



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE **NEWSLETTER #36 — DEC. 16, 2011**

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
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Congressional Tyranny, White House Surrender

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Dec. 16, 2011)

"Congressional Tyranny, White House Surrender" by Ralph Nader, Eurasia Review

Dec. 15, 2011, (<http://www.eurasiareview.com/15122011-ralph-nader-congressional-tyranny-white-house-surrender-oped/>)

Paraphrasing Shakespeare, something is rotten in the state of Capitol Hill. A majority of Congress is just about to put the finishing touches on an amendment to the military budget authorization legislation that will finish off some critical American rights under our Constitution.

Here is how two retired 4 star marine generals, Charles C. Krulak and Joseph P. Hoar, described in the New York Times the strip mining of your freedom to resist tyranny in urging a veto by President Obama:

"One provision would authorize the military to indefinitely detain without charge people suspected of involvement with terrorism, including United States citizens apprehended on American soil. Due process would be a thing of the past...."

"A second provision would mandate military custody for most terrorism suspects. It would force on the military responsibilities it hasn't sought..."for domestic law enforcement...."

"A third provision would further extend a ban on transfers from Guantanamo, ensuring that this morally and financially expensive symbol of detainee abuse will remain open well into the future."

All of Obama's leading military and security officials oppose this codification of the ultimate Big Brother power. Imagine allowing the government to deny people accused of involvement with terrorism (undefined), including U.S. citizens arrested within the United States, the right to a trial by jury. Imagine allowing indefinite imprisonment for those accused without even proffering charges against them. Goodbye 5th and 6th Amendments.

On some government agency's unbridled order: just pick them up, arrest them without charges and throw them into the military brig indefinitely. This atrocity deserves to be repeatedly condemned loudly throughout the land by Americans who believe in the rights of due process, habeas corpus, right to confront your accusers, right to a jury trial—in short, liberty and the just rule of law.

Some stalwart lawyers are speaking out soundly: They include Georgetown Law Professor, David Cole, George Washington University Law Professor, Jonathan Turley, Republican lawyer, Bruce Fein, former American Bar

Association (2005-2006) president, Michael Greco, and the always alert lawyers at the civil liberties groups. Their well-grounded outcries are not awakening the citizenry.

Where are the one million lawyers? Where are the thousands of law professors? Where are the scores of law school deans? Are they not supposed to be our first constitutional responders?

Where is the Tea Party and its haughty rhetoric about the sanctity of constitutional liberty? Most of the Tea caucus voted for tyranny. Presidential candidate, Rep. Ron Paul has been an outspoken critic of this attack on our civil liberties.

The majority also voted to ratify a dictatorial procedure in the Congress, as well. This indefinite, arbitrary, open-ended dictatorial White House mandate was never subjected to even a House or Senate Committee hearing, and was not explained with any rationale known as legislative "findings." It was rammed through by the House and Senate Armed Services Committees without the Judiciary and Intelligence Committees invoking their concurrent jurisdiction for public hearings.

So extreme are these majority Congressional extremists, composed of both Republicans and renegade Democrats, the latter led by Senator Carl Levin, that the Obama Administration has to lecture them about the fundamental American principle that "our military does not patrol our streets."

It is not as if the imperial presidencies of Bush and Obama need any more encouragement and legitimization to continue on their lawless paths to criminal wars of aggression, unlawful surveillance, arbitrary slayings of innocents, wrongful imprisonments, and unauthorized spending. Instead of Congress using its constitutional authority regarding the war, appropriations and investigative powers, it formalizes its impotence by handing the "go for it" power to the Executive branch with the vaguest of language boundaries.

Usually there are a few Senators whose upfront defense of our Constitution would lead them to stand tall against the "Senate Club" and put a "hold" on this pernicious amendment. Civil libertarians hope that, before the final Senate vote in the rush to get home for the Holidays, Senators Rand Paul, Tom Harkin, Al Franken, Richard Blumenthal, Ron Wyden, Bernie Sanders, Jeff Merkley, Tom Coburn or Mike Lee would step forth. A "hold" could spark the demand for public hearings and floor debate to give the American people the time and information to react and ask themselves "how dare Congress take away our most fundamental rights?"

President Obama initially threatened to veto the entire bill and make Congress drop these pernicious dictates that so insult the memory and vision of our founding fathers. He is already signaling that he doesn't have the backbone to reject the false choice "between our safety and our ideals," that he asserted in his Inaugural Address.

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20111215-01	08:30	SteveB	Replay: "Tax Cuts Simply Do Not Create Jobs"
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Also known as "The Unvarnished Truth about Business Taxes".

submitted by Dennis:

"Tax Cuts Simply Do Not Create Jobs" by Larry Beinhart, AlterNet

Dec. 14, 2010, (<http://www.alternet.org/story/149201/>)

MYTH #1: Tax cuts create jobs. Tax increases cost jobs.

All Republican politicians, and many Democratic ones as well, make the claim that tax increases will prevent small business people from hiring. Indeed, it may force them to fire people.

Alright, we expect politicians to say loony things.

But we have a right to expect reporters to break out in hysterical laughter, economists to call their nearest media outlet to say how ridiculous that is, and competing politicians to explain why they're wrong.

That doesn't happen. And that's the weird part. Because it's pretty simple.

Let's do some basic economics. Real basic.

Taxes are not paid on revenue.

Taxes are paid on profits.

Profits are revenues minus costs.

Labor is a cost.

Let's imagine a small business.

For the sake of simplicity, let's say it's a personal business, not a corporation.

It has gross revenues of \$10,000,000 a year.

It has one hundred employees. They each make about the median income, about \$35,000 a year. So they have a payroll of \$3,500,000.

All its other expenses come to \$5,000,000 a year. This includes all the things it buys to make whatever it sells, rent, utilities, shipping, legal, accounting, etc., etc., and so forth.

That leaves a profit of \$1,500,000 a year.

Let's look at a very high tax situation.

Taxes on everything over a million dollars a year is 90%. (The rate from WWII until 1964)

So, on the final half million of my profits, I have to give the government \$450,000, leaving just \$50,000.

If I add ten employees at \$35,000 each, that costs me \$350,000. Those are costs, deducted from revenues, decreasing profits.

Do I want to do that?

I would only have kept \$35,000 of that \$350,000 anyway.

You bet I want to do it. I get to add ten employees at a cost - to me - of just \$35,000. Or \$3,500 per employee.

I get more production, more territories, more sales. My business grows.

Indeed, the whole community benefits.

Let's look at a much lower tax situation.

Say 30% (just 1% lower than what we have now.)

We'll assume the same business, same employees, same costs and profits.

Let's say I'm approached by a factory in China. For simplicity's sake, let's say that even with shipping and other ancillary costs, I can cut fifty jobs and walk away with half their salaries as profits.

Fifty employees cost me \$1,750,000. Half of that is \$875,000. After taxes (30%), I keep \$612,000. That's worth doing.

I'm a bit tired of Chinese villains.

Let's say that by increasing hours, decreasing benefits, firing older workers, hiring new workers at a lower pay scale and a variety of other maneuvers, I can decrease my costs by the equivalent of ten employees. That's \$350,000. At a 90% tax rate I only keep \$35,000. Not chump change. But balanced against continuity, happiness, and efficiency in my company and the likelihood that it will grow my business, I'm likely to keep my people. At a 30% tax rate I keep \$245,000. I'll jump on it.

In any debate on taxes and their effect on business, keep in mind that taxes are only paid on profits. Costs are counted against profits. High taxes are, therefore, an inducement to invest (create deductible costs). Labor is a cost. High taxes are, therefore, an inducement to higher people. Not, of course, at random, but people who will grow the business and increase the value of the business.

Low taxes are an inducement to reduce costs - at whatever cost - and take profits. We currently have low taxes. If the theoretical model above is correct, the result should be high unemployment and high corporate profits. Moreover, profits that are retained. That are not reinvested. Except to purchase other companies. Which is exactly what we have.

20111215-02	12:38	SteveG	Fw: EDF Petition: Urge Congressional Action on the RESTORE Act!
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From Environmental Defense Fund:

We need your help right now to seize an historic chance to restore the Gulf Coast to environmental health.

Please Take Action Today! Urge Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to include the RESTORE Act in any end-of-year legislation.

It is outrageous that a year and a half after the worst environmental disaster in American history, Congress still has not passed a single new law to repair the long-term damage done to the extraordinary and economically vital Gulf Coast and Mississippi River Delta.

https://secure2.edf.org/site/Advocacy?pagename=homepage&page=UserAction&id=1913&autologin=true&utm_source=EDF%20action%20network&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=advocacy&JServSessionIdr004=zxayn6ck81.app341b

20111215-03	14:28	SteveB	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to Jim, FotM Newsletter #35)
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I can't help but think there's been some kind of major development in the world and world history, or at least my understanding of it.

We've talked about this subject before, though with the new laws coming, I hesitate to mention...civilian insurrection.

From today's news, it looks like the thing is unraveling in Syria just as it did in Libya. Surely these two are far more brutal on their own people than the U.S. would be? Who could be more brutal than Syria has been?

But it doesn't seem to work. Libya fell. Syria is headed to somewhere far from where it thought it was. In Russia, Putin is in fear.

It is the time of a great rising of the desire for freedom in the world. Meanwhile, the U.S. becomes more totalitarian.

Power to the people!

20111215-04	14:36	SteveG	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to SteveB, above)
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Don't forget Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, and Yemen.

20111215-05	15:10	SteveB	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to SteveG, above)
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Yes. Where they didn't even have to really fight. Much anyway. But the actual battle scenario is what has me thinking.

It seems like our government is preparing for the eventuality. Goodbye habeas corpus. Very ominous signs indeed. I hope this is not what OWS costs us, though, if so, better to know early, I suppose.

And what we forget about our precious freedoms that the Right proposes to guard so fiercely (another big lie!), is that in whatever the government decides is an Emergency, there go your rights.

So what the hell... all could be lost unless the battle can be won. Now, that gives me the shivers. These are becoming serious times. I'm beginning to think we have a traitor to the cause in the White House.

But, hey, Teabaggers, etc., let me give you some advanced warning: Your damned guns are next!

20111215-06	15:22	Art	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to SteveB & SteveG, above)
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Remember Europe in 1848. Of course, one of the problems with these civilian spontaneous uprisings is what comes next? Too often it is a regime more repressive than the previous one. Remember Iran after the Shah. Maybe history will treat this as a watershed period by I ain't voting just yet. Also need to recognize we have been pretty cozy with all the outgoing thugs, so that may not sit so well with the new folks coming in.

20111215-07	16:06	SteveB	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to Art & SteveG, above)
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I'm more concerned about the lessons we can transfer to the U.S. domestic situation. I'm just curious about the possibilities. It seems the Founding Fathers may have been right—citizen soldiers can apparently be a more powerful force than I, growing up during the protest years, ever thought possible. I wonder if Americans could be as brave as the Libyans and Syrians? I hope. We did it in *Terminator*.

20111215-08	16:07	Ben	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply SteveB, above)
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SteveB: We did it in *Terminator*.

And yet, it was a very near thing.

20111215-09	16:12	Art	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply SteveB, above)
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Well *Terminator* was a movie, you know. :-)

I think if that should ever come, and I think we are a long way from it, one of the questions is what would the soldiers do? In the case of Syria today and to some degree Libya, an awful lot of them went over to the other side - with their weapons. In our case I think a bigger issue is how deep are the divides between the Tea Baggers and the OWS folks? Pretty deep me thinks.

20111215-11	16:30	Pam	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to all, above)
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I was thinking today about bring this subject up, but you beat me to it, SteveB. Great minds, and all that.

First it's *Citizens United* redefining the definition of "person" to benefit corporate interests. Then it's law enforcement officers told to stop and search people who may look funny—or brown. Now Congress wants to allow arrest without trial and get rid of *habeas corpus* for American citizens. I don't know about the rest of you (well, I do), but I'm getting more than a little nervous about the way things are going. I used to think issues like abortion, gun control, and capital punishment were the most serious conflicts we face, but those seem tame (if possible) compared to losing our Constitutional rights. If I were a Muslim, I'd be rather uneasy. We seem very close to the paranoia of the McCarthy era; maybe we're already in a version of it. It does seem that as the Middle East, and even Russia, erupts, the American power structure is trying to entrench itself. I wonder if 2012 will be a reprise of 1968 at the conventions.

I just read a book review on a new biography of Thomas Mann. It talks about those who fled Germany in the 'thirties, and those who didn't. Freud made it out, but he lost four sisters in the camps. What will be the sign that things are seriously deteriorating here, and how will we recognize it? I find myself somewhat in disbelief at some of the things I'm thinking. This is America, after all. Such things don't happen here. We're all about freedom and individual rights and tolerance, at least I used to think so. Now I'm not so sure. At all.

The piece SteveG. (I believe it was he) posted from Ralph Nader is what got me started on all this. [See today's lead piece. –SteveB]

Yes, where are the lawyers and law professors, the political scientists and judges? Why don't these professions rise up and denounce what's going on? Sometimes I feel that Obama has been taken over by body snatchers. Why didn't he start fresh with new people to address the financial crisis? Why did he back off on Guantanamo? I realize the President can't do everything, and compromises are inevitable, but what does it take to shake the political tree? Has anyone asked the GOP candidates what they think about this latest legislation to allow arrest without trial and to make the military take on internal law enforcement? Maybe I'm not looking in the right places, but I haven't seen anything about this in the mainstream news. I just see clips of Romney back in the day, claiming to be a "moderate progressive." Oh, how the worm has turned.

Also, Dale, I am still looking forward to your inside scoop on the SEC, or did you have second thoughts?

[20111215-12](#) 16:39 SteveB Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to Pam, above)

Mmmmm...yes....and with the new military bill in Congress...don't know what's happened up to this moment with that...but..

It seems to me like the Arab Spring or, more likely, OWS has the government frightened. I don't remember such a blatant grab of my rights before. Since they can call anyone a terrorist...then no trial...

Though, as I say, when push comes to shove, the rights don't really exist anyway. It's just a fr*cking piece of paper, isn't it? To be discarded by our beloved current Congress and president.

Not that I want to sound like the Right with their gun crap (I'll keep mine too, thanks), but this is some serious sh*t going down!

[20111215-13](#) 16:43 Ben Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to all, above)

From Ben (Dec. 15, 2011, 4:43 pm)— ref: American Insurrection, Loss of *Habeas Corpus* in Military Bill

Don't forget: the recent pillaging of rights began with Cheney. Big Dick Cheney.

I really had believed that Obama wouldn't sign that one, that the suspension of habeas corpus and 'suspected terrorists' was something the Republicans had thrown into that bill so that Obama would be seen to veto something that - otherwise - was important to the military.

Was it signed? I missed that.

[20111215-14](#) 16:48 Pam Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to all, above)

And now we've got Iraq and Iran making friendly noises toward each other. I am not Islamophobic, but I don't for a minute believe Islamic extremists, and there are a lot of them, are going to stop pushing against the West. Everyone dumps on Samuel Huntington, and I admit I haven't read his book, only reviews, but I can't help seeing a pretty fundamental conflict between theocracy and democracy. Islam is all about "submission." Christianity is all about "obedience." Both seem potentially dangerous to me, but the demand by the mullahs that Muslims submit to Islamic rule is medieval. Do I sound like a bigot? I certainly hope not. I'm not trying to castigate an entire people, just leaders who take advantage of, and indeed promote, the ignorance of their followers. The Tea Party is doing much the same thing, if you think about it, only the teabaggers are being used by shadowy moneyed interests instead of some idea of theocratic purity. Actually, Santorum would probably like to impose that.

Our history is being rewritten. The Founding Fathers are being redefined and deified. The Right seems to forget that our revolution and the philosophy behind it grew out of Enlightenment rationalism. Most of the Founders were deists, which is rather like being a Unitarian today, I guess, and they were careful to follow the French example of separation of church and state. I know the world has never been and never will be a stable place, but I try to tell myself that even if it's hopeless it's not pointless to speak out about things that are wrong.

Another long-winded diatribe. If anyone reads my stuff, I commend your endurance and thank you for your patience. :-)

[20111215-15](#) 16:50 Pam Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to SteveB, above)

SteveB: Not that I want to sound like the Right with their gun crap (I'll keep mine too, thanks), but this is some serious sh*t going down!

I'm glad you agree. Serious it is. We have so much "news" thrown at us 24/7 that the really important things, like this proposed legislation, seem to get drowned out. I'm freaking out, for real.

[20111215-29](#) 19:30 Art Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to Pam, above)

Pam, I avidly read all your "stuff". You are always well spoken, thoughtful and clearly concerned. When I compare it to virtually all of the drivel I read in the AOL news responses and on speaker Bonehead's BLOG, I keep thinking, "How come none of this gets through?"

People want to believe what they want and don't want to be confused by fact or logic. The favorite response when you catch them in some undeniable position is "Well both sides do it." As if that makes it OK. I don't know, I am not quite as gloomy as some of you but I do think we are maybe entering an 'age of stupidity'?

Tomorrow, now that I have rescued my quota of Golden retrievers for the week, I would like to build on what Steve had written previously as to what should be the focus on the differences between the Republicans and Democrats. Hopefully some of our more righty friends will review and see if they agree. If so, then the question becomes, are these issues really a problem and who is best qualified to address them.

[20111215-16](#) 16:52 SteveB Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to Pam, above)

Thomas Mann? I love it! Pam, you are a treasure. (I bet Christmas is really fun with those grandkids!). ☺

You asked, "What will be the sign that things are seriously deteriorating here, and how will we recognize it?"

This bill, our Obamaless (How did they steal him? Did they threaten him?) Obamacracy, and the ascendancy of the perfect embodiment of everything Rightwing totalitarianism loves, Newt "Zany" Gingrich, I think I have all the signs I need. I'm leaving the country!

God, I hope Obama hasn't signed the Military Bill and doesn't. Who owns him?????? I had also thought that Obama was simply engaged in political strategy, Ben.

I'm having trouble finding what's happening in Congress.

[20111215-17](#) 16:58 Ben Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to SteveB, above)

If it hasn't been signed, then I don't feel Obama's been compromised. But I do regard this particular bill as critical to determining that, and that it not be signed as critical to our future as a nation.

[20111215-18](#) 16:59 Pam Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to SteveB, above)

SteveB: I'm leaving the country!

Hold on! I think you already did. ;-)

20111215-19	17:10	SteveB	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to SteveB, above) & "The President's Constitutional Authority to Conduct Military Operations Against Terrorists and Nations Supporting Them"
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WE HAVE NO RIGHTS, UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT DECIDES TO GIVE THEM TO US LIKE BEGGARS. THIS IS WHY THE RICH RULE!

And...I was thinking...ah...but this is so unconstitutional, I think. But here's some bad news from the Bush White House:

"The President's Constitutional Authority to Conduct Military Operations Against Terrorists and Nations Supporting Them" Memorandum Opinion for the Deputy Counsel to the President

Sept. 25, 2001, (<http://www.justice.gov/olc/warpowers925.htm>)

20111215-20	17:11	Dennis	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to all, above)
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Guess you all missed the documentary on Current TV about Gene Sharp, the Harvard professor who is probably the most influential person in the world. His playbook for nonviolent revolution, *Dictatorship to Democracy*, is being used throughout the world and has been instrumental from Serbia to Tunisia to Syria in fomenting change. He should be *Time* Magazine's Person of the Year and not the anonymous Protestor since he is the strategist behind all the protests:

<http://www.aeinstein.org/organizations98ce.html>

20111215-21	17:21	SteveB	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to Dennis, above)
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This is getting very interesting, if very frightening. I'm going to read this guy, Dennis.

And it does seem like Ben is right: If Obama signs this bill, he is a sissy clone or pod or something.

Have they been feeding him that same weird puss from Roswell that Cheney used to make Bush eat??? Damn!

Funny, the Right always thought they'd come for the guns. They bypassed that. I wonder if this means we're all on the same side now? :-)

20111215-22	17:24	Ben	Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to SteveB, above)
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Remember: Obama had a distinguished career as a professor of constitutional law. I still have hope.

SteveB: I wonder if this means we're all—the Right and the Left—on the same side now?

Nope.

Why would it?

20111215-23 17:29 SteveB Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to all, above)

Any thoughts on our Constitutional Rights?

All of us fighting for that piece of paper I thought the Right loved so much (at least one or two parts).

20111215-24 17:43 SteveG Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to all, above) & "Peak Oil Primer"

If you have access to Netflix, watch "Collapse". Have either of you read anything about the concept of Peak Oil? Scary. Basically the collapse:

"Peak Oil Primer" by the Post Carbon Institute

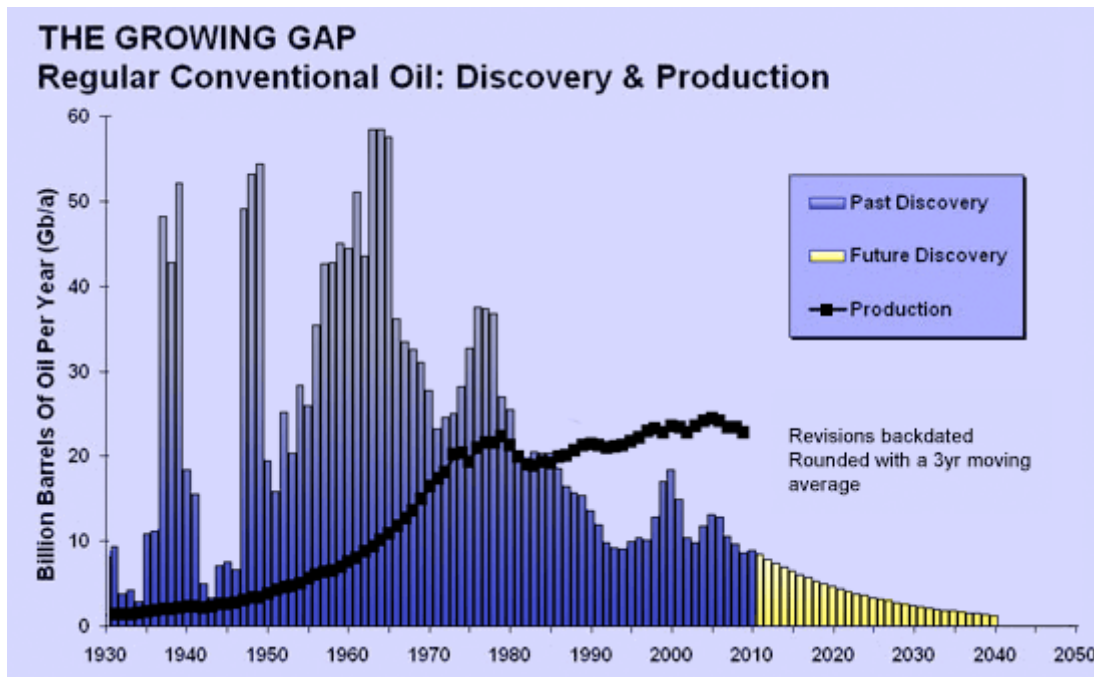
Oct. 20, 2011, (<http://www.energybulletin.net/primer.php>)

What is peak oil?

Peak oil is the simplest label for the problem of energy resource depletion, or more specifically, the peak in global oil production. Oil is a finite, non-renewable resource, one that has powered phenomenal economic and population growth over the last century and a half. The rate of oil 'production', meaning extraction and refining (currently about 85 million barrels/day), has grown almost every year of the last century. Once we have used up about half of the original reserves, oil production becomes ever more likely stop growing and begin a terminal decline, hence 'peak'. The peak in oil production does not signify 'running out of oil', but it does mean the end of cheap oil, as we switch from a buyers' to a sellers' market. For economies leveraged on ever increasing quantities of cheap oil, the consequences may be dire. Without significant successful cultural reform, severe economic and social consequences seem inevitable.

Why does oil peak? Why doesn't it suddenly run out?

Oil companies have, naturally enough, extracted the easier-to-reach, cheap oil first. The oil pumped first was on land, near the surface, under pressure, light and 'sweet' (meaning low sulfur content) and therefore easy to refine. The remaining oil is more likely to be off-shore, far from markets, in smaller fields and of lesser quality. It therefore takes ever more money and energy to extract, refine and transport. Under these conditions, the rate of production inevitably drops. Furthermore, all oil fields eventually reach a point where they become economically, and energetically, no longer viable. If it takes the energy of a barrel of oil to extract a barrel of oil, then further extraction is pointless, no matter what the price of oil.



[You and Dennis and the news are scaring the hell out of me today! –SteveB]

[20111215-25](#) 17:56 SteveB Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to all, above) & "White House Drops Veto Threat on Defense Bill"

It's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers!*

Looks like they preserved the rights of the police (naturally) and snatched ours!

(Pssst! I heard a rumor that a whole lot of Obama supporters are really Al Qaeda sympathizers, even going so far as sending Christmas present to Arabs. NOTE TO SELF: SELF, MUST DETAIN THESE "TERRORISTS" BEFORE THEY CAN ACTUALLY TERRORIZE ANYONE. And if someone arrested can prove they are innocent? So what? Who's to tell? No evidence required. No trial. Neat, huh? The perfect police state. Just what they've always been after. We're a giant step closer.)

AH, BUT CLARENCE AND THE SUPER SUPREME COURT WILL SAVE US! — LOL LOL LOL LOL LOL LOL LOL LOL LOL LOL LOL LOL LOL

THIS IS CHANGE WE CAN BELIEVE IN!

OBAMA IS A P.O.D. !!!!

"White House Drops Veto Threat on Defense Bill" by CNN

Dec. 15, 2011, (<http://www.cnn.com/2011/12/14/politics/congress-defense-bill/index.html>)

(WASHINGTON) The White House lifted a veto threat against a giant \$662 billion defense authorization bill on Wednesday after legislators made changes in language involving detainees.

In particular, the legislators added language to make clear that nothing in the bill requiring military custody of al Qaeda suspects would interfere with the ability of civilian law enforcement to carry out terrorism investigations and interrogations in the United States.

[20111215-10](#) 16:13 Art Re: "House-Senate Revise Indefinite Detention Bill..." (reply to SteveG, above)

read Jared Diamond's book. Same thing?

[20111215-30](#) 22:00 Jim Anniversary of the Bill of Rights

Today (Dec 15) marks the anniversary of the Bill of Rights becoming official when the last state necessary to make it part of the Constitution ratified it.

[20111215-27](#) 19:08 SteveG Fw: The Other 98% Petition: It's Time for Clarence Thomas to Recuse Himself!

from The Other 98%:

You and more than 45,000 others signed our petition earlier this month to tell Justice Clarence Thomas to recuse himself from the health care case. We're still collecting signatures to pressure him to do the right thing. Can you please forward this e-mail to family and friends and encourage them to add their voices too? Thanks for your support!

It's time for Clarence Thomas to recuse himself - join our letter to Associate Justice Thomas TODAY:

<http://other98.com/time-for-clarence-thomas-to-recuse-himself/>.

[20111215-32](#) 23:08 Dale Re: The Other 98% Petition: It's Time for Clarence Thomas to Recuse Himself! (reply to SteveG, above)

Wow...45,000! That's really something.

Let's see, there were about 90,000,000 people who cast votes in 2010 and 45,000 have now boldly signed a meaningless petition. **I guess that makes them The Other .05%.**

Nice waste of time.

[20111215-35](#) SteveG 23:43 Re: The Other 98% Petition: It's Time for Clarence Thomas to Recuse Himself! (reply to Dale, above)

Apparently 45,000 people believe in integrity. If integrity is a waste of time, count me in.

[20111215-31](#) 22:56 Dale Fw: Real Care vs. Photo Op's

I've seen this before. You probably have too. I still think it's worth another look.

(Pam, please have your snarkiness meter ready for the comments which may follow.)

[Source of original email unknown. -SteveB]

A doctor had his TV on in his office when the news of the military base shootings at Ft. Hood , TX came on. The husband of one of his employees was stationed there.

He called her into his office and as he told her what had happened, she got a text message from her husband saying, "I am okay." Her cell phone rang right after she read the message. It was an ER nurse, "I'm the one who just sent you a text, not your husband. I thought it would be comforting but I was mistaken in doing so. I am sorry to tell you this, but your husband has been shot 4 times and he is in surgery."

The soldier's wife left Southern Clinic in Dothan , AL and drove all night to Ft. Hood. When she arrived, she found out her husband was out of surgery and would be OK. She rushed to his room and found that he already had two visitors there to comfort him.

He was just waking up and found his wife and the visitors by his side. The nurse took this picture:



What? No news crews and cameras? This is how people with class respond and pay respect to those in uniform.

I sent my cousin in Fayetteville , N.C. (Retired from Special Forces) that picture of Geo. W. visiting the wounded at Ft. Hood . I got this reply:

What is even better is the fact George W. Bush heard about Fort Hood, got in his car without any escort, apparently they did not have time to react, and drove to Fort Hood. He was stopped at the gate and the guard could not believe who he had just stopped. Bush only asks for directions to the hospital then drove on. The gate guard called that "The President is on Fort Hood and driving to the hospital."

The base went bananas looking for Obama. When they found it was Bush, they immediately offered escort. Bush simply told them it was o.k. and to let him visit the wounded and the dependents of the dead.

He stayed at Fort Hood for over six hours, and was finally asked to leave by a message from the White House.

Obama flew in days later and held a "photo opportunity" session in a gym, and did not even go to the hospital.

All this I picked up from two soldiers here who happened to be at Fort Hood when it happened.

This Bush/Obama/Ft.Hood story is something that should be sent to every voter in the US . Those who wanted "change". You certainly got it.

Someone, PLEASE, show me anything that will tell us that Obama has ANY respect for the country he leads! I'm looking for just a little sign of respect

20111215-33 23:11 SteveBA Re: Real Care vs. Photo Op's (reply to Dale, above)

Well said. The liberals that yak on this thread never have gotten it. They seem to think their freedom of speech came free.

20111215-34 23:36 SteveB Re: Real Care vs. Photo Op's (reply to Dale, above)

Not that it wasn't real nice of George and Laura to visit a soldier in the hospital, or real nice of you to send it, Dale, but your story is full of lies.

Please see: <http://www.snopes.com/photos/military/forthood.asp>. But I suppose I'm just being "snarky"?

You somehow have the nerve to insult my friends and then send out sh*t? I'm calling you out this time.

"Wow...45,000! That's really something. Let's see, there were about 90,000,000 people who cast votes in 2010 and 45,000 have now boldly signed a meaningless petition. I guess that makes them The Other .05%. **Nice waste of time.**" -Dale

Dale: I thought SteveG's answer to your "snarkiness" was beautiful: "Apparently 45,000 people believe in integrity. If integrity is a waste of time, count me in."

THE TRUTH IS NEVER A WASTE OF TIME, MY FRIEND. Nor is the democratic process, including the right to petition. If there is any truth at all on your side, why do you refuse to answer my simple challenges of fact?
¿Posiblemente "sin huevos?"

And when it comes to simple facts, your side has nothing but silence (or insults) Wonder why that is?

20111215-26 18:24 SteveB An Electric Indianapolis 500

from a letter I wrote to people at the Track:

I am a retired engineer currently living in Bolivia, but I am originally from Greencastle, Indiana, just a few miles from you, really. When I was growing up—and still!—I loved the race so much! It was the giant event that kicked off the summer and, if I was very lucky, I got to go with my Dad!

I think I have a great idea for you!

Your track and race, as we all know, have been at the forefront of vehicle technology for a long time. Why not continue that trend, do a ton of good, and also make a lot of money?

Simply hold an annual ELECTRIC INDY 500! Maybe starting in 2013 (the sooner the better). It could be held a day after or a week after the big race. (Or whenever you think best, of course.) Technology would be more important than driving at first. Then electric cars will become faster than gasoline-powered. Mark my words. At pit stops, batteries would be changed (at least, in the early years). The first year, maybe, there would be no rules, or they would be limited. Each year you would learn more, just as you do with the regular race, and adjust your rules accordingly. Same process.

The prize would be \$10,000,000 each year, adjusted for inflation. (Again, at your discretion. I'm just trying to present what I see as possibilities.)

Just as innovations developed at and for your track have helped all our lives, think how much you would help the world by advancing cleaner technology in this way?

Electric vehicles are poised to take off into a bright future, I feel (though I have no economic connection to this industry or any other). Your race would be an incredible publicity boost for electric vehicles, Indy, the track...everyone wins.

What do you think? The idea is yours for free as a public service from me to you. Thank you.

May have stumbled on part of the problem:

Translations of Common Euphemisms

DEMOCRAT	REPUBLICAN
Arsenal of Weapons	Gun Collection
Delicate Wetlands	Swamp
Undocumented Worker	Illegal Alien
Cruelty-Free Materials	Synthetic Fiber
Assault and Battery	Attitude Adjustment
Heavily Armed	Well-protected
Narrow-minded	Righteous
Taxes or Your Fair Share	Coerced Theft
Commonsense Gun Control	Gun Confiscation Plot
Illegal Hazardous Explosives	Fireworks or Stump Removal
Non-viable Tissue Mass	Unborn Baby
Equal Access to Opportunity	Socialism
Multicultural Community	High Crime Area
Fairness or Social Progress	Marxism
Upper Class or "The Rich "	Self-Employed
Progressive, Change	Big Government Scheme
Homeless or Disadvantaged	Bums or Welfare Leeches
Sniper Rifle	Scoped Deer Rifle
Investment For the Future	Higher Taxes
Healthcare Reform	Socialized Medicine
Extremist, Judgmental, or Hater	Conservative
Truants	Homeschoolers
Victim or Oppressed	Criminal or Lazy Good-For-Nothing
High Capacity Magazine	Standard Capacity Magazine
Religious Zealot	Church-going
Reintroduced Wolves	Sheep and Elk Killers
Fair Trade Coffee	Overpriced Yuppie Coffee
Exploiters or "The Rich "	Employed or Land Owner
The Gun Lobby	NRA Members
Assault Weapon	Semi-Auto (Grandpa's M1 Carbine)
Fiscal Stimulus	New Taxes and Higher Taxes
Same Sex Marriage	Legalized Perversion
Mandated Eco-Friendly Lighting	Chinese Mercury-Laden Light Bulbs
Accepted Facts	Horse Sh*t

—Friends of the Middle,
 Steven W. Baker (SteveB), Editor/Moderator

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