfully entertaining arguments for doing the wrong thing, many of them ingeniously counter-intuitive. "Public economists" (on the analogy of "public intellectuals") such as John Kenneth Galbraith in the last generation, and Paul Krugman in this, stand in direct succession to him: same attitudes, same habits.

Lord Keynes' great rival, Friedrich Hayek, exploded many of the economic fallacies upon which Keynes depended, along with many of the facts which Keynes massaged to fit his own passing needs. But Hayek's strongest criticism is too lightly passed over. He said that Keynes was interested in economic theory only as a means to influence current policy. He had not, in fact, the "intellectual chastity" to examine anything on its own terms...

More: http://www.realeclearpolitics.com/articles/2011/08/21/rick_perry_keeps_it_simple_111037.html

When 'inconsequential' means 'better'

by Jeff Jacoby, 21 Aug 2011 Second of two parts ([Read Part 1](#))

To many liberals, Rick Perry's audacious pledge to make Washington as "inconsequential in your life as I can" is tantamount to a pledge to bring back the Dark Ages.

Commenting on Twitter as the Texas governor announced his presidential candidacy, longtime Washington journalist Howard Kurtz wondered: "Perry wants to make DC 'inconsequential in your life.' Does that include Medicare, Soc Sec, vets' programs, air safety, FDA?" Former Bobby Kennedy aide Jeff Greenfield ran through a litany of Washington's contributions to American life—from railroads, interstate highways, and the Hoover Dam to land-grant colleges, civil rights, and subsidized mortgages—and marveled at the depth of the right's "disdain for all things Washington."

But it isn't highways or veterans' programs or minority voting rights that conservatives find so objectionable about Washington. When Perry speaks of making the nation's capital "inconsequential," he isn't proposing to dismantle the

Hoover Dam. Hard as it may be for liberals to accept, the Republican base isn't motivated by blind loathing of the federal government, or by a nihilistic urge to wipe out the good that Washington has accomplished.

What conservatives believe, rather, is what America's Founders believed: that government is best which governs least, and that human freedom and dignity are likeliest to thrive not when power is centralized and remote, but when it is diffuse, local, and modest...

Read on: http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2011/08/21/when_inconsequential_means_better/

Here's a good illustration of the above column:

Call the Dept. of Agriculture

by Jonah Goldberg, 19 Aug 2011

Yesterday, president Obama mildly mocked a farmer concerned about the feds imposing more regulations on his livelihood...

...I love this because you can tell that Obama really believes that criticisms of the government stem from slack-jawed yokels listening to too much Rush Limbaugh and Fox News. The idea that a farmer might understand the business-end of government-agriculture relations better than Barack Obama never occurs to him. The questioner must be ignorant or misinformed because the question is inconvenient. And the solution is just as obvious. Simply call the government...

The full story: <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/275044/call-department-agriculture-jonah-goldberg#>

Union astroturf tries to undercut Tea Party with comparison

by Warner Todd Huston, 21 Aug 2011

The Hill has an interesting, if not a bit slanted, report about the faux grassroots efforts of unions and left-wing advocates to pretend they are somehow *just like* the Tea Party by attacking the town hall meetings of various GOP congressman across the country this Summer...

...Only these orchestrated attacks are nothing like what happened in 2009 as the Tea Party movement first started gaining steam. The Tea Party events were not organized by unions, they did not have millions of dollars behind them, they had no national organizations, no formal groups to which to belong or by which to organize. The protests that Democrats faced in 2009 were real citizens gathering on their own hook, not organized from the top like these faux protests are being raised today.

There is no parallel at all between these fake, astroturfed protests funded by Democrat operatives and union thugs and the spontaneous protests peopled by real voters that occurred in 2009, gatherings that eventually became the full-blown Tea Party movement.

Once again we see that these unions have had to spend untold dollars and months organizing to get the "dozens of constituents" that have turned out to this Summer's meetings. By contrast Tea Party events have turned out millions of participants over these last few years few funded by anyone but the participants themselves.

What this shows is that unions and leftists have to employ a top down sort of organizing to get any support for their ideals. It shows that there is no real enthusiasm among regular Americans for the left-wing agenda.

Above all it shows that the left is still no closer to replicating the true enthusiasm and verve and the true grassroots efforts of the Tea Party movement—despite The Hill trying to give them the legitimacy of the claim.

More: <http://bigjournalism.com/wthuston/2011/08/21/union-astroturf-tries-to-undercut-tea-party-with-comparison/>

Getting ugly in Texas: Karl Rove and the Democrats desperate to stop the Rick Perry posse

by Toby Harnden, 20 Aug 2011

In the past few days, Karl Rove, President George W. Bush's long-time consigliere and an erstwhile hate figure on the Left, has been welcomed back into polite society. Democrats who previously thought the only place Rove should be was in jail have been murmuring approvingly about his wisdom and moderation.

At the same time, Left-wingers whose only debate about Bush over the past decade has been whether he was stupid, evil or a lethal combination of both, are suddenly recalling the former president's "compassionate conservatism". The Huffington Post's Howard Finemann noted that he was better read and more thoughtful than previously given credit for and now seemed "like Pericles."

The change of heart has been prompted by the appearance on the national scene of Governor Rick Perry...

Read on: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/tobyharnden/100101641/american-way-getting-ugly-in-texas-%E2%80%93-karl-rove-and-the-democrats-desperate-to-stop-the-rick-perry-posse/>

Paul Krugman is still wrong about Texas

by Kevin D. Williamson, 15 Aug 2011

Paul Krugman continues his campaign to discredit the economic success of Texas, and, as usual, he is none too particular about the facts...

...Comparing money wages does not tell us anything like the whole story: \$50,000 a year in Houston is a very different thing from \$50,000 a year in Boston or Brooklyn.

How different? Let's look at the data: In spite of the fact that Texas did not have a housing crash like the rest of the country, housing remains quite inexpensive there. The typical owner-occupied home in Brooklyn costs well over a half-million dollars. In Suffolk County it's nearly \$400,000. In Houston? A whopping \$130,100. Put another way: In Houston, the median household income is 39 percent of the cost of a typical house. In Brooklyn, the median household income is 8 percent of the cost of the median home, and in Boston it's only 14 percent. When it comes to homeownership, \$1 in earnings in Houston is worth a lot more than \$1 in Brooklyn or Boston. But even that doesn't really tell the story, because the typical house in Houston doesn't look much like the typical house in Brooklyn: Some 64 percent of the homes in Houston are single-family units, i.e., houses. In Brooklyn, 85 percent are multi-family units, i.e. apartments and condos.

Professor Krugman knows that these variables are significant when comparing real standards of living, but he takes scant account of them. That is misleading, and he knows it is misleading.

Likewise, he knows that the rest of the picture is much more complicated than is his claim: "By the way, one in four Texans lacks health insurance, the highest proportion in the nation, thanks largely to the state's small-government approach." Is small government really the reason a relatively large number of Texans lack health insurance? Or might there be another explanation? ...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/exchequer/274695/paul-krugman-still-wrong-about-texas>

Mark Steyn on the *Hugh Hewitt Show* with guest-host Guy Benson

18 Aug 2011

...GB: Mark, I have to know what you think about Rick Perry. The rehabilitation of President Bush has been remarkable over the last few days, because they are clearing the decks for the crucifixion of the new, New Hitler. What do you think of that?

MS: Yeah, yeah, somewhere in Texas, another village is missing its idiot. And I think, yeah, it's fascinating to me. I mean, clearly the guy, because he's the longest serving governor in Texas history, has a hell of a paper trail. And there's basically something, there will be something for everyone to dislike in there. But I think you should, you should always listen carefully when the media just decide to pounce like vultures and pick a guy's bones clean, because they're telling you what they fear. And the fact that they don't do it with certain candidates tells you that they have no fear of those candidates winning the nomination. I'm always interested in who the mainstream media is in most of a hurry to demonize, because it's telling you whom they fear the most...

...GB: One of the brain dead morons in chief, if you will, is British "actor" Russell Brand, who is married to Katy Perry. He wrote a piece about this, blaming the whole situation and social upheaval on Margaret Thatcher. Here's what he says. "These young people have no sense of community, because they haven't been given one. They have no stake in society, because Cameron's mentor, Margaret Thatcher, said there's no such thing." He concludes, "As we sweep away the mistakes made in the selfish, nocturnal darkness, we much ensure that amidst the broken glass and sadness, we don't sweep away the youth lost amongst the shards in the shadows cast by the new dawn." Can you make heads or tails of that, Mark?

MS: No. The guy is a fool. I mean, it's fascinating to me the change...you had a lot of this stuff when the burning began, and it was in the less fashionable *quartiers*, the less fashionable zip codes of London, if you will. And then, as they started moving into the center and burning down closer to where all these celebrity lefties live, the mood began to turn. But the fact is these are people who are, a fifth of British children, for example, are raised in homes where no one works. In other words, they're used to having their accommodation, their food, their drink, their drugs, their X-Boxes, their iPods and other toys provided by the state. And the idea that a guy, someone in the house gets up in the morning and gets dressed and goes out the door and does not return until late afternoon when the day's labors have been completed, that is an entirely alien ritual to these people, and to anyone they know. It's the exact opposite of what Russell Brand was saying. They have been taught by the big government welfare state, they are absolved of the need to work, they're absolved of the need for community...

More: <http://www.hughhewitt.com/transcripts.aspx?id=109ffc84-c7fb-4992-9aa0-53c74831ace2>

Do atheists have more fun?

by Heather Wilhelm, 15 Aug 2011

..."Believing there is no God," Jillette once told National Public Radio, "gives me more room for belief in family, people, love, truth, beauty, sex, Jell-O and all the other things I can prove and that make this life the best life I will ever have...Just the love of my family that raised me and the family I'm raising now is enough that I don't need heaven. I won the huge genetic lottery and I get joy every day."

This is good news, I suppose, for those who win the genetic lottery, have great jobs, aren't living in a famine-stricken war zone, and have healthy and loving family and friends. This is bad news, of course, when life goes wrong...and it often does.

The Christian concept of joy is not something that we "get" or acquire, and it's fundamentally different from happiness, which is ephemeral and fleeting. In his autobiographical book *Surprised By Joy*, former atheist C.S. Lewis describes joy as the human longing for—and almost a memory of—something higher. "Its visitations were rather the moment of clearest consciousness we had, when we became aware of our fragmentary and phantasmal nature," he wrote. Joy, he added, "makes nonsense of our common distinction between having and wanting."

After Jillette's mother died, as he describes in his book, "It was a time for sadness and memory, and it was also a time for pure, raw, empty hate at the pain of life." The pre-conversion C.S. Lewis had a similar feeling: "My argument against God," he wrote in *Mere Christianity*, "was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust."

But then there's more. "But how had I got this idea of just and unjust?" Lewis continued. "A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?"...

Read it all: http://www.realclearreligion.org/articles/2011/08/15/do_atheists_have_more_fun.html

Bad luck? Bad faith?

by Charles Krauthammer, 18 Aug 2011

"We had reversed the recession, avoided a depression, got the economy moving again...But over the last six months, we've had a run of bad luck."— President Obama, Decorah, Iowa, Aug. 15

A troubled nation wonders: How did we get mired in 9.1 percent unemployment, 0.9 percent growth and an economic outlook so bad that the Federal Reserve pledges to keep interest rates at zero through mid-2013 — an admission that it sees little hope on the horizon?

Bad luck, explains our president. Out of nowhere came Japan and its supply-chain disruptions, Europe and its debt problems, the Arab Spring and those oil spikes. Kicked off, presumably, by various acts of God (should He not be held accountable too?): earthquake and tsunami. (Tomorrow: pestilence and famine. Maybe frogs.)

Well, yes, but what leader is not subject to external events? Were the minor disruptions of the current Arab Spring remotely as damaging as the Arab oil embargo of 1973-74? Were the supply disruptions of Japan 2011 anything like the Asian financial collapse of 1997-98? Events happen. Leaders are elected to lead (from the front, incidentally). That means dealing with events, not plaintively claiming to be their victim...

Continue: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/bad-luck-bad-faith/2011/08/18/gIQAD2IWOJ_story.html

Are the black flash mob attacks on whites Obama's fault?

by Lloyd Marcus, 18 Aug 2011

...Obama and his minions have despicably created racial tension for political gain—accusing all who opposed his hostile takeover of our health care system of racism. Clearly, the Obama administration's game plan for his presidency is to use race as a bludgeon whenever anyone opposes an Obama agenda item. Obama obviously considers the loss of harmony between black and white Americans to be acceptable collateral damage. Here are a few examples of race exploitation by Obama and company which could be fueling rage in black youths...

More: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/are_the_black_flash_mob_attacks_on_whites_obamas_fault.html

America is owed an honest ObamaCare cost estimate

Washington Examiner editorial, 14 Aug 2011

...Section 1401 of the Affordable Care Act says an insurance plan is unaffordable if the employee portion of an employer-offered health insurance premium "exceeds 9.5 percent of the applicable taxpayer's household income." So a family of four whose breadwinner earned \$80,000 would be eligible for subsidies if the nominal premium for the plan that his employer offered exceeded \$7,600 a year. The average family premium in 2010 cost \$13,770, so millions of Americans would have been eligible for generous Obamacare subsidies.

But when the Congressional Budget Office scored the Obamacare legislation, analysts were instructed to use a different definition of affordable coverage. Instead of comparing a family's income to the cost of insuring a family, the CBO scored a family's income to the cost of insuring just the individual employee. The average premium for an individual policy costs far less than the average family premium (\$5,049 compared with \$13,770). So, all of a sudden, our typical family with household income of \$80,000 would not have qualified for Obamacare subsidies. However, it still would have been on the hook for expensive health coverage because of the individual mandate. A recent study estimated that it would have cost \$47.5 billion a year to close this subsidy gap.

Instead, the Treasury Department "fixed" this apples-to-oranges problem Friday by simply exempting affected families from the individual mandate. But while this regulatory fix may save the government hundreds of billions of dollars, it puts affected families in a worse position than they were before the reform law was passed. They may not have to buy insurance, but if they do want coverage their options are now more limited and more expensive...

More: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/2011/08/america-owed-honest-obamacare-cost-estimate>

Hamas calls off truce as rocket fire continues from Gaza

by Yaakov Lappin, Reuters, and Jpost.com staff, 20 Aug 2011, 01:00

Hamas announced early on Saturday they were no longer committed to a more than two-year de facto truce with Israel since the end of a war in early 2009. The statement was broadcast over a Hamas radio station in Gaza after Israel pounded the Strip for two days with air strikes in response to rocket salvos and attacks on Thursday that killed eight people...

More: <http://www.jpost.com/Defense/Article.aspx?id=234550>

Related:

Counter-terror officer killed by terrorist fire near Eilat

Timeline of the attacks on the Sinai border

Perry: I love my country more than I care about Obama's feelings

by Ed Morrissey, 18 Aug 2011

Anyone expecting Rick Perry to ease up on the throttle a bit as a presidential contender will likely be disappointed with his remarks yesterday in New Hampshire — but Republicans will likely be delighted, even if they're not on board with Perry. The **Boston Herald** followed Perry's trip in New Hampshire, where the Texas governor wants to challenge Mitt Romney in his strongest state, where Perry took aim more at Obama and the President's call for a kinder, gentler campaign:

"The rhetoric will probably get heated. I'm going to be outspoken, I'm going to be passionate, I'm going to be calling it like I see it," Perry told the Herald in a one-on-one interview, as he shrugged off Obama's recent scolding that he should be "more careful" about what he says. "And if I hurt the president's feelings, well, with all due respect, I love my country and I love future generations more than I care about his feelings," the 61-year-old governor added.

Republicans will also like remarks captured in this Boston Herald video about the "experiment" with the American economy, conducted by Obama and his administration. Perry calls it a "terrible, terrible failure," and pledges to appoint pro-business administrators to agencies, especially the EPA.

Perry's rhetoric towards Ben Bernanke may have been **over the top**, but did Perry get it right on the policy? Time Magazine's **Curious Capitalist** says 'probably'...

...Former Reagan budget director **David Stockman** says there is no maybe about it, Perry is absolutely correct — and that a day of reckoning is quickly approaching:...

...The New York Post's editors **concur**...

More, including video: <http://hotair.com/archives/2011/08/18/perry-i-love-my-country-more-than-i-care-about-obamas-feelings/>

Rick Perry, pro and con:

A Big Black Cloud

by George Neumayr, 18 Aug 2011

<http://spectator.org/archives/2011/08/18/a-big-black-cloud>_____

Skeptical of Perry

by Ross Kaminsky, 18 Aug 2011

<http://spectator.org/archives/2011/08/18/skeptical-of-perry>

Rick Perry and Texas job numbers

by Matthias Shapiro, 16 Aug 2011

<http://www.politicalmathblog.com/?p=1590>

Mr. Shapiro begins by saying "Full disclosure: I don't like Rick Perry for our next president. I have my reasons that aren't worth going into here." Then he fully analyses the following propositions, and answers them with hard data, including charts:

"Texas has an unemployment rate of 8.2%. That's hardly exceptional."

"Sure, Texas has lots of jobs, but they're mostly low-paying/minimum wage jobs"

"Texas is oil country and the recent energy boom is responsible for the incredible jobs increase."

"Texas has 100,000 unsustainable public sector jobs that inflate the growth numbers."

"My Personal Favorite Chart" [the statistical effects of people coming to Texas because of the positive economic climate]

All of this is well worth checking out. Near the end of his piece, Mr. Shapiro says this:

"You may have noticed that I don't mention Rick Perry very much here. That is because Rick Perry is, in my opinion, ancillary to this entire discussion. He was governor while these these numbers happened, so good for him. Maybe that means these jobs they are his "fault." Maybe the job situation is the result of his policies. Or maybe Texas is simply the least bad option in a search for a favorable economic climate.

"That is not an argument I'm having at this exact moment. My point is to show that most of the "excuses" you will hear about Texas' job statistics are based in nothing more than a hope that Rick Perry had nothing to do with them and not on a sound understanding of the data.

My advice to anti-Perry advocates is this: Give up talking about Texas jobs. Texas is an incredible outlier among the states when it comes to jobs. Not only are they creating them, they're creating ones with higher wages..."

Palestinians say Gaza under major assault

by Elior Levy, 19 Aug 2011

Gaza under attack: The Air Force launched a wave of assaults in Gaza early Friday according to Palestinian sources, targeting numerous sites within the Strip in the wake of a terror offensive in southern Israel that left eight people dead Thursday.

Earlier, Israeli aircraft killed the terror masterminds behind the multipronged offensive that targeted a bus, civilian cars and IDF soldiers near Eilat.

According to Palestinian reports early Friday, the Air force struck a home in Gaza City located near the former Palestinian intelligence headquarters. The attack reportedly caused a large fire in the area, leaving one boy dead and wounding up to 17 people...

More good news: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4110968,00.html>

J-Post updates:

Air raid siren heard in Beersheba 08/19/2011 06:16

Rocket lands in Eshkol, no injuries 08/19/2011 06:24

Air raid sirens heard in Ashdod 08/19/2011 07:36

Why Americans hate economics

by Stephen Moore, 19 Aug 2011

...Mr. Carney explained that unemployment insurance "is one of the most direct ways to infuse money into the

economy because people who are unemployed and obviously aren't earning a paycheck are going to spend the money that they get, and that creates growth and income for businesses that then lead them to making decisions about jobs—more hiring."

That's a perfect Keynesian answer, and also perfectly nonsensical. What the White House is telling us is that the more unemployed people we can pay for not working, the more people will work. Only someone with a Ph.D. in economics from an elite university would believe this.

I have two teenage sons. One worked all summer and the other sat on his duff. To stimulate the economy, the White House wants to take more money from the son who works and give it to the one who doesn't work. I can say with 100% certainty as a parent that in the Moore household this will lead to less work.

Economic bimboism is rampant in Washington. The Center for American Progress held a forum earlier this summer arguing that raising the minimum wage would create more jobs. For this to be true, you have to believe that the more it costs a business to hire a worker, the more workers companies will want to hire.

A few months ago Mr. Obama blamed high unemployment on businesses becoming "more efficient with a lot fewer workers," and he mentioned ATMs and airport kiosks. The Luddites are back raging against the machine. If Mr. Obama really wants to get to full employment, why not ban farm equipment?

Or consider the biggest whopper: Mr. Obama's thoroughly discredited \$830 billion stimulus bill. We were promised \$1.50 or even up to \$3 of economic benefit—the mythical "multiplier"—from every dollar the government spent. There was never any acknowledgment that for the government to spend a dollar, it has to take it from the private economy that is then supposed to create jobs. The multiplier theory only works if you believe there's a fairy passing out free dollars...

Read the rest: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903596904576514552877388610.html>

Col. Allen West has them

by Baron Bodissey, 17 Aug 2011

LTC (ret.) Allen West represents Florida's 22nd District in Congress. He is one of a handful of congressmen — there may be no senators whatsoever — who recognize the danger that Islam poses to this country.

Needless to say, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is not happy with Col. West. When it demanded that he repudiate any ties with "anti-Islamic" people and groups, his one-word reply defiantly echoed one of the finest moments in American military history. A notable (and dismaying) aspect of the following news video is that neither the news presenters nor the people interviewed on the street seem to have any familiarity with the single-word quote, much less understand its significance...

More: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/08/col-allen-west-has-them.html#more>

Joe Biden update: His GOP 'terrorists' quote reaffirmed

by Andrew Malcolm, 18 Aug 2011

So, did Vice President Joe Biden really liken Republican House "tea party" members to terrorists during the debt deal roughhousing, just as President Obama was publicly professing a desire for political civility?

In a way, it doesn't matter anymore, because the belief that he did has hardened like cement (see the photo above, the protester on the right, all the way out in Iowa).

In an unusual move within the fraternities of Washington journalism, Politico, which broke the original hot story, **issued a reaffirmation of the piece** Wednesday, apparently in response to another Washington news organization questioning Politico's sources as "dubious."

To refresh your memory, hours after Biden met behind closed doors with unhappy congressional Democrats during the heated talks, Politico reported that the vice president of the United States had agreed with Pennsylvania Democratic Rep. Mike Doyle's characterization of the House's new GOP majority and said, "They have acted like terrorists."...

Continue: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/washington/2011/08/joe-biden-china-terrorists-politico.html>

Israel hit by multiple terrorist attacks

by Rick Moran, 18 Aug 2011

Three separate terrorist attacks along the border with Egypt has killed at least 5 Israelis and wounded as many as 25. Terrorists attacked a bus near Eliat with an RPG and detonated bombs near some IDF vehicles. There were also

reports of another attack on a bus and vehicle. Special forces engaged the terrorists, killing at least 7...

...As Rich Baehr notes, "These types of attacks in southern Israel never occurred while Mubarak controlled things. This is only the beginning; the bloody prelude to UN action in September."

More: http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2011/08/israel_hit_by_multiple_terrorist_attacks.html

The Jacksonian foreign policy option

by *Caroline Glick*, 12 Aug 2011

...In truth, the dominant foreign policy in the Republican Party, and to a degree, in American society as a whole is neither neoconservatism nor isolationism. For lack of a better name, it is what historian Walter Russell Mead has referred to as Jacksonianism, after Andrew Jackson, the seventh president of the U.S.. As Mead noted in a 1999 article in the *National Interest* entitled, "The Jacksonian Tradition," the most popular and enduring U.S. model for foreign policy is far more flexible than either the isolationist or the neoconservative model.

According to Mead, the Jacksonian foreign policy model involves a few basic ideas. The U.S. is different from the rest of the world and therefore the U.S. should not try to remake the world in its own image by claiming that everyone is basically the same. The U.S. must ensure its honor abroad by abiding by its commitments and standing with its allies. The U.S. must take action to defend its interests. The U.S. must fight to win or not fight at all. The U.S. should only respect those foes that fight by the same rules as the U.S. does.

The U.S. president that hewed closest to these basic guidelines in recent times was former president Ronald Reagan. Popular perception that Reagan was acting in accordance with Jacksonian foreign policy principles is what kept the public support for Reagan high even as the liberal media depicted his foreign policy as simplistic and dangerous...

...Throughout his presidency, Reagan never shied away from trumpeting American values. To the contrary, he did so regularly. However, unlike the neoconservatives, Reagan recognized that advancing those values themselves could not replace the entirety of U.S. foreign policy. Indeed, he realized that the very notion that values trumped all represented a fundamental misunderstanding of U.S. interests and the nature and limits of U.S. power.

If a Jacksonian president were in charge of U.S. foreign policy, he or she would understand that supporting elections that are likely to bring a terror group like Hamas or Hezbollah into power is not an American interest.

He or she would understand that toppling a pro-American dictator like Mubarak in favor of a mob is not sound policy if the move is likely to bring an anti-American authoritarian successor regime to power.

A Jacksonian president would understand that using U.S. power to overthrow a largely neutered U.S. foe like Gaddafi in favor of a suspect opposition movement is not a judicious use of U.S. power. Indeed, a Jacksonian president would recognize that it would be far better to expend the U.S.'s power to overthrow Syrian President Bashar Assad—an open and active foe of the U.S. ...

Read the rest: <http://www.carolineglick.com/e/2011/08/the-jacksonian-foreign-policy.php>

PBS and global warming skeptics' lockout

by *Russell Cook*, 18 Aug 2011

I've repeatedly asked politicians, policymakers, and mainstream media journalists to **explain to me** why we need greenhouse gas regulation when skeptic scientists' climate assessments indicate that it's a pointless action to stop a natural phenomenon. You'd think at least the journalists would directly answer my questions about their articles' claims of a scientific consensus, acid oceans, and who corroborated a singular accusation that fossil fuel industries conspire with skeptic scientists to fool the public. Each time, I got evasive replies instead.

Rush Limbaugh will probably howl at me for expecting the MSM to accurately report both sides of the issue, but my incessant inquiries reveal that one news outlet, PBS' NewsHour, appears unable to clearly state why skeptic scientists' viewpoints aren't worth considering.

Its national affairs editor, Murrey Jacobson, has now sidestepped my questions three times in a row about why his program excluded skeptic scientists since 1996...

Continue: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/pbs_and_global_warming_skeptics_lockout.html

Making Washington inconsequential

by *Jeff Jacoby*, 17 Aug 2011

When Texas Governor Rick Perry announced his campaign for president last weekend in a **speech** to the RedState Gathering in Charleston, S.C., he saved his best line for the end. "I'll promise you this," **he said to exuberant cheers and**

applause, “I’ll work every day to try to make Washington, DC, as inconsequential in your life as I can.”

To a Democrat steeped in the big-government tradition of the New Deal and the Great Society, there could hardly be a greater heresy. For liberals, perhaps the only thing more absurd and disagreeable than the prospect of a Washington with radically reduced influence in American life is a presidential candidate pledging to make that reduction a priority...

...But to countless libertarians and free-market conservatives, it is exhilarating to hear a candidate talk this way. And why wouldn’t it be? After all, large majorities of Americans consistently say **they don’t trust the federal government** and **have little faith in the ability of Washington’s immense bureaucracy** to solve the nation’s problems. In promising to curb Washington’s outsize authority, Perry is responding to an alienation from government that is very much a Main Street phenomenon.

It is also a relatively recent phenomenon, one that has grown in proportion with the federal establishment’s self-aggrandizement...

More: http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2011/08/17/making_washington_inconsequential/

Blue partisans shorten the lines

by *Walter Russell Mead, 16 Aug 2011*

Press reaction to events in Wisconsin remains educational...

...Three bouts of failure described by much of the mainstream press as three approaching triumphs for the blue model agenda: it begins to look like a pattern. To the extent that they think about it — as opposed to simply letting their little lights artlessly shine — liberal journalists seem to think that acting like cheerleaders strengthens their team. It doesn’t. That more conservative candidates and causes face hostile media scrutiny that liberal lions don’t makes the conservatives tougher and more battle tested. It can ground their political calculations more securely in reality; if there are any gaping flaws in conservative arguments, programs or personnel, they can be reasonably sure that a vigilant mainstream media will point them out in great and loving detail.

This is not always a blessing, but surprisingly often, it is. More hostile media scrutiny would have convinced Senator John Kerry that his Vietnam record could not anchor his presidential campaign. It would have made then Vice President Gore much more aware of what a liability it is that so many voters heard him as condescending and elitist. It would have alerted President Obama to the critical flaws in the congressional porkfest loosely but inaccurately referred to as a ‘stimulus package’. It would have let the greens know that their carbon treaty concept was an obvious flop before they wasted precious time and money on a decade long unicorn hunt.

Over and over again in modern American politics, liberals have developed “frames” and strategies for key issues that they think will shift the debate their way. Over and over again the echo chamber of the liberal press resounds with praises of the new approach. And over and over again liberals “unexpectedly” get sucker punched by conservative counter attacks a more critical press would have forecast as both inevitable and deadly...

More: <http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2011/08/16/blue-partisans-shorten-the-lines/>

Urban warming and racial climate change

by *Walter Russell Mead, 11 Aug 2011*

...Random events like those in Philadelphia, Wisconsin, Ohio and other places do not make a trend and there is no inexorable march to violence, but they suggest that we are in a danger zone. Sparks fly, and there is TNT in the room. A tropical wave is approaching, and the conditions favor development. Nothing is inevitable, and the timing on these things is by nature uncertain, but year by year we are heading deeper into the risk zone, and one of these years things will likely go bang.

In any case, riots in the United States would be significant because race relations are so deeply embedded in our politics and culture. Managing the relationship between the races has long been a major preoccupation in American politics, and the political architecture of the United States has always been profoundly affected by the politics of race. That is still true today, and as it happens the current model of race relations that dates back to the 1970s is under increasing strain. New outbreaks of significant urban violence at a time of government austerity and social change would raise basic questions about the American order in a way that riots in London don’t for the UK. Those questions are bound to be asked sooner rather than later; urban violence would precipitate some very charged discussions about the next stage in American race relations...

...It has been a long time since the two races had such fundamentally different appraisals of the country’s situation. Most whites, including even the liberal whites who have long been among Black America’s strongest non-Black advocates, believe things are going well...

...This post has concentrated on the special problems of Black urban violence, but I would not want to leave

readers with the impression that African Americans are the only people in the United States with the potential to behave badly. There are many people in this country who have grievances of one kind or another, or who simply wouldn't mind the opportunity to get in some good looting while the anarchy lasts. We have our share of infantile leftists, whose ignorant, petulant narcissism leads them to identify with important world historical revolutionary figures and movements like their fatuous predecessors did in the 1960s. And there are the handfuls of deranged religious nuts whose personal vision of the apocalypse (whether some para-Christian or para-Islamic weird cult or some even weirder more idiosyncratic flavor à la Manson) lures them into mass murder...

More: <http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2011/08/11/urban-warming-and-racial-climate-change/>

The Eleventh Circuit takes aim at Obamacare

by Avik Roy, 16 Aug 2011

...The judges make another point that is so rarely made in these debates: that purchasing health insurance is not the same thing as purchasing health care...

...“In sum,” they conclude, “the individual mandate is breathtaking in its expansive scope. It regulates those who have not entered the health care market at all. It regulates those who have entered the health care market, but have not entered the insurance market (and have no intention of doing so). It is overinclusive in *when* it regulates: it conflates those who presently consume health care with those who will not consume health care for many years into the future. The government’s position amounts to an argument that the mere fact of an individual’s existence substantially affects interstate commerce, and therefore Congress may regulate them at every point of their life. This theory affords no limiting principles in which to confine Congress’s enumerated power.”...

...Dubina and Hull are blunt on this point. “At root, the [government] relies upon a convenient sleight of hand to deflect attention from the central issue in the case: what is the nature of the conduct being regulated by the individual mandate, and may Congress reach it?” The government goes out of its way to downplay the far-reaching implications of the mandate; hence the whole discussion about how health care is unique. “Accordingly, the government adroitly and narrowly re-defines the regulated activity as the uninsured’s health care *consumption* and attendant *cost-shifting*, or the *timing and method of payment* for such consumption.”

“Ultimately,” they write, “the government’s struggle to articulate cognizable, judicially administrable limiting principles only reiterates the conclusion we reach today: there are none. . . . This economic mandate represents a wholly novel and potentially unbounded assertion of congressional authority: the ability to compel Americans to purchase an expensive health insurance product they have elected not to buy, and to make them repurchase that insurance product every month for their entire lives. We have not found any generally applicable, judicially enforceable limiting principle that would permit us to uphold the mandate without obliterating the boundaries inherent in the system of enumerated congressional powers.”...

...Sutton’s decisive opinion upholding the mandate naïvely accepted the argument that “health care is unique” because it involves “regulating how citizens pay for what they already receive.” Hull and Dubina demolish that sophistry...

3,500 very clear words: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/print/274693>

Obamacare Is Going Down

by Peter Ferrara, 17 Aug 2011

As **we saw**, the 11th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals became the first federal appellate court to find the Obamacare individual mandate unconstitutional last Friday. I filed briefs in that case on behalf of the American Civil Rights Union urging that result. More important than the ruling is what the trend is showing...

...The Judges found the government power exercised in the individual mandate to be so unprecedented that the government could not cite a single precedent upholding it, in their briefs or in oral argument. Nor could the Judges find one. Hull and Dubina wrote:

"Even in the face of a Great Depression, a World War, a Cold War, recessions, oil shocks, inflation, and unemployment, Congress never sought to require purchase of wheat or war bonds, force a higher savings rate or greater consumption of American goods, or require every American to purchase a more fuel efficient vehicle."

Finding Obamacare constitutional would be a precedent for precisely those horrible results. The Judges concluded, "The government's position amounts to an argument that the mere fact of an individual's existence substantially affects interstate commerce, and therefore Congress may regulate them at every point of their life. This theory affords no limiting principles in which to confine Congress's enumerated power."...

...Also working its way through the courts is another Obamacare challenge brought by the Goldwater Institute in Arizona that not only challenges the individual mandate, but also challenges the constitutionality of the Medicare

Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) also adopted by Obamacare.

That board will be composed of 15 unelected bureaucrats with the power to cut payments to doctors and hospitals under Medicare to keep the program within specified spending targets. Though its backers deny it, IPAB was designed to be a federal rationing authority analogous to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), which decides who can live or who can die under British socialized medicine. The IPAB merely needs to severely cut, or deny altogether, payments for treatments it decides are not in the public interest, regardless of what you or your doctors think...

Read the rest: <http://spectator.org/archives/2011/08/17/obamacare-is-going-down#>

The Department of Failed Ideas

by David Harsanyi, 17 Aug 2011

The Obama administration is finally going to focus on jobs—again. Jobs, jobs, jobs. And nothing says jobs like food stamps, unemployment insurance and a shiny new federal Department of ... yes, Jobs!

Some of you may find President Barack Obama's three-day campaign bus tour through Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois a considerable downer. Not that it's the president's fault. If it weren't for Japanese earthquakes, unpatriotic Republicans, Arab springs, European welfare states collapsing, market fluctuations, Lady Luck's being a complete witch—you know, *existence*—this mess could have been squared away months ago...

...Word from *The New York Times* is that the administration is chewing over a proposal that would merge the Department of Commerce, the Office of the United States Trade Representative and economic divisions of the State Department to form a tremendously useless department, possibly named the Department of Jobs or maybe the Department of Competitiveness.

That's what the economy needs, the lecturer in chief meting out economic advice. At a Minnesota town hall, for instance, the president offered this gem: "You can't just make money on SUVs and trucks. There is a place for SUVs and trucks, but as gas prices keep on going up, you have got to understand the market."

If only the common man had such insight into markets. Earlier this month, Ford reported that sport utility vehicle sales had increased 31 percent (car sales improved 3.4 percent) from a year earlier. General Motors also "bounced back" on the strength of its worldwide SUV sales. Who knows? If this administration didn't harbor resentment toward useful and affordable energy, Ford could sell even more SUVs...

More: <http://www.creators.com/opinion/david-harsanyi/the-department-of-failed-ideas.html>

On Day 938 of his presidency, Obama says he'll have a jobs plan in a month or so

by Andrew Malcolm, 17 Aug 2011

OK, let's see if we can sort out this White House jobs package hocus-pocus because President Obama is counting on us not to. And no one wants to fail to disappoint him:

Last winter in his State of the Union address, oblivious to the gathering storm over the nation's national debt, the Democrat proposed massive new spending and loan programs—he calls it investments—to extend unemployment benefits and payroll tax cuts and to rebuild the nation's roads, bridges and other union-made infrastructure kinds of stuff. He had a plan he would share soon.

When in trouble, give a speech. Say, early September. Before all this Rick Perry 40% of the nation's jobs come from Texas stuff really gets going.

The president has mentioned the plan often, despite widespread skepticism due to the lack of stimulus that came from spending \$787 billion in stimulus money that was for sure going to hold national unemployment at 8%, but it's now 9.1%. So, perhaps another such plan might work...

Biting: <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/washington/2011/08/obama-jobs-package-debt-deal.html>

Obama's Jekyll and Hyde routine: disturbing mixed messages

by Wynton C. Hall, 15 Aug 2011

President Obama has become so detached from the economic realities Americans are suffering that he has failed to realize just how muddled and inconsistent his message and presidency have become.

The following, then, should help him understand why Republicans, moderate Democrats, Independents, Tea Party members, and **increasingly his own liberal base** have tuned him out and moved on.

Here's the schizophrenic political message the American people now hear when they listen to Obama speak: Big

Government can improve lives and create economic prosperity ... except right now, because the economic catastrophe my reckless spending has triggered has left me and my administration impotent and unable to redistribute ever-dwindling wealth. My team of economic advisers has the smartest plans and strategies for creating jobs ... except that jobs are nowhere in sight, 16.2% of people can't find enough work, **one in five men doesn't work**, and **one in seven** now relies on food stamps to put meals on the table.

I am the arbiter of hope and change, and I'm a strong leader who can navigate us through the worst economy since the Great Depression ... except that, even though my party controls 66% of the government, I still send my advisers out to blame America's first-ever S&P **downgrade on the Tea Party**, whose members I believe are crazy and insignificant ... except that they are, apparently, smart and significant...

It gets even better: <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=45524>



Hat tip: Jim D.

The Reagan stimulus vs. the Obama one

by Paul Kengor, 13 Aug 2011

...After a slow start through 1982-83, the stimulus effect of the cuts was extraordinary, sparking the longest peacetime expansion in U.S. history. The "Reagan Boom" not only produced widespread prosperity but — along with the attendant Soviet collapse — also helped generate budget surpluses in the 1990s. Carter-Ford era terms such as "malaise" and "misery index" vanished. Only now has America re-approached similar **misery-index levels**, reaching a 28-year high.

Unfortunately, liberals have so maligned Reaganomics that they are unable to separate facts from myths — to the detriment of their party and president. Among the worst myths is that Reagan's tax cuts created the deficit, even as the deficit increased under Reagan.

In fact, Reagan inherited chronic deficits. Since Franklin Roosevelt, the budget had been balanced a handful of times, mainly under President Eisenhower. From 1981-89, the deficit under Reagan increased from \$79 billion to \$153 billion. It peaked in 1983-86, hitting \$221 billion. Yet, once the economy started booming, the deficit steadily dropped.

Tax cuts were not the problem. Tax revenues under Reagan rose from \$599 billion in 1981 to nearly \$1 trillion in 1989. The problem was that outlays all along outpaced revenue, soaring from \$678 billion in 1981 to \$1.14 trillion in

1989.

The cause of the Reagan deficits was the 1982-83 recession and spending — as is always the case. And, yes, the culprit was not just social spending by congressional Democrats but Reagan defense spending designed to take down the Soviet Union. What a bargain that turned out to be: It helped kill an "evil empire" and win the Cold War, paving the way for a peacetime dividend in the 1990s.

Yet it is clear today that we have refused the proper lessons of history. For one, our problem remains excessive spending. Obama must bear this in mind if he's considering tax increases (which hamper growth) as part of his "balanced" approach to deficit reduction...

Read it all: http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2011-08-14-reagan-obama-economy-recovery-stimulus_n.htm

GOP on Defensive!

by Mickey Kaus, 15 Aug 2011

MSNYT: Innovations in bias technology are coming at an increasingly rapid pace in the *New York Times*—it's a regular Singularity of self-reinforcement over there. In June the paper **deployed its powerful "Draws Attention To" template**, the formula for which is

X event in the news (go find one if necessary)

"draws attention to"

Y argument the *Times* wants to push

Continue: <http://dailycaller.com/2011/08/15/gop-on-defensive/print/>

New ObamaCare violations of liberty

by Star Parker, 10 Aug 2011

...ObamaCare is a masterpiece in its achievement of leaving no corner of our personal freedoms unviolated. It hijacks our pocketbook, our autonomy of action, and our conscience. The result is to leave us economically and morally impoverished.

A tiny and narrow exemption is carved out so that non-profits with a defined religious mission, whose employees and target audience shares those same values, are not forced to provide insurance that includes free birth control services. Liberals are committed to religious freedom as long as those religious values do not conflict with their liberal values. Which, practically, means all religion.

Meanwhile, what we have is another in a vast universe of mandated new health care entitlements that is ObamaCare. It is the convoluted logic of the liberal mind to use government power to mandate and subsidize free goodies, to sever all links between individual behavior and its consequences, and then claim this will lead to lower costs and more efficiency. It is no wonder that the financial markets have been tanking since the passage of the debt-ceiling bill. That bill simply slaps a band-aid on a fiscal rupture that will start gushing red ink as soon as ObamaCare kicks in full tilt in 2014.

The perverse truth is that ObamaCare, sold by our president and congressional Democrats as fiscally responsible, is exactly the opposite. The Congressional Budget Office forecasts huge deficits and growing debt, double what they are today, driven primarily by health care spending, fueled by ObamaCare mandated entitlements.

Michele Bachmann was onto something by demanding repeal of ObamaCare as a condition for increasing the debt limit. Americans need to sober up...

More: <http://www.newschief.com/article/20110810/NEWS/108105023>

Just before this excerpt, Mr. Adams describes recent black mob crimes against white people in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Ohio which, in the words of a friend of mine, resembled *The Rise of the Planet of the Apes*.

The mob tears at the foundations of civilization in London and America

by J. Christian Adams, 11 Aug 2011

...Of course there are federal hate crimes laws designed for these violent racially motivated attacks, right? But a law is only as good as the people enforcing it. The Justice Department under Eric Holder has little interest in bringing hate crimes charges to protect white victims. The corrupt dismissal of the New Black Panther voter intimidation case, which I brought, made that plain.

The criminal section of the civil rights division has the responsibility to prosecute racially motivated violence. But

Mark Kappelhoff, the chief of the criminal section of the civil rights division, is unlikely to act if the victims are white. He was angry that the DOJ enforced the law on behalf of white victims in the voting rights case of *United States v. Ike Brown*. According to the sworn testimony of former voting section chief Christopher Coates, Kappelhoff complained equal enforcement of the law to protect whites was causing problems with “its relations with civil rights groups.” He placed greater importance on political relations with civil rights groups than ending discrimination against white voters.

Through Kappelhoff’s attitude, we gain insight into a worldview that excuses wrongdoers because of whom they victimize. We glimpse the opening passages of a rotted storyline with tragic final chapters.

The Mob thrives off such moral equivocation. The Mob is decisive when the law is not.

To some, the Mob is a symptom of disenfranchisement, urban malaise or institutional hurt feelings. The Mob, after all, only awoke after a questionable police shooting in London. Excuses all, of course. Nothing justifies this behavior in nations built on the rule of law. Excuses are paralyzing those with the responsibility of enforcing the law, both in England and the United States.

Let’s return to the question of why. Many have absolute confidence about what we are witnessing. They can surely imagine the whispers of Wormwood to a thousand Patiens. Delighted that the Mob has bypassed the gradual path toward evil, they can imagine him basking in the heat of burning double deckers in Peckham. They know who delights in a father’s dream for his daughter destroyed. Others perhaps imagine Legion, who admits in the Gospel of Mark, “We are many,” before being cast into the maniacal herd of pigs by Christ. No longer simply pigs, the maniacal herd for our times now roams London and stalks families in Milwaukee and Akron...

Read the rest: <http://www.aim.org/guest-column/the-mob-tears-at-the-foundations-of-civilization-in-london-and-america/>

Global Warming link to drowned polar bears melts under searing Fed probe

by *Audrey Hudson*, 11 Aug 2011

Polar bears drowning in an Alaskan sea because the ice packs are melting—it’s the iconic image of the global warming debate. But the validity of the science behind the image—presented as an ignoble testament to our environment in peril by Al Gore in his film *An Inconvenient Truth*—is now part of a federal investigation that has the environmental community on edge. Special agents from the Interior Department’s inspector general’s office are questioning the two government scientists about the paper they wrote on drowned polar bears, suggesting mistakes were made in the math and as to how the bears actually died, and the department is eyeing another study currently underway on bear populations.

Biologist Charles Monnett, the lead scientist on the paper, was placed on administrative leave July 18. Fellow biologist Jeffrey Gleason, who also contributed to the study, is being questioned, but has not been suspended...

...Dr. Rob Roy Ramey, a biologist who specializes in endangered species scientific issues for Wildlife Science International, Inc., reviewed Monnett’s paper as well as the inspector general’s interviews for *Human Events* and said that the authors made unwarranted assumptions and large extrapolations based on a single event.

“They did not know if the polar bears actually drowned, they assumed that they had drowned. There were no statistical tests, just extrapolations made with no accounting for measurement error. The paper gives the appearance that rigorous surveying was done for polar bears, when it was not,” Ramey said. “They were flying at 1,500 feet with the purpose of looking for bowhead whales, which are much larger and easier to spot.”

Ramey also says he sees a conflict of interest for Monnett’s wife to be part of the internal peer review, and questioned the awarding of a contract to Derocher, who also participated in the peer review. “That’s not impartial,” Ramey said. “It’s really important that peer review be truly independent. If they can’t be, then everyone has to state their conflict right up front. I think it’s very illustrative of the problems with government research on endangered species, and raises the question as to whether government should be in the business of science,” Ramey said...

More: <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=45447>

Gallup: Obama job rating sinks below 40% for first time

by *Michael A. Memoli*, 14 Aug 2011

President Obama’s summer woes have dragged his approval rating to an all-time low, sinking below 40% for the first time in Gallup’s daily tracking poll. New data posted Sunday shows that 39% of Americans approve of Obama’s job performance, while 54% disapprove. Both are the worst numbers of his presidency...

More: <http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-pn-obama-approval-20110814,0,2481281.story>

Voters still express more confidence in Tea party than in Congress

Rasmussen Reports, 10 Aug 2011

More voters still think the average Tea Party member has a better handle on America's problems than the average member of Congress does, but there's a sharp difference of opinion between Democrats and Republicans.

A new Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey finds that 42% of all Likely U.S. Voters believe the average member of the Tea Party has a better understanding of the problems America faces today, while 34% think the average member of Congress is more clued in. Twenty-four percent (24%) are undecided...

Read on:

http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/august_2011/voters_still_express_more_confidence_in_tea_party_than_in_congress

Obama's cheap 'shot'

by John Hayward, 14 Aug 2011

Thirty American troops came home to Dover Air Force Base last week. They died when their helicopter was shot down in Afghanistan by Taliban with rocket-propelled grenades. Many were members of SEAL Team Six, the fabled special operations unit that flew stealth choppers into Pakistan after Osama bin Laden, putting the old monster down in a pile of his porno tapes.

Nineteen of the 30 families asked for no media coverage of the ceremony at Dover — that request for privacy was, of course, honored. By everyone, that is, except Barack Obama. He slipped in a personal photographer, who snapped a dramatic photo of the president saluting in silhouette...

...This is not the last time Obama will try to exploit the SEALs for political advantage. The director of the Oscar-winning film *The Hurt Locker* announced that she would begin filming a movie about the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, with a generous focus on Obama's role in making the "gutsy call" to proceed with the operation. The White House is providing access and interviews.

It will come as no surprise that *Gutsy Call: The Movie* is scheduled for release a month before Election Day 2012...

...This is what happens when war becomes silhouetted against politics, a desperate bid for re-election overrides common sense, and the honor and respect due to our fallen heroes and their families is not the highest priority of the commander in chief.

More: http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/obama_cheap_shot_VxalLSSU0kmrCmfVdk5IOI

"Epistemic Closure" at the *New Yorker*?

by Matt Welch, 11 Aug 2011

...I came across something of note in the same issue of the magazine. Namely, a startling (and startlingly familiar) unanimity of opinion when it comes to economic policy...

I don't open up *The New Yorker* to agree with its economics, and I'm sure the feeling would be mutual. But what's striking here is the absence of any engagement with the critique that we've *already been dosing the economy with fiscal and monetary stimulus*, we've *already been* pushing a "jobs, jobs, jobs, and jobs" agenda from Washington, and after three full years of this approach (which itself came after an *eight-year federal spending binge* whose multiplier effect can be scientifically calculated as *bupkus*), we have...the lowest labor-force participation *since 1983*.

I understand the counter-arguments, on those occasions when people stir themselves to make them—bailout economics saved us from an *unimaginable financial meltdown*, the stimulus needed to be *several times larger*, the *Great Credit Unwind* is greater and unwindier than we thought. That's why it's important to, you know, *engage those counter-arguments*.

But what we've largely seen on both the left and the *great do-something center* these past several days is not a willingness to persuade a skeptical nation, nor to grapple with the many inconvenient real-world after-effects of bailouts and stimuli, but rather a series of petulant declarations of allegedly settled economic facts, accompanied by some general stomping around and a crossing of the arms. To do this in one breath, then in the next condemn the Tea Party tendency as "ideological," strikes me at minimum as being a little lacking on the self-awareness side.

Examples of the Unanimity: <http://reason.com/blog/2011/08/11/epistemic-closure-at-the-new-y>

Apart from an ignorant reference to Senator *Joseph McCarthy* (1908-1957), this is a pretty good piece.

How to recover Britain's streets for civilisation

by Charles Moore, 13 Aug 2011

...As someone who was a young journalist the last time a wave of disorder swept through the country, I am struck

by a great change that has taken place. Contrary to what you may have read, this change is not that violence has increased. It was in 1981 that horrible things like attacking fire engines, trying to kill policemen and using riot as a cover for mass looting first showed themselves in mainland Britain. Although the technology is different today, allowing the criminals to bring trouble to more places, the ferocity of violence has been, if anything, slightly less bad than in Brixton or Toxteth 30 years ago.

No, the difference lies in public attitudes to what has happened. This time, the attitudes are much better. Then as now, of course, most ordinary citizens were unequivocal in their disgust at rioting. But in 1981, the prevailing culture among our ruling elites was different. The weight of the BBC, local government, trade unions, officialdom, came down on the police for being too harsh, and, needless to say, on the prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, for the same crime. The chairman of the Merseyside Police Authority supported the rioters, saying: "They would be apathetic fools if they didn't protest." In Parliament, Michael Foot, the Labour leader, hurled anathemas at the evil Thatcher. In the capital, a young man called Ken Livingstone took over the Greater London Council in a post-election coup, and began attacking the police.

In the Commons on Thursday, the Opposition was as good as gold. David Cameron politely invited Ed Miliband to agree with him, and Mr Miliband politely did. Except on police numbers (with Labour wanting more of them), there was no way of distinguishing between one party and the other. Faced with overwhelming public anger and opinion polls in which 90 per cent wanted water cannon and a third even wanted live ammunition for the police, MPs knew which side their bread was buttered. In 1981, an MP saying that he supported the police was making a controversial political statement. This week, he was uttering a commonplace. So great is the moral pressure that even the criminal justice system, which for years has said that it is utterly impossible to speed up its processes, has suddenly found that its courts can, after all, work through the night.

So the Government must not use this political unanimity as an excuse to change the subject—as Mr Cameron seems rather inclined to do—to moaning about "cultural" problems in the whole of society. Let it alter the culture which it truly can affect—its own. The basic trend of public policy since the Brixton riots has been to make it harder for the police to deal with crime. It has not been a question of money...

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/8698193/How-to-recover-Britains-streets-for-civilisation.html>

Lessons for us from London in flames

by Mark Steyn, 13 Aug 2011

... While the British Treasury is busy writing checks to Amsterdam prostitutes, one-fifth of children are raised in homes in which no adult works—in which the weekday ritual of rising, dressing and leaving for gainful employment is entirely unknown. One-tenth of the adult population has done not a day's work since Tony Blair took office on May 1, 1997.

If you were born into such a household, you've been comprehensively "stimulated" into the dead-eyed zombies staggering about the streets this past week: pathetic inarticulate subhumans unable even to grunt the minimal monosyllables to BBC interviewers desperate to appease their pathologies. C'mon, we're not asking much: just a word or two about how it's all the fault of government "cuts" like the leftie columnists argue. And yet even that is beyond these baying beasts. The great-grandparents of these brutes stood alone against a Fascist Europe in that dark year after the fall of France in 1940. Their grandparents were raised in one of the most peaceful and crime-free nations on the planet. Were those Englishmen of the mid-20th century to be magically transplanted to London today, they'd assume they were in some fantastical remote galaxy. If Charlton Heston was horrified to discover the *Planet of the Apes* was his own, Britons are beginning to realize that the remote desert island of *Lord Of The Flies* is, in fact, located just off the coast of Europe in the northeast Atlantic. Within two generations of the Blitz and the Battle of Britain, a significant proportion of the once-free British people entrusted themselves to social rewiring by liberal compassionate Big Government and thereby rendered themselves paralytic and unemployable save for nonspeaking parts in *Rise of The Planet Of The Apes*. And even that would likely be too much like hard work.

Here's another line from my book: "In Britain, everything is policed except crime."...

...A police force all but entirely useless when it comes to preventing crime or maintaining public order has time to police everything else. When Sam Brown observed *en passant* to a mounted policeman on Cornmarket Street in Oxford, "Do you know your horse is gay?" he was surrounded within minutes by six officers and a fleet of patrol cars, handcuffed, tossed in the slammer overnight, and fined 80 pounds. Mr. Brown's "homophobic comments," explained a spokesmoron for Thames Valley Police, were "not only offensive to the policeman and his horse, but any members of the general public in the area." The zealous crackdown on Sam Brown's hippohomophobia has not been replicated in the present disturbances. Anyone who has so much as glanced at British policing policy over the past two decades would be hard pressed to argue which party on the streets of London, the thugs or the cops, is more irredeemably stupid.

This is the logical dead end of the Nanny State...

More: <http://www.ocregister.com/opinion/london-311857-want-book.html>

What happened to Obama? Absolutely nothing.

by Norman Podhoretz, 13 Aug 2011

...Unlike Mr. Westen, we villainous conservatives do not see Mr. Obama as conciliatory or as "a president who either does not know what he believes or is willing to take whatever position he thinks will lead to his re-election." On the contrary, we see him as a president who knows all too well what he believes. Furthermore, what Mr. Westen regards as an opportunistic appeal to the center we interpret as a tactic calculated to obfuscate his unshakable strategic objective, which is to turn this country into a European-style social democracy while diminishing the leading role it has played in the world since the end of World War II. The Democrats have persistently denied that these are Mr. Obama's goals, but they have only been able to do so by ignoring or dismissing what Mr. Obama himself, in a rare moment of candor, promised at the tail end of his run for the presidency: "We are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America."

This statement, coming on top of his association with radicals like Bill Ayers, Jeremiah Wright and Rashid Khalidi, definitively revealed to all who were not wilfully blinding themselves that Mr. Obama was a genuine product of the political culture that had its birth among a marginal group of leftists in the early 1960s and that by the end of the decade had spread metastatically to the universities, the mainstream media, the mainline churches, and the entertainment industry. Like their communist ancestors of the 1930s, the leftist radicals of the '60s were convinced that the United States was so rotten that only a revolution could save it...

...A faithful scion of the political culture of the '60s left is now sitting in the White House and doing everything in his power to effect the fundamental transformation of America to which that culture was dedicated and to which he has pledged his own personal allegiance.

I disagree with those of my fellow conservatives who maintain that Mr. Obama is indifferent to "the best interests of the United States" (Thomas Sowell) and is "purposely" out to harm America (Rush Limbaugh). In my opinion, he imagines that he is helping America to repent of its many sins and to become a different and better country.

But I emphatically agree with Messrs. Limbaugh and Sowell about this president's attitude toward America as it exists and as the Founding Fathers intended it. That is why my own answer to the question, "What Happened to Obama?" is that nothing happened to him. He is still the same anti-American leftist he was before becoming our president, and it is this rather than inexperience or incompetence or weakness or stupidity that accounts for the richly deserved failure both at home and abroad of the policies stemming from that reprehensible cast of mind.

More of the story: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903918104576502093021646166.html?mod=WSJ_article_MoreIn_Opinion

Court says mandate unconstitutional

by Jennifer Haberkorn, 12 Aug 2011, 1:29 PM EDT

The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday ruled that the health care reform law's requirement that nearly all Americans buy insurance is unconstitutional, a striking blow to the legislation that increases the odds the Supreme Court will choose to review the law.

The suit was brought by 26 states — nearly all led by Republican governors and attorneys general — and the National Federation of Independent Business. The Department of Justice is expected to appeal.

The 2-1 ruling marks the first time a judge appointed by a Democrat has voted to strike down the mandate. Judge Frank Hull, who was nominated by former President Bill Clinton, joined Chief Judge Joel Dubina, who was appointed by George H.W. Bush, to strike down the mandate. Judge Stanley Marcus, in a dissenting opinion, said the mandate is constitutional. He was also appointed by Clinton.

The panel partially upheld a ruling issued in January by Judge Roger Vinson, who struck down the entire health reform law. However, the 11th Circuit said that the rest of the legislation can stand even if the mandate is unconstitutional. The panel also said that the law's expansion of Medicaid is constitutional, ruling against the states...

...The majority of the panel said they couldn't uphold the mandate because there would be no limit to Congress's powers if they did. Opponents of the law have frequently argued that if Congress can require people to buy insurance, they can force people to do anything else, such as buy broccoli or a gym membership for their health benefits. Vinson cited this broccoli argument in his sweeping ruling striking down the entire law.

"We have not found any generally applicable, judicially enforceable limiting principle that would permit us to uphold the mandate without obliterating the boundaries inherent in the system of enumerated congressional powers," Dubina and Hull wrote in an expansive, 200-page ruling. "'Uniqueness' is not a constitutional principle in any antecedent Supreme Court decision."...

More: <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0811/61218.html>

Police timeline details mob attacks at Wisconsin State Fair's opening night

12 Aug 2011

A police timeline details the flood of 911 calls and other reports about a marauding pack of youngsters that attacked individuals attending the opening night of the Wisconsin State Fair.

As described by cops, the “offenders...were described as African American. The victims were either White or Hispanic.” A 16-year-old boy arrested for suspicion of attempted robbery and robbery reportedly told officers that whites were singled out because they were deemed “easy targets.”

The timeline prepared by the West Allis Police Department lists dozens of “calls for service” received last Thursday. CFS entries included, “Groups of people chasing white people,” “Mob pulled male and female from motorcycle,” and “Male assaulted by group. Bleeding, but medical refused.”

Police are continuing to investigate nine assaults, one robbery, and an attempted robbery for which they believe race was a factor.

Just a few of the Comments:

Steve Langstroth: Nothing stops a "wilding", or riot like the sight and sound of a wounded street thug of any race writhing in pain and bleeding in the street after having been shot with a large caliber hollow point round to the stomach. Remember; a "victim" is someone who goes on the Oprah show and cries. DON'T be a "victim"!

James Black: Are the cops continuing to deny these attacks were perpetrated by negroes against non-negroes and racially motivated?

Sean Oneill: Here's the headline if I had been one of the innocent white people being attacked at State Fair "WHITE MAN BEING ATTACKED AT STATE FAIR SHOTS AND KILLS HIS ATTACKERS".

More: <http://www.thesmokinggun.com/buster/wisconsin-state-fair-riots-987654>

Mr. O'Hanlon is a Brookings Institution analyst, and endorsed Obama just before the 2008 election. But he also was one of the very first non-conservatives to **recognize the success** of GWB's 2007 "surge" in Iraq.

The U.S. still has a promising future

by Michael O'Hanlon, 11 Aug 2011

Amid all the talk of gloom and doom in the United States, with the stock market's near-crash and the renewed threat of a double-dip recession, it is worth pausing to remember that the United States remains the greatest country on Earth. It is also the country with the most promising future. I make these assertions not as a matter of national pride, but as an analytical conclusion.

This is not to discourage serious attention to deficit reduction, economic renewal and political reform — all of which we greatly need — or to trivialize the country's admittedly serious problems. Nor is it meant to deny the plight of the many Americans who have suffered enormously as a result of the punishing economic downturn of the last three years. But when the news is generally bleak, there is always a danger we will talk ourselves into greater fatalism, and more extreme responses, than are warranted or wise...

Continue: <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-ohanlon-america-20110811,0,1890319.story>

We can't even cut programs that don't work

by Steven Malanga, 10 Aug 2011

...But what many of these media accounts will inevitably fail to do is ask fundamental questions about these programs: What were they designed to do? And is there any evidence they accomplish their purpose? Those questions are significant because much of discretionary spending that our government introduces is speculative in nature. That is, there is little or no evidence when we begin this spending that the money will actually accomplish what we want it to. That's why we wind up funding anti-poverty programs that don't reduce poverty, and job training initiatives that don't get people jobs. We justify tax expenditures to make homes more affordable or to reduce our energy dependence, when there's little evidence they accomplish either. And yet, once begun, we often can't get rid of this spending, even when the evidence against its effectiveness is substantial...

...Political campaigns are big enablers of this culture of speculative spending because politicians feel the need to woo voters with an agenda of prospective solutions to problems. Back in the 2008 presidential campaign, for instance, as

the economy sunk around us, the candidate Obama proposed expanding a federal jobs program, the Workforce Investment Act, as the centerpiece of his effort to get people back to work. In doing so he ignored studies by the Government Accountability Office and other watchdogs that WIA had joined a long list of failed federal jobs programs, with 60 percent of the money in WIA going to administration, not to retraining. The Obama campaign touted the program even though a federal official had testified to Congress that, "We have little information at a national level about what the workforce investment system under WIA achieves," and that the government doesn't know "what works for whom" in the program. Still, when the federal stimulus act of 2009 came around, Congress loaded it up with new job training money. At best, the spending was a jobs program for people who run and work at job training centers...

...Some programs are so sacrosanct the media can't bring itself to confront the evidence that they don't work. Head Start has been the subject of much study by academics who've found the program doesn't do what it is supposed to, that is, give lower income kids a good educational head start. The government keeps commissioning studies hoping to change that, but when the latest study sponsored by Health and Human Services was released in 2010 again showing there were no lasting educational effects of the program, the media virtually ignored it. And so, \$100 billion later, we continue to fund a program that fails to accomplish its purpose...

More: http://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2011/08/10/we_cant_even_cut_programs_that_dont_work_99176.html

Of all the great pieces I've read on the subject thus far, this one is the best.

How the liberals ruined Britain

by Melanie Phillips, 11 Aug 2011

...The violent anarchy that has taken hold of British cities is the all-too-predictable outcome of a three-decade liberal experiment which tore up virtually every basic social value. The married two-parent family, educational meritocracy, punishment of criminals, national identity, enforcement of the drugs laws and many more fundamental conventions were all smashed by a liberal intelligentsia hell-bent on a revolutionary transformation of society. Those of us who warned over the years that they were playing with fire were sneered at and smeared as right-wing nutters who wanted to turn the clock back to some mythical golden age. Now we can see what they have brought about in the unprecedented and horrific scenes of mob violence, with homes and businesses going up in flames, and epidemic looting...

...When Labour came to power in 1997, it set about systematically destroying not just the traditional family but the very idea that married parents were better for children than any other arrangement. Instead, it introduced the sexual free-for-all of 'lifestyle choice'; claimed that the idea of the male breadwinner was a sexist anachronism; and told girls that they could, and should, go it alone as mothers. This was the outcome of the shattering defeat of Tony Blair, in the two years or so after he came to power, at the hands of the ultra-feminists and apostles of non-judgmentalism in his Cabinet and party who were determined, above all, to destroy the traditional nuclear family. Blair stood virtually alone against them, and lost...

...The result of this toxic combination of welfare and non-judgmentalism was an explosion of elective lone parenthood and dysfunctional behaviour transmitted down through the generations at the very bottom of the social heap — creating, in effect, a class apart. Once, children would have been rescued from their disadvantaged backgrounds by schools which gave them not just an education but structure and purpose to their lives. But the liberal intelligentsia destroyed that escape route, too. For its onslaught upon marriage — the bedrock institution of society — with a tax system that penalises married couples with a wife who doesn't work, was replicated by an onslaught upon the understanding and very identity of that society. Instead of transmitting knowledge to children, teaching was deemed to be an attack upon a child's autonomy and self-esteem...

...All of this was compounded still further by the disaster of multiculturalism — the doctrine which held that no culture could be considered superior to any other because that was 'racist.' That meant children were no longer taught about the nation in which they lived, and about its culture. So not only were they left in ignorance of their own society, but any attachment to a shared and over-arching culture was deliberately shattered. Instead of forging social bonds, multiculturalism dissolved them — and introduced instead a primitive war of all against all, in which the strongest groups would destroy the weak.

Closely related to this was 'victim culture,' in which all minority groups were regarded as victims of the majority. So any bad behaviour by them was excused and blamed on the majority. In similar vein, all criminal wrongdoing was excused on the basis that the criminal couldn't help himself, as he was the victim of circumstances such as poverty, unemployment, or as yet illusory cuts in public spending. The human rights of the criminal became seen as more important than the safety and security of his victims...

Read every word: <http://melaniephillips.com/how-the-liberals-ruined-britain>

Experience Matters

8 Aug 2011

Watch: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJZl-YzYHFc&feature=player_embedded

England used to be a country of Men

Something has changed in the English character.

by Frank Miniter, 11 Aug 2011

With London succumbing to looters and muggers, it's time to ask what happened to the once-manly English people. The August 9 issue of the *Daily Mail*, for example, includes a photo of a young man taking off his pants on the street as an impatient looter waits with the emasculated Briton's sneakers and shirt already in his hands. Luckily the feeble Englishman chooses boxers over briefs, but I can't help wondering if men such as T. E. Lawrence, Winston Churchill, or Lord Acton could have stomached the state of manliness in this generation of Englishmen...

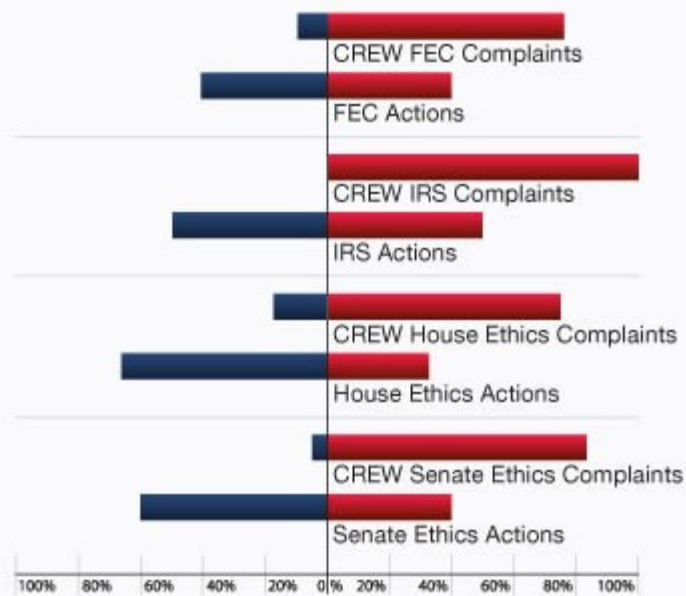
...For context, consider the "Tottenham Outrage" of 1909. Two men in Tottenham, armed with semi-automatic handguns, attempted to rob a payroll truck, but the guards resisted. After one robber fired his gun, police came running. The robbers fled on foot. The chase lasted two hours and covered about six miles as other officers and armed civilians pursued and engaged the robbers. One of the thieves committed suicide and the other later died in surgery. One officer and one civilian also were killed. The bravery of the officers and civilians prompted the creation of the Kings Police Medal and the funeral processions for the slain officer the civilian passed through streets lined with mournful Londoners. Those weren't the kind of people who demonize police officers or take off their pants for thieves...

...Britain's licensing of gun owners and the registration of their firearms made it easy for the government to take guns from law-abiding citizens after a mass-murderer in Hungerford killed 16 people in 1987. Within the next decade, British politicians criminalized possession of most handguns — the final deadline for turning them in was Feb. 27, 1998. (This is something liberals would like to do in the U.S., too.) Yet, few have subsequently pointed to the victims of this anti-freedom gun confiscation. The English papers haven't interviewed victims of rape and other crimes and asked what they might have done if they had the ability to defend themselves from criminals...

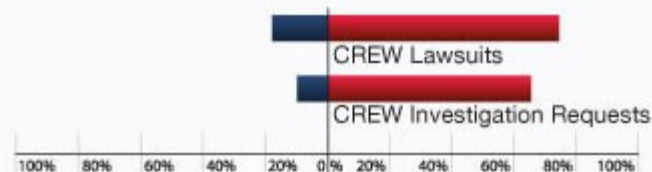
Read the rest: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/274268/england-used-be-country-men-frank-miniter>

C.R.E.W.

If you think Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington is a "non-profit, non-partisan" watchdog group, think again. In reality, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) is a left-wing attack dog masquerading as a "non-partisan watchdog."



Some CREW actions do not have corollary federal oversight functions, but CREW's motivations remain clear.



More: <http://www.crewexposed.com/>

(Hat tip: James F.K.)

The deadest deadbeat

Quick: Which state has the worst balance of assets and liabilities?

Chicago Tribune editorial, 11 Aug 2011

...Illinois is the deadest deadbeat. As the accompanying graphic shows, in only three other states — New Jersey (negative \$28.2 billion), Connecticut (negative \$13.7 billion) and California (negative \$4.2 billion) do liabilities trump assets. Every state calculates net assets the same way, so it was simple for the auditor general staff to compare 49 of them (Hawaii is late with its annual report)...

...True, net assets is only one measure among many of the 50 states' finances. But why, year upon year, do Illinoisans find their state at the butt end of so many comparisons? And why, when all sorts of variables get baked together in credit ratings, does Illinois incessantly find itself competing with California over who gets rated closest to Greece? Because Illinois' leaders have failed and continue to fail...

More: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-edit-deadbeat-0810-20110811,0,197675.story>

Guardian report on London riots omits the race or ethnicity of rioters—but still mentions Jews

8 Aug 2011

<http://cifwatch.com/2011/08/08/guardian-report-on-london-riots-omits-the-race-or-ethnicity-of-rioters-but-still-mentions-jews/>

What makes it doubly disastrous is the depravity of Islam itself.

The annihilation of civilizations

by Bill Warner, 8 Aug 2011

By the time Mohammed died in 632 AD, Islam had used persuasion and jihad to subjugate Arabia. The annihilation of native Arabic culture is Sunna, the perfect example for all times and all Muslims. Said another way, the political theory of Islam is annihilation of Kafir civilization. How well did this political theory work out in history? Is this theory of annihilation at work today?

We have records of Mohammed's last jihad against the Christians north of Arabia. After he died, Umar, the second caliph, took Mohammed's jihad against the Christians and developed it into a war that conquered half of the Christian world. But this conquest was only the beginning of the political transformation. Sharia law was put into place and the Christian Kafirs became dhimmis. But Umar was not able to conquer Anatolia, the site known today as Turkey. For centuries, Islam attacked Anatolia and finally took Constantinople, now known as Istanbul, Turkey.

Take a look at the demographic history of the annihilation of the Greek Christian civilization...

Chilling charts: <http://www.politicalislam.com/blog/the-annihilation-of-civilizations/>

Rep. Robert Dold (R-IL) on protecting human rights throughout the world

28 July 2011

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=lkpBiKze4Ow

[especially in the Islam-infested regions of the Near East and South-central Asia.]

Dr. Wolf is a board-certified diagnostic radiologist, and second-cousin of President Obama.

Obamacare or America?

Liberals' cruel, empty promises hurt rich and poor alike.

by Dr. Milton R. Wolf, 8 Aug 2011

...The debt-ceiling debate has revealed that there are two types of politicians in America today: those who still claim we can afford Obamacare and those who will tell you the truth...

What's worse, Obamacare is a parasite that threatens the very survival of its host economy. When Mr. Obama signed his namesake health care takeover into law in March 2010, he converted his wishful-thinking "recovery summer" into the Obama Depression. This before-and-after moment of the Obama presidency saw private-sector job creation plummet from a modest 67,600 new jobs per month to a flat line of 6,500. Compare that with the 285,800 jobs created per month under President Reagan during the similar time period in the 1980s. And if you can stomach it, compare it with the 400,000-plus new jobless claims—a new normal under Obamanomics—each week.

Obamacare targets job creators like a heat-seeking missile. In Obama-world, any company that dares to employ Americans, particularly more than 50, must face additional financial burdens. As federal compliance makes each new hire prohibitively more expensive, companies that would otherwise expand, won't. In fact, employers who hope to keep their heads above water are being forced to shed as many jobs as possible, particularly within the health care sector itself, which is hit especially hard with rationed reimbursements and increased taxes. Boston Scientific, for example, a medical-device company that provides everything from life-saving cardiac pacemakers to laser-therapy systems, recently announced that it is laying off 1,200 to 1,400 employees. Meanwhile, the same company is investing \$150 million and hiring 1,000 people in Red China because the communists have less burdensome government regulations than Barack Obama's America.

What's worse—the "galling irony," as health care economist David Catron describes it—is that the Obama administration now admits Obamacare will not reduce health care costs. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a report last month indicating health care costs will rise faster under Obamacare than they would have in its absence. Ponder that for a moment...

The rest: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/aug/8/obamacare-or-america/>

The crumbling cult of Obama

by David Harsanyi, 10 Aug 2011

...It turns out we are the ones who failed Him. We weren't prepared for a mega-dosage of awesomeness. We were too dimwitted to grasp the decency of central planning. And the insistence of troublemakers to engage in debate and vote,

in fact, is the most serious threat to this nation's future...

...Similarly, Jacob Weisberg of Slate wrote that because of "intellectual primitives" on the right, "compromise is dead" and "there's no point trying to explain complicated matters to the American people. The president has tried reasonableness and he has failed."

"Reasonableness," you'll remember, is shoving a wholly partisan, Byzantine restructuring of the health care system through Congress in the midst of an economic downturn. But chipping a few billion off a \$3.7 trillion budget in exchange for raising the debt ceiling is an act of irrationality that has, apparently, sucked the very soul from the American project...

...Armed with this unearned intellectual and ethical superiority, it is not surprising to hear someone like John Kerry reprimand the media for even covering conservative viewpoints. It is predictable that the Senate would "investigate" a private entity like Standard & Poor's for giving an opinion on American debt that conflicted with its own. (Remember when not listening to the Dixie Chicks was a "chilling of free speech"?)...

...Following the lead of the Environmental Protection Agency, Education Secretary Arne Duncan recently used this imagined "dysfunction" as an excuse to try to unilaterally implement comprehensive education "reform" by bypassing law and using a waiver system. Why? "Right now," Duncan explained, "Congress is pretty dysfunctional. They're not getting stuff done."

Hate to break the news to you, Arne; for many Americans, stopping this administration from "getting stuff done" is getting stuff done...

Read it all: <http://reason.com/archives/2011/08/10/the-crumbling-cult-of-obama>

Less political rebellion, more mollycoddled mob

by Brendan O'Neill, 10 Aug 2011

...The political context is not the cuts or racist policing, it is the welfare state, which has nurtured a generation that has no sense of community spirit or social solidarity.

What we have on the streets of London and elsewhere are welfare-state mobs. The youth who are shattering their own communities represent a generation that has been suckled by the state more than any generation before it. They live in urban territories where the sharp-elbowed intrusion of the welfare state during the past 30 years has pushed aside older ideals of self-reliance and community spirit. The march of the welfare state into every aspect of urban, less well-off people's existences, from their financial wellbeing to their child-rearing habits and even into their emotional lives, with the rise of therapeutic welfarism designed to ensure that the poor remain "mentally fit", has undermined individual resourcefulness and social bonding. The antisocial youthful rioters are the end-product of this antisocial system of state intervention.

The most striking thing about the rioters is how little they care for their own communities. You don't have to be a right-winger with helmet hair and a niggling discomfort with black or chavvy yooof (I am the opposite of that) to recognise that this violence is not political, just criminal. It is entertaining to watch the political contortions of commentators who claim the riots are an uprising against the evils of capitalism, as they struggle to explain why the targets have been Foot Locker sports shops and why the only "gains" made by the rioters have been to get a new pair of trainers or an Apple laptop. ..

...This is not a political rebellion; it is a mollycoddled mob, a riotous expression of carelessness for one's own community. And **as a left-winger** I refuse to celebrate nihilistic behaviour that has a profoundly adverse affect on working people's lives. Far from being an instance of working-class action, this welfare-state mob has more in common with what Marx described as the lumpenproletariat...

...There is one more important part to this rioting story: the reaction of the cops. Their inability to handle the riots effectively reveals the extent to which the British police are adapted to consensual rather than conflictual policing. It also demonstrates how far they have been paralysed by the politics of victimhood, where virtually every police activity gets followed up by a complaint or a legal case. Their kid-glove approach to the rioters only fuels the riots...

More: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion/less-political-rebellion-more-mollycoddled-mob/story-e6fmg6zo-1226111939883>

Years of liberal dogma have spawned a generation of amoral, uneducated, welfare dependent, brutalised youngsters

by Max Hastings 10 Aug 2011

...But it will not do for a moment to claim the rioters' behaviour reflects deprived circumstances or police persecution. Of course it is true that few have jobs, learn anything useful at school, live in decent homes, eat meals at regular hours or feel loyalty to anything beyond their local gang. This is not, however, because they are victims of mistreatment or neglect. It is because it is fantastically hard to help such people, young or old, without imposing a

measure of compulsion which modern society finds unacceptable. These kids are what they are because nobody makes them be anything different or better...

...'The problem,' said Bill Pitt, the former head of Manchester's Nuisance Strategy Unit, 'is that the law appears to be there to protect the rights of the perpetrator, and does not support the victim.' Police regularly arrest householders who are deemed to have taken 'disproportionate' action to protect themselves and their property from burglars or intruders. The message goes out that criminals have little to fear from 'the feds.'...

...That story rings horribly true. It reflects a society in which teachers have been deprived of their traditional right to arbitrate pupils' behaviour. Denied power, most find it hard to sustain respect, never mind control...

...So there we have it: a large, amoral, brutalised sub-culture of young British people who lack education because they have no will to learn, and skills which might make them employable. They are too idle to accept work waitressing or doing domestic labour, which is why almost all such jobs are filled by immigrants. They have no code of values to dissuade them from behaving anti-socially or, indeed, criminally, and small chance of being punished if they do so...

...They are an absolute deadweight upon society, because they contribute nothing yet cost the taxpayer billions. Liberal opinion holds they are victims, because society has failed to provide them with opportunities to develop their potential. Most of us would say this is nonsense. Rather, they are victims of a perverted social ethos, which elevates personal freedom to an absolute, and denies the underclass the discipline — tough love — which alone might enable some of its members to escape from the swamp of dependency in which they live.

Only education — together with politicians, judges, policemen and teachers with the courage to force feral humans to obey rules the rest of us have accepted all our lives — can provide a way forward and a way out for these people. They are products of a culture which gives them so much unconditionally that they are let off learning how to become human beings. My dogs are better behaved and subscribe to a higher code of values than the young rioters of Tottenham, Hackney, Clapham and Birmingham...

Read it all: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2024284/UK-riots-2011-Liberal-dogma-spawned-generation-brutalised-youths.html>

A Clockwork Orange

by Rosemary Richter, 9 Aug 2011

...The rioters who torched and thieved their way through Tottenham on Saturday were not out to avenge Duggan's death: they were out to exploit it. To claim the streets as theirs, for laughs, for loot, and for the power-buzz of terrifying people, of seeing them panic and of seeing outnumbered police back away from their brick, bottle, and firebomb onslaughts. As thousands of them then did in relatively deprived Archway, Bethnal Green, Hackney, and Peckham; in leafy suburban East Dulwich, Ealing, and Croydon; and in affluent Chelsea and Notting Hill—anywhere the whim took them. In numbers far beyond the capacity of any metropolitan police force to contain. In numbers at which the mob instinct takes over and lawlessness, adroitly manipulated by gang leaders, breaks free of normal inhibitions about getting caught.

To blame this orgy of violence on "government cuts," as the left-wing former mayor of London Ken Livingstone shamelessly has done, is also wrong. Not only have the cuts, while real, still for the most part to make any serious impact, "cuts" is a cop-out excuse for inexcusable behavior for which we all, as citizens, are collectively responsible. We have seen this coming and we have done, we have dared to do, pathetically little about its root cause: the collapse in Britain of parenting and, beyond that, of our readiness to take individual and collective responsibility for the fact that, as a nation, we seem to have become afraid of teenage children...

...We are asking the impossible of the police: they cannot remedy society's sloppiness about inculcating moral values, making clear what are the normal rules of conduct, and teaching children that they have responsibilities toward others that go together with respect for their own rights. And when riots happen, we tend to blame the police for their arrogance toward the most arrogant semiliterate cohort of kids this country has ever bred...

...A generation of senior police officers has earned promotion by learning the language of social workers, of "racism issues" and moral relativism clothed as cultural sensitivity...

More: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/08/09/london-riots-kids-and-parents-need-to-be-held-accountable.html>

The criminals who shame our nation

Telegraph editorial, 10 Aug 2011

...What we have experienced in London and elsewhere since Saturday night is a wholly new phenomenon: violent disorder whose sole intent is criminal. These are not protesters, as the BBC stupidly insisted on calling them: they are looters and vandals and thieves...

...When Theresa May, the Home Secretary, yesterday ruled out the use of water cannon and the deployment of the military to help quell the disturbances, she justified her position by insisting that "the way we police is by consent"—in other words, the people accept the authority of the police out of respect, not fear.

Well, that particular civics lesson has clearly been lost on the thousands of young thugs who have laid waste streets across the capital, and struck in parts of other cities. It is blindingly obvious that they have neither respect for nor fear of the police. They behave with brazen impunity. For many of these hooligans, the contract between people and police has not been broken—it has never existed. Many have grown up in sink estates where the writ of the law scarcely runs.

In such circumstances, there can be only one response if the law-abiding majority is to be protected: the thugs must be taught to respect the law of the land the hard way. Can the police rise to the challenge? As David Green of the Civitas think tank argued in these pages yesterday, the police have become so sensitised to the issue of race post-Macpherson that their response to violent criminality when perpetrated predominantly by black people can be fatally inhibited. The spectacle of heavily equipped riot police looking on as gangs of thugs systematically loot shops is a dispiriting one...

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/8691352/The-criminals-who-shame-our-nation.html>

Riots: a Tory PM must always deliver peace and order

by Charles Moore, 10 Aug 2011

...Throughout these years, a panoply of "human rights" and form-filling procedures and "diversity" programmes and politicians who see career advantage in attacking the police when things get difficult have forced the coppers to look over their shoulders to survive. The authorities were at pains to celebrate the "vibrant" society created by multiculturalism. They were reluctant to admit that all that vibrancy needs tough policing.

In the 1990s, it became correct parlance to refer to the police as a "service" rather than a "force". Of course the police should serve, but once you drop the word "force", you drop the basic, necessary thing. The police must, above all, keep the peace. Sometimes, they will need force to do this.

If they cannot use sufficient force, two things will happen. First, the criminals will be emboldened. If you were a bored, unpleasant youth in Hackney or Clapham or Croydon in recent days, and you had seen, thanks to the Sky helicopter, what was going on in the streets near you, you would have thought it would be fun to go out and join in the plunder. As two girls in Woolwich drinking stolen rosé at 9.30 in the morning said to the BBC: "It was good... we are showing the police we can do what we want". Without force against it, crime will sweep through a city like a Mexican wave.

The second thing that will happen is that decent citizens won't put up with it. The heroes of recent days for many (including, I must admit, me) are the Turkish shopkeepers patrolling Green Lanes, Hackney, with baseball bats to protect their businesses (and being threatened with arrest for doing so). If the police are so hemmed in that they have to act like a sluggish nationalised industry, private enterprise will step into the breach. Few of us want vigilantes, but many would like a version of the Home Guard directed against indigenous threats to peace. At last, a Big Society project that could get some traction! ...

More: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/8691353/Riots-a-Tory-PM-must-always-deliver-peace-and-order.html>

Unions lose big in Wisconsin

by David Freddoso, 10 Aug 2011

..."The people" were supposed to be on the side of the unions who protested at the state capitol when Walker's bill passed, limiting the unions' collective bargaining privileges against taxpayers and school districts. But it turns out that "the people" had other ideas. In the end, even a massive infusion of cash and union volunteers was not enough to deliver the three state Senate recall races the unions needed, despite the fact that President Obama carried all six of the seats in question in 2008.

This marks the unions' third huge defeat in Wisconsin this year. The other two were the passage of Walker's bill and the re-election of David Prosser to the state Supreme Court. The grand talk of recalling Walker himself next year seems a bit blustery now, given the great failure of last night.

More: <http://campaign2012.washingtonexaminer.com/blogs/beltway-confidential/unions-lose-big-wisconsin>

Republicans maintain control of Wisconsin Senate

9 Aug 2011, 11:46 pm CDT

Republicans will stay in control of the state Senate after surviving several recall challenges on Tuesday. Republicans on Tuesday successfully defended four seats in recall elections, and Democrats picked up two seats...

...Two Democrats, Sens. Jim Holperin and Bob Wirch, face recalls next week on Aug. 16. One Democratic incumbent, state Sen. Dave Hansen, won his recall election last month.

Democrats were hoping to recapture control of the Senate in a political fight that's attracted millions of dollars in spending by national unions and other outside groups. The recall elections Tuesday target incumbent Republicans and stem from anger over Gov. Scott Walker's collective bargaining proposal that attracted throngs of protesters to the state Capitol. Walker's proposal took away most union rights from nearly all public workers.

Those three Democrats were among those who fled to Illinois for weeks to avoid voting on the bill...

More: <http://www.channel3000.com/politics/28818859/detail.html>

(Hat tip: Jim D.)

Is Obama smart?

A case study in stupid is as stupid does.

by Bret Stephens, 9 Aug 2011

...Socrates taught that wisdom begins in the recognition of how little we know. Mr. Obama is perpetually intent on telling us how much he knows. Aristotle wrote that the type of intelligence most needed in politics is prudence, which in turn requires experience. Mr. Obama came to office with no experience. Plutarch warned that flattery "makes itself an obstacle and pestilence to great houses and great affairs." Today's White House, more so than any in memory, is stuffed with flatterers.

Much is made of the president's rhetorical gifts. This is the sort of thing that can be credited only by people who think that a command of English syntax is a mark of great intellectual distinction. Can anyone recall a memorable phrase from one of Mr. Obama's big speeches that didn't amount to cliché? As for the small speeches, such as the one we were kept waiting 50 minutes for yesterday, we get Triple-A bromides about America remaining a "Triple-A country." Which, when it comes to long-term sovereign debt, is precisely what we no longer are under Mr. Obama.

Then there is Mr. Obama as political tactician. He makes predictions that prove false. He makes promises he cannot honor. He raises expectations he cannot meet. He reneges on commitments made in private. He surrenders positions staked in public. He is absent from issues in which he has a duty to be involved. He is overbearing when he ought to be absent. At the height of the financial panic of 1907, Teddy Roosevelt, who had done much to bring the panic about by inveighing against big business, at least had the good sense to stick to his bear hunt and let J.P. Morgan sort things out. Not so this president, who puts a new twist on an old put-down: Every time he opens his mouth, he subtracts from the sum total of financial capital...

Read the rest: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111904140604576495932704234052.html>

At time of crisis, Obama plays politics

Washington Examiner editorial, 9 Aug 2011

When President Obama finally got around Monday to offering public remarks on Friday evening's decision by Standard & Poor's to downgrade the U.S. credit rating, his comments featured a little of everything. There was at the outset a snide retort that "we didn't need a rating agency" to tell us we have an economic problem, followed by shifting blame for the downgrade to Republicans for their "insistence on drawing lines in the sand" and willingness to use "the threat of a default" as "a bargaining chip." Obama then indulged in a crude denial of reality in saying "there's not much further we can cut" in defense of domestic spending. There was a promise, finally, "to present my own recommendations in coming weeks on how we should proceed," followed by yet more demands for additional federal spending on stimulus projects and unemployment.

It was, in short, vintage Obama: political double talk with a sprinkling of empty promises and baseless accusations of selfish intentions on the part of opponents. What it was not was presidential leadership...

More: <http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/2011/08/time-crisis-obama-plays-politics>

The taboo on mentioning black mob violence

by John Bennett, 8 Aug 2011

If you point out a wave of racial mob violence, you are "race-baiting," according to several liberal commentators. Perhaps these liberals are the ones Attorney General Holder referred to when he called ours a "nation of cowards."

The [wave of racist violence](#) committed by [black flash mobs](#) is different from any other form of racism today. The neglected social problem of racial mob violence is unique in its [organization](#), the [high numbers of people involved](#), the [intensity of the violence](#), and the [stark racial impact](#) of that violence. The violence is also unique in that it has been

purposefully obscured by the mainstream media, with the [editor of the Chicago Tribune, among others](#), saying that his paper will not report on the race of the attackers.

The hateful murders of Matthew Shephard, who was gay, and James Byrd, Jr., who was black, were memorialized with national legislation. When similar crimes are committed by blacks against whites, they are greeted with ignominious silence. Just ask your friends how many of them are familiar with the murder of [Channon Christian and Christopher Newsome](#), or [David Graham](#). How many are familiar with Hoang Nguyen, who was [killed in a senseless "game"](#) called the knock-out game, in which [mostly black attackers](#) attack [mostly non-black victims](#)?

Now that some news outlets like the Drudge Report have occasionally taken notice of some of this violence, the left is acting out in response. Some on the left—always on the lookout for racism against minorities—are now upset that people are paying attention to black mob violence. The hypocrisy is so extreme that some liberals, like Roy Edroso at [The Village Voice](#), are condemning people who point out the mob violence...

Continue: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/the_taboo_on_mentioning_black_mob_violence.html

Obamageddon, Barackalypse Now! Bam is "Debt Man Walking" in 2012

Rush Limbaugh Show, 8 Aug 2011

...Obama is always running around complaining and whining and moaning about all that he inherited from George W. Bush. Well, he inherited a AAA credit rating, an unemployment rate of 5.7%. Does anybody doubt that this is on purpose?... So go ahead and blame Standard & Poor's all you want, Democrats. Now they're blaming the military! Barney Frank's blaming the military... You know our military spending is 4% of GDP right now? Military spending is 4% of GDP. During the Eisenhower administration in the fifties, post WWII, defense spending was 10% of GDP. Today it's 4% of GDP, and Barney Frank and the Democrats are trying to say it's the military's fault that we've been downgraded. This is the fault of the Democrat Party...

...Contrary to what the Democrats are saying, Standard & Poor's is not saying we're not taxed enough; they're saying we're spending too much... Another thing I'm ticked off about is this stupid debt deal. Remember last week on Wednesday, after Obama received the new spending authority in that debt deal we spent \$259 billion in one day. We went \$259 billion in debt in one day, which was more than the cuts over ten years are gonna end up being in the debt deal...

...In the last two and a half years we've had plenty of time to assess what hasn't been working and change it. Instead, we have doubled down in what hasn't been working. We have doubled and tripled what hasn't been working. We piled what doesn't work on top of what doesn't work, on top of what doesn't work. The old definition of "insanity" is "doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result." We've got it! We have insanity at the upper levels of our government. So now we know what Obama got for his birthday: A downgrade of our credit rating, probably exactly what he wanted in his heart of hearts...

...We've had a AAA credit rating since 1917, all the way through World War I. The Great Depression, we had a AAA credit rating. World War II, we had a AAA credit rating, and we lose it now, and for what? For what great purpose did we lose it? Except an ideological hatred of American capitalism and a love of class warfare, what did we lose our AAA rating for? A naked effort to get still more and more money to buy votes. A never-ending quest for power, that's why we lost our AAA credit rating. Think about it: Obama's finally managed another major accomplishment on that list he told us he had, that list that he said he'd only done about 70% so far. At long last, Obama and his fellow Democrats have finally been able to convince the world that we are just another country, after all...

More: http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_080811/content/01125106.guest.html

If we are to survive the looming catastrophe, we need to face the truth

by Janet Daley, 7 Aug 2011

...The truly fundamental question that is at the heart of the disaster toward which we are racing is being debated only in America: is it possible for a free market economy to support a democratic socialist society? On this side of the Atlantic, the model of a national welfare system with comprehensive entitlements, which is paid for by the wealth created through capitalist endeavour, has been accepted (even by parties of the centre-Right) as the essence of post-war political enlightenment.

...But the US has a very different historical experience from European countries, with their accretions of national remorse and class guilt: it has a far stronger and more resilient belief in the moral value of liberty and the dangers of state power. This is a political as much as an economic crisis, but not for the reasons that Mr Obama believes. The ruckus that nearly paralysed the US economy last week, and led to the loss of its AAA rating from Standard & Poor's, arose from a confrontation over the most basic principles of American life.

Contrary to what the Obama Democrats claimed, the face-off in Congress did not mean that the nation's politics were "dysfunctional." The politics of the US were functioning precisely as the Founding Fathers intended: the legislature was acting as a check on the power of the executive.

The Tea Party faction within the Republican party was demanding that, before any further steps were taken, there must be a debate about where all this was going. They had seen the future toward which they were being pushed, and it didn't work. They were convinced that the entitlement culture and benefits programmes which the Democrats were determined to preserve and extend with tax rises could only lead to the diminution of that robust economic freedom that had created the American historical miracle.

And, again contrary to prevailing wisdom, their view is not naive and parochial: it is corroborated by the European experience. By rights, it should be Europe that is immersed in this debate, but its leaders are so steeped in the sacred texts of social democracy that they cannot admit the force of the contradictions which they are now hopelessly trying to evade...

... We have been pretending — with ever more manic protestations — that this could go on for ever. Even when it became clear that European state pensions (and the US social security system) were gigantic Ponzi schemes in which the present beneficiaries were spending the money of the current generation of contributors, and that health provision was creating impossible demands on tax revenue, and that benefit dependency was becoming a substitute for wealth-creating employment, the lesson would not be learnt. We have been living on tick and wishful thinking...

Read it all:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/janetdaley/8685945/If-we-are-to-survive-the-looming-catastrophe-we-need-to-face-the-truth.html>

And check out the 1,794+ Comments!

Whether or not the short-term stock market predictions are accurate, this is a key explanation of what's going on.

S&P's regulatory politics

by John Berlau & Matthew Melchiorre, 8 Aug 2011

... S&P was actually a Johnny-come-lately at marking down U.S. debt, as two upstart credit rating agencies, Egan-Jones Rating Co. and Weiss Ratings, had already done so.

Unlike S&P, these firms made clear that their ratings were about long-term prospects, rather than the debt ceiling fight, and emphasized spending over taxes. When Egan-Jones, widely respected for its early downgrades of Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers, changed its rating of U.S. debt from AAA to AA+ on July 16, it explained: "The major factor driving credit quality is the relatively high level of debt and the difficulty in significantly cutting spending. We are taking a negative action not based on the delay in raising the debt ceiling but rather our concern about the high level of debt to GDP." Similarly, Weiss, which lowered its rating in April from C to C-, offered this explanation: "Our downgrade today is not contingent on the outcome of the debt-ceiling debate."

By contrast, a closer look at the S&P downgrade shows that the firm may have been motivated by its desire to remain a political player. Fox Business correspondent Charlie Gasparino argued on-air Saturday that the firm "boxed itself in" by demanding \$4 trillion in cuts and encouraging tax hikes. When Congress passed cuts of less than this amount in a package that contained no tax hikes, S&P likely felt that it had to make good on its threat but do so in a way that carried some favor with the administration in power.

The ratings cartel of S&P, Moody's, and Fitch was created by decades of government regulation blocking meaningful competition. In 1975, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) created the designation of "nationally recognized statistical rating organization" (NRSRO) for credit rating firms. Regulatory agencies soon began requiring that banks, brokerage firms, pensions, and insurance companies carry mandated levels of securities rated AAA from an SEC-approved NRSRO.

From the 1990s until 2003, only the "Big 3" had been approved by the SEC to be NRSROs. And when these firms would rate a new security as AAA, financial firms would rush to buy it to satisfy their regulatory capital requirements. This is what helped create the bubble in AAA-rated mortgage-backed securities. But slowly and surely, the state-backed financial ratings cartel began to crack...

More: <http://spectator.org/archives/2011/08/08/sps-regulatory-politics#>

America Gets Downgraded

A spend and tax policy mix always leads to economic decline.

Wall Street Journal editorial, 8 Aug 2011

... The Bush Presidency and previous GOP Congresses contributed to the current problem by not insisting on domestic cuts to finance the cost of war, and by adding the prescription drug benefit without reforming Medicare. But as

recently as 2008 spending was still only 20.7%, and debt held by the public was only 40.3%, of GDP.

In the name of saving the economy from panic, the White House and the Pelosi Congress then blew out the American government balance sheet. They compounded the problem of excessive private debt by adding unsustainable public debt.

They boosted federal spending to 25% of GDP in 2009, 23.8% in 2010 (as TARP repayments provided a temporary reduction in overall spending), and back nearly to 25% this fiscal year. Meanwhile, debt to GDP climbed to 53.5% in 2009, 62.2% in 2010, and is estimated to hit 72% this year—and to keep rising. These are all figures from Mr. Obama's own budget office.

Rather than change direction this year, Mr. Obama's main political focus has been to preserve those spending levels by raising taxes. His initial budget in February for fiscal 2012 proposed higher spending. He then resisted the modest spending cuts that the GOP proposed for the rest of fiscal 2011.

He responded to Paul Ryan's proposal to reform Medicare and Medicaid by calling it un-American and unworthy of debate. In the most recent budget talks, he would only consider small entitlement reforms (cuts in payments to providers) if Republicans agreed to raise taxes. He has refused even to discuss ObamaCare or serious reforms in Medicare and Social Security. Meanwhile, federal payments to individuals continue to grow as a share of all spending, as the nearby chart shows. This is how you become the Downgrade President...

...The better answer—the only road back to fiscal sanity and AAA status—is to reverse the economic policies of the late Bush and Obama years. The financial crisis followed by the Keynesian and statist revival of the last four years have brought the U.S. to this downgrade and will lead to inevitable decline. The only solution is to return to the classical, pro-growth economic ideas that have revived America at other moments of crisis.

More: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903454504576493173381179508.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEADTop

38 US, Afghan forces killed in helo crash

by Bill Roggio, 6 Aug 2011

Coalition forces suffered the largest loss of life in a single incident since US forces invaded Afghanistan in 2001 when a transport helicopter crashed during a raid in eastern Afghanistan, killing 31 US and seven Afghan special operations forces. The Taliban and an Afghan official claimed the Chinook was shot down, but ISAF would not confirm the reports.

The helicopter crashed today while conducting a raid in the Tangi Valley in the Saydabad district, a known haven for the Taliban in Wardak province. Thirty US troops, including 22 Navy SEALs, an interpreter, and seven Afghan special operations soldiers were killed, **according to the *Navy Times*. *The Associated Press* reported** that more than 20 members from Naval Special Warfare Development Group, more commonly referred to as SEAL Team 6, the unit that carried out the raid that killed al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 2, were killed. There is no indication that the SEALs killed today were involved in the bin Laden raid.

A spokesman for the Wardak provincial government said that the Chinook was hit as it took off after an operation. A villager in Saydabad also **told *AFP*** that the helicopter was shot down.

In a statement released on their propaganda website, Voice of Jihad, the Taliban **claimed the helicopter was shot down** "with rockets during the fighting." The Taliban also said that eight of their own fighters were killed during a clash in the area...

More: http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/08/38_coalition_afghan.php

Prayers Up!

by Blackfive, 6 Aug 2011

Time for some spiritual warfare. By now, most of you have seen reports that we've been following it for some time. News reports are stating that the majority of the 31 Americans slain in the helicopter shoot down were SEALs from ST6.

Thoughts and prayers go out to the families and friends of those SEALs, their terps, the Afghans and the air crew.

This loss to SOCOM is akin to the Pacific Fleet losing an aircraft carrier. It is devastating.

<http://www.blackfive.net/main/2011/08/prayers-up.html>

Don't forget to honor the Navy SEALs who died in the line of duty

by Michael Daly, 7 Aug 2011

If you went to Ground Zero or Times Square or anywhere else to cheer and chant "U.S.A.! U.S.A.!" after Navy SEAL Team Six brought justice to Osama Bin Laden, go back there Sunday.

Go back and offer a moment of silence for the 22 men from SEAL Team Six and all the others aboard the helicopter that was shot down in Afghanistan yesterday...

More: http://www.nydailynews.com/news/2011/08/07/2011-08-07_2michael07m.html

The 'Satan sandwich' we all face if we do nothing

by E. Thomas McClanahan, 7 Aug 2011

... As Noemie Emery wrote recently in the *Weekly Standard*, constitutional rights require payment from nobody, while government benefit programs deliver goods and services that cost money, have properties of scarcity and require tradeoffs.

Cleaver and his friends use the language of fairness and justice to suggest that the only policy in keeping with “the great religions of the world” is to grab a bigger share of other people's money, ignoring the growth of the debt and the threat it will impede the wealth-creation process on which these politicians feed...

More: <http://www.kansascity.com/2011/08/06/3061055/the-satan-sandwich-we-all-face.html>

Though he may be wonderful on subjects that he *knows*, Governor Christie is shockingly ignorant about Islam.

Christie's 'Crazies'

Sharia is not a figment of our imagination.

by Andrew C. McCarthy, 6 Aug 2011

This “sharia-law business is crap . . . and I'm tired of dealing with the crazies!” So blustered Chris Christie. Bluster is the New Jersey governor's default mode. It has certainly served him well. When directed at surly advocates of New Jersey's teachers' unions — who, after all, deserve it — bluster can apparently make a conservative heartthrob out of a pol whose bite is bipartisan moderate, however titillating his bark may be...

...That's why, as Governor Christie ought to understand, sharia concerns can't be dismissed as “crap.” They help us sort out the pro-American Muslims we want to empower from the Islamists. When we dismiss these concerns, we end up building bridges to all the wrong people, as government has done, to its repeated embarrassment, for two decades...

Read it all: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/273865/christies-crazies-andrew-c-mccarthy?page=1>

The Peculiar Madness of Paul Krugman

by Robert Tracinski, 6 Aug 2011

...Only in Washington could a plan to increase the national debt from 65% to 80% of GDP *in less than a year and a half* be called a “debt reduction” deal.

If that's what is happening under the “austerity” that horrifies Krugman, consider what his proposal would do to these debt levels. It would increase the ratio of publicly held debt to GDP by another 10 to 15 percent, carrying us straight to the same levels that have driven Greece, Italy, and Spain to the brink of default (or in the case of Greece, over it). So what he is proposing is that we can spend our way to growth, if we just have the courage to throw the country to the brink of bankruptcy in one enormous throw of the dice.

You would think a proposal like Krugman's would call for a little modesty, for a recognition of the enormity of his task and the legitimate skepticism he has to overcome. But he makes no effort to reasonably lay out his case, take counter-arguments seriously, and address his proposal's enormous risks. Instead, it's all just bluster and name-calling and contemptuous attitude, as if that is supposed to intimidate us into compliance.

Krugman is an extreme case, but he illuminates the furious bitterness we are now seeing from the left-leaning elites. They keep telling us to transform our lives in ways that have obvious risks, shortcomings, and negative consequences—such as, for example, eliminating fossil fuels and powering everything with windmills and solar panels. And if anyone asks questions or objects, we are immediately dismissed as “intellectual primitives who reject modern economics.” That's from Jacob Weisberg, just to show that Krugman isn't the only one suffering from this kind of madness...

More http://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2011/08/06/the_peculiar_madness_of_paul_krugman_99169.html

America's debt downgrade is a damning indictment of President Obama's Big Government disaster

by Nile Gardiner, 6 Aug 2011

The decision by credit agency Standard and Poor's to downgrade America's AAA credit rating for the first time in 70 years is a massive blow to the credibility of the Obama administration, and a damning indictment of its handling of the economy. No doubt the White House will pathetically try to blame the Bush Administration, Republicans in Congress, and of course its favourite target, the Tea Party, for the move by S&P. But without a shadow of a doubt, responsibility for the country's financial mess and staggering levels of debt lie with the current US president and his administration. They have been in charge of running the economy for over 30 months, during which time the United States has witnessed an unprecedented increase in government spending and borrowing...

...The implications of this debt downgrade are extremely serious, not least with 46 percent of US Treasuries owned by foreigners. As *The Wall Street Journal* notes, the United States now has a score that ranks "below Liechtenstein and on par with Belgium and New Zealand"...

...Since President Obama took office in January 2009, the United States has embarked on the most ambitious failed experiment in Washington meddling in US history. Huge increases in government spending, massive federal bailouts, growing regulations on businesses, thinly veiled protectionism, and the launch of a vastly expensive and deeply unpopular health care reform plan, have all combined to instill fear and uncertainty in the markets. Free enterprise has taken a backseat to continental European-style interventionism, as an intensely ideological left wing administration has sought to dramatically increase the role of the state in shaping the US economy. The end result has been a dramatic fall in economic freedom, sluggish growth, poor consumer confidence, high unemployment, a collapsing housing market, and an overall decline in US prosperity, with more than 45 million Americans now reliant on food stamps—that's over one seventh of the entire country....

More: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/nilegardiner/100099762/america%E2%80%99s-debt-downgrade-is-a-damning-indictment-of-president-obama%E2%80%99s-big-government-disaster/>

Weisberg vs. the People

The authoritarian impulse and the Cult of Obama.

by James Taranto, 5 Aug 2011

America, you've been a bad, bad country. And Jacob Weisberg is very cross with you.

"It is hard to remember a more dismal moment in American politics," Weisberg moans in a column originally written for the Financial Times. It starts out as a standard partisan attack on Republicans for failing to fall into line with liberal dogma—excuse us, "science"...

...But the comparison between Keynesian economics and global warmism is on target. Both are liberal dogmas disguised, increasingly thinly, as science. Both are supported by circular logic, and thus lack falsifiability, a necessary characteristic of a scientific theory. If the weather gets warmer, that's because of global warming; if it gets colder, that's "climate change" and proves the theory too. Had unemployment stayed below 8%, as the Obama administration promised it would, that would have proved the "stimulus" worked; since it peaked at 10% and has held steady above 9%, that proves the stimulus wasn't big enough. Heads I win, tails you lose.

To Weisberg, the failures of the Obama administration prove not only that Republicans are "intellectual primitives" but that you are stupid: Among the "sobering lessons" that "we" have "learned," he writes, is "that there's no point trying to explain complicated matters to the American people."

The FT, by the way, is a London-based newspaper with a far-flung world-wide circulation (though it is smaller than The Wall Street Journal's by an order of magnitude). So when Weisberg says you're stupid, he isn't exactly saying it to your face. Remember when dissent was the highest form of patriotism? We suppose the definitions are flexible here. Bad-mouthing the American people—for dissenting!—is the highest form of patriotism, at least this week...

More: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903366504576490194186182566.html?mod=djemBestOfTheWeb_h

The Persecution of Palestinian Christians

2 Aug 2011

This news report from CBN's Chris Mitchell talks about the relentless Muslim persecution of the dwindling numbers of Palestinian Christians in Gaza and the West Bank.

Watch: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2011/08/persecution-of-palestinian-christians.html>

The Dirty Little Secret of Economics

by Christopher Chantrill, 2 Aug 2011

...When Adam Smith came out with *The Wealth of Nations*, he advanced two startling notions. One notion was the "invisible hand," that businessmen following their selfish interests seemed to be guided into benefiting others in order to benefit themselves. The other notion was a critique of mercantilism, the eternal idea that a state got strong and powerful by exporting goods and piling up gold in its treasury. On the contrary, Smith argued, it was labor that increased wealth, not gold and silver. Then along came David Ricardo and "comparative advantage." He resolved the "make or buy" issue by arguing that we should only make what we are best at and buy the rest.

Notice what didn't happen next. Governments didn't say, OK, we get it. We'll stop protecting domestic industry; we'll stop worrying about exports; we'll stop worrying about a strong manufacturing sector. We will just write the laws to help labor do its thing and comparative advantage work its magic. Not a bit of it...

What *did* happen, and still does: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/the_dirty_little_secret_of_economics.html

Who's Pro-Choice?

by Deroy Murdock, 4 Aug 2011

Almost unanimously, Washington Democrats call themselves "pro-choice." "I support a woman's right to choose!" they thunder into any open microphone. "Choice," of course, means abortion, though they rarely yell that word as loudly.

Being able to have abortions is where the Democrats' passion for choice starts and stops. Elsewhere, Democrats sabotage a woman's right to choose. Instead, they demand to make that choice for her, as they do for men...

Read on: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/273603/who-s-pro-choice-deroy-murdock>

The invisible hand is writing on our wall

by Walter Russell Mead, 5 Aug 2011

...In the Book of Daniel, King Belshazzar of Babylon held a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and as they ate and drank from the vessels captured when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, they praised the false gods of gold and of silver and of brass, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly when the party was at its height the fingers of an invisible hand appeared and wrote on the wall: MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN. The shocked king called for his sages and soothsayers to interpret the message; none of them could until Daniel, one of the Hebrews brought up in the royal court, appeared. The king promised Daniel any reward he wanted if he would interpret the message. Said Daniel, rather unlike a modern consultant, "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writings unto the king and make known to him the interpretation."

MENE: God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL: Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting. UPHARSIN: Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and the Persians.

This is the message our markets, and the invisible hand behind them that shapes us like a potter shapes the clay, have for the kings and rulers of this earth, the Davoisie and the bankers, the economic sages and the lords of finance: You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Now your punishment begins.

The world's leaders have been on trial these last few months. In Europe, a long running currency crisis has tested the commitment of Europeans to the social ideals they so often speak of, and to the community of nations they have worked to build since the 1940s. TEKEL: weighed in the balance and found wanting.

In China they have been on trial as the accumulating evidence suggests that corruption, incompetence and malfeasance damaged the country's vaunted high speed rail project and led to the deaths of dozens of passengers.

TEKEL. In Japan they have been on trial since the tsunami last spring. Would Japan's bureaucracy tell the truth to the public? After a lost generation of stagnation would Japan's government come up with an effective plan to reconstruct the north and rebuild the country's economy? TEKEL. And in the United States we have a stagnant economy, a mounting debt and no real idea of the way forward. Would Washington come up with a constructive, future-oriented program to move the economy forward and start the adjustments necessary to prepare us to live within our means—and to grow our means so it wouldn't be hard? TEKEL again.

Europe, China, Japan, the United States: the leaders of the world's four largest economies are nowhere near passing the tests that history has set them. In all four places the instincts of the politicians are the same: to dissemble, to delay, to disguise and to deny...

Read the rest <http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2011/08/05/the-invisible-hand-is-writing-on-our-wall/>

To Hell with you people

by Jonah Goldberg, 2 Aug 2011

...So flashforward to this week. Tom Friedman — who knows a bit about Hezbollah — calls the tea partiers the “Hezbollah faction” of the GOP bent on taking the country on a “suicide mission.” All over the place, conservative Republicans are “hostage takers” and “terrorists,” “terrorists” and “traitors.” They want to “end life as we know it on this planet,” says Nancy Pelosi. They are betraying the Founders, too. Chris Matthews all but signs up for the “Make an Ass of Yourself” contest at the State Fair. Joe Nocera writes today that “the Tea Party Republicans can put aside their suicide vests.” Lord knows what Krugman and Olbermann have said.

Then last night, on the very day Gabby Giffords heroically returns to cast her first vote since that tragic attack seven months ago, the vice president of the United States calls the Republican party a bunch of terrorists.

No one cares. I hate the “if this were Bush” game so we're in luck. Instead imagine if this was *Dick Cheney* calling the Progressive Caucus (or whatever they're called) a “bunch of terrorists” on the day Giffords returned to the Congress. Would the mainstream media notice or care? Would *Meet the Press* debate whether this raises “troubling questions” about the White House's sensitivity? Would Andrea Mitchell find some way to blame Sarah Palin for Dick Cheney's viciousness? Would Keith Olbermann explode like a mouse subjected to the Ramone's music in *Rock and Roll High School*? Something inside me hidden away shouts, “Hell yes they would!”

The *Today Show* even had Debbie Wasserman Schultz on this morning for five minutes talking about Giffords. No one thought to ask her what she thought of Biden's comments? It's not like she's the Democratic party's national spokesperson or anything. Oh, wait. She is! ...

More: <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/273444/hell-you-people-jonah-goldberg#>

Matt Damon's got a lot to learn

by Michael Graham, 4 Aug 2011

Matt Damon is *not* a genius. He just plays one in the movies. At last week's “Save Our Teachers” rally in Washington (“save them” from what — the private sector?) Damon announced that incentives — like bonuses for good performance or ending tenure for bad ones — don't work for teachers...

Continue: http://www.bostonherald.com/news/opinion/op_ed/view.bg?articleid=1356281&format=text

Why the Gender Gap won't go away. Ever.

by Kay S. Hymowitz, Summer 2011 issue

Early this past spring, the White House Council on Women and Girls released a much-anticipated report called *Women in America*. One of its conclusions struck a familiar note: today, as President Obama said in describing the document, “women still earn on average only about 75 cents for every dollar a man earns. That's a huge discrepancy.”

It is a huge discrepancy. It's also an exquisite example of what journalist Charles Seife has dubbed “proofiness.” Proofiness is the use of misleading statistics to confirm what you already believe. Indeed, the 75-cent meme depends on a panoply of apple-to-orange comparisons that support a variety of feminist policy initiatives, from the Paycheck Fairness Act to universal child care, while telling us next to nothing about the well-being of women.

This isn't to say that all is gender-equal in the labor market. It is not. It also isn't to imply that discrimination against women doesn't exist or that employers shouldn't get more creative in adapting to the large number of mothers in the workplace. It does and they should. But by severely overstating and sensationalizing what is a universal predicament (I'm looking at you, Sweden and Iceland!), proofers encourage resentment-fueled demands that no government anywhere has ever fulfilled—and that no government ever will.

Let's begin by unpacking that 75-cent statistic, which actually varies from 75 to about 81, depending on the year and the study...

Read it all: http://www.city-journal.org/2011/21_3_gender-gap.html

Dr. Wolf is the president's cousin.

Liberals' unmaking of Barack Obama

President enters predictable free-fall from godlike to Carteresque.

by Dr. Milton R. Wolf, 3 Aug 2011

...The only thing worse than the abject failure of a liberal president, at least in the eyes of the liberal, is the

undeniable failure of liberalism itself. To claim Mr. Obama has been a good president no longer even remotely passes the laugh test. Consider the results thus far of the Obama presidency...

...What's worse, and was as easily predictable, is the systematic dishonesty Team Obama unleashed to persuade Americans to tolerate its big-government, collectivist agenda. America is, after all, a center-right nation with nearly 3-to-1 self-described conservatives compared to liberals. How else besides trickery could Mr. Obama further an agenda so unpopular with voters? Witness the dishonesty...

...So, as the liberal presidency of Mr. Obama becomes increasingly indefensible, the liberal is faced with an unthinkable dilemma: acknowledge the fundamental failure of his collectivist liberal philosophy, which tends toward socialism, or blame its failures on a single man whom, until just recently, the liberal deified.

The conflict between liberal collectivist ideology and its application was easily predictable by anyone who has studied big-government economic failures throughout history, from the collectivist all-stars including Mao's China, Mussolini's Italy, Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Soviet Union to today's honorable mentions such as Castro's Cuba or Chavez's Venezuela. Enforcement of collectivism has always depended on government power, from Stalin's iron-fisted gulags to Mr. Obama's mere heavy-handed plan for punitive fines for failure to purchase your government-imposed health insurance. The degree of autocracy may vary, but still the collectivist road to economic ruin is universal...

Details of failure: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/aug/2/liberals-unmaking-of-barack-obama/print/>

The Spending is Nuts (4:56)

a cartoon by Justin Folk, 23 July 2011

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6AgL-I3PxHE>

<http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2011/08/the-winner-of-the-power-line-prize-is.php>

<http://justinfolk.com/JustinFolk/DirectorReel.html>

Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Aquinas: An Imagined Encounter

by J. Augustine Di Noia, O.P., 3 Aug 2011

<http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2011/08/thomas-jefferson-and-thomas-aquinas-an-imagined-encounter>

Cloward-Piven Paradise Now?

by Jeannie DeAngelis, 1 Aug 2011

Combine class warfare, demonizing the rich, getting as many people onto the welfare rolls as possible, and pushing the economic system to collapse and you have a flawless formula for Cloward-Piven 2.0—and a vehicle that ensures Obama remains in power...

...Since the 1960's when Cloward-Piven presented a socialistic guideline to usher in the type of evenhandedness Obama lauds, America's entitlement rolls have swelled from eight million to 80 million. If the nation's ability to disperse handouts were ever disrupted, it's not hard to see how chaos would erupt should an angry army of millions demand what Cloward-Piven called "the right to income."

Couple the threat of dried-up funds for food stamps, Social Security, unemployment benefits and the like with the Obama administration's vigorous campaign to turn a tiny upper class of big earners into the enemy, and you have the Cloward-Piven recipe for anarchy and complete collapse.

If the worst happened, Saul Alinsky's biggest fan, whose poll numbers continue to plummet, could use mayhem in the streets to remain firmly ensconced in the White House. Alinsky taught his students a basic principle that community organizer Barack Obama learned well: "Never let a good crisis go to waste." Fiscal disintegration coupled with lawlessness would deliver the type of Cloward-Piven/Saul Alinsky trifecta that progressives have worked toward and waited decades for.

Barack Obama has spent the last 1,000+ days defying reason and choosing policy directions that seem nonsensical to the rational mind: a failed stimulus package; ObamaCare; growing the deficit to astronomical proportions; and cynically portraying wealth as immoral. Now, when cuts are the only fix to a budgetary balloon about to burst, a seemingly illogical President digs in and demands additional phantom dollars to spend on a system that is collapsing under the weight of unmanageable debt...

Read it all: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/cloward-piven_paradise_now.html

Obama's idiotic infographic

by Peter Wilson, 2 Aug 2011

...The infographic is a vertical bar graph with 2 segments that stand out: "Bush Policies," highlighted in red ink, are responsible for \$7 trillion, while "Obama policies," in blue, added \$1.4 trillion to the national debt. We are therefore led to believe that Bush added five times as much as Obama to the national debt. Bush's \$7 trillion comes from 6 items, which include—predictably—" \$3T - Bush tax cuts" and "\$1.4T - Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq," while Obama's \$1.4 trillion is the sum of four random line items...

...The items have obviously been slanted to favor Obama's policies (the "middle class tax cut deal" is no different from the "Bush tax cuts"; Obama has "education investments," "one-time and emergency cost[s]" and "mandatory policies" while Bush was fighting un-mandatory wars, etc.).

But more striking is Obama's childish conception of the national debt. To state what might be obvious: the federal government takes in revenue and spends it on all its various discretionary activities and mandatory entitlements. When outlays exceed receipts, we run a deficit, and over time, the deficits accumulate, creating national debt, which today **stands** at \$14.2 trillion and running.

Any government expenditure could potentially add to the national debt, but the idea that you can point to one "policy" and claim that 100% of the cost should be added to our debt is absurd. It would be like claiming that you gained ten pounds because last month you ate six pounds of chicken and four pounds of rice. Similarly, it is erroneous to claim that the national debt increased by \$1.4 trillion because Bush spent that amount over five years on Iraq and Afghanistan. Much, or part, of the cost of war was funded by tax revenue.

Obama's 2010 budget was over 2,000 pages long, with \$3.5 trillion of expenditures, against \$2.1 trillion in revenue, resulting in a deficit of \$1.4 trillion for one year alone. None of this spending appears in the infographic, even though the combined budgets of Department of Education, HUD, and the Department of Energy total over \$100 billion a year, or over \$1 trillion in the last decade. It's as if Obama has redefined mandatory and discretionary spending; any statist program he believes in is mandatory, while programs he disapproves of are discretionary, and only these latter programs can add to the national debt...

More: http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/08/obamas_idiotic_infographic.html

A total waste of time and effort

Rush Limbaugh Show, 2 Aug 2011

Ladies and gentlemen, how many of you believe that there are budget cuts in the new debt ceiling bill? You've heard that there are cuts, have you not? We're cutting here, we're cutting there. Yeah, well, what I want to know is why would anybody believe that this deal includes any significant cuts in spending? If it really cuts spending, why would we have to raise the debt limit by \$2.4 trillion? Why? And we're still gonna get downgraded, and the markets are still not happy, and all the reasons we were sold for doing this have turned out to be bogus. Vladimir Putin, he's out hunting. He says the United States is "a parasite on the world economy." A parasite, meaning our growth is all phony.

It's all based on borrowing, it isn't real, and we are gobbling up all the resources around the world just to sustain our spending. We're really not the rich country that we are is what Putin means. It's all borrowed, it's all fake, it's all phony. We're parasites. All the numbers in this deal are just government math. Government math's even crazier than Farrakhan's Million Man Math Made Easy. Rand Paul has an open letter on his website: To paraphrase Senator Jim DeMint: When you're speeding toward the edge of a cliff, you don't set the cruise control. You stop the car. The current deal to raise the debt ceiling doesn't stop us from going over the fiscal cliff...

...As you well know, because we've been explaining this in easily understandable detail all week. I love the illustration. We could prepare a budget that is a freeze next year that doesn't spend a dime more than this year, and it would be scored as a nine and a half trillion-dollar cut because of the baseline, because of how the budget is expected to grow. "This deal, even if all targets are met and the Super Committee wields its mandate—results in a BEST case scenario of still adding more than \$7 trillion more in debt over the next 10 years. That is sickening." Folks, I'm gonna give you a little history. I remember when this program started—well, even before it started here, when I was in Sacramento and the show started in 1984—getting phone calls throughout the years from people concerned about the national debt, and I pooh-poohed it...

More: http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_080211/content/01125106.guest.html

'Painful' cuts? Anything but.

Investor's Business Daily editorial, 1 Aug 2011

...According to IBD's analysis of available budget numbers, the deal's \$2.4 trillion in 10-year cuts amounts to a mere 5% trim off total projected federal spending during that time. It's like a 400-pound man boasting that he plans to drop 20 pounds over a decade, while his doctors warn about the risks of losing weight so fast.

Even calling these "cuts" is a bit of a stretch, since spending will continue to increase, just at a slightly slower pace. (See [charts below](#).) By 2021, federal spending would still equal 22% of the nation's economy, above the post-World War II average of 20%. Not really a cut, is it?

Plus, in the short term, these "deep," "sharp," "slashing" cuts would still leave the federal government spending roughly 4% more in 2012 than it did in 2010, and 20% more than it did in 2008.

Shorn of all the hyperbole, what this agreement really demonstrates is why it's so hard to get federal spending under control. Both sides routinely use budget gimmicks to exaggerate spending cuts, while armies of special interests swarm Washington to make sure their pet programs don't get touched.

All the while, spending marches upward. And reporters too dumb, lazy or biased to understand how budgets work keep falling for this nonsense...

More: <http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=580096&p=1>

Fine! Call my bluff!

Obama maximizes his losses by going all in on a weak hand.

by James Taranto, 1 Aug 2011

Remember a few weeks ago when President Obama reportedly said to House Majority Leader Eric Cantor: "Eric, don't call my bluff"? Lots of commentators said that this was a "tell"—that by referring to "my bluff," Obama was admitting he was bluffing.

Actually, his play was even worse than that. A bluff is a pretense. The bluffer knows he has a weak hand but bets as if he has a strong one in order to induce his opponents to fold. Obama had a weak hand but thought he had a strong one. His next words to Cantor, according to [Politico](#), were a vow to "take his case 'to the American people.'" He actually believed—for all we know, he *still* believes—all that World's Greatest Orator nonsense.

Thus he ended up maximizing his losses. Last weekend congressional leaders appeared to be on the verge of striking a deal, but Obama scuttled their efforts and commandeered the airwaves for a prime-time address. [As we predicted](#), the American people were unmoved.

Obama had looked at his cards and seen that he was holding a 2, a 3, a 4 and a 5. He was sure he had an ace to complete the straight, but in reality he was looking in the mirror. By the time he realized how weak his hand was, there was no time left to improve it or to bluff. Faced with an imminent liquidity crisis—which would have been a political disaster for him as well as an economic one for the country—he was forced to agree to a deal more or less along Republican lines.

From the standpoint of a small-government conservative, the agreement is far from perfect, but it's probably the best possible outcome as long as a left-wing Democrat is in the White House and his party has a Senate majority. One measure of that is the rage it has provoked on the liberal left...

Read on: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903520204576482083738819032.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_BelowLEFTSecond

Republicans' sobriety on taxes and defense

by Jennifer Rubin, 1 Aug 2011

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/post/republicans-sobriety-on-taxes-and-defense/2011/03/29/gIQAP45JnI_blog.html#pagebreak

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They're still fighting for us.

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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.