



## FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #116 — APR. 13, 2012

*Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.*  
<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org> [FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com](mailto:FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com)

### Index to Friends of the Middle Newsletter #116 — Apr. 13, 2012

## The Most Dangerous Lies

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Apr. 13, 2012)

Publicly traded corporations are not “private”. Get over it! It’s time for something other than greed to be served—the public good!

“The 1%’s Most Dangerous Lies” by William Lazonick, Ken Jacobson, and Lynn Parramore, Alternet

Apr. 6, 2012, ([http://www.salon.com/2012/04/06/the\\_1s\\_most\\_dangerous\\_lies/](http://www.salon.com/2012/04/06/the_1s_most_dangerous_lies/))

(Pernicious myths about the role of corporations are ruining the economy. Here's how to fight back.)

(This originally appeared on AlterNet. It's the final essay in a five-part series analyzing the foundations, history and purpose of the corporation to answer this vital question: How can the public take control of the business corporation and make it work for the real economy?)

The wealth of the American nation depends on the productive power of our major business corporations. In 2008 there were 981 companies in the United States with 10,000 or more employees. Although they were less than two percent of all U.S. firms, they employed 27 percent of the labor force and accounted for 31 percent of all payrolls. Literally millions of smaller businesses depend, directly or indirectly, on the productivity of these big businesses and the disposable incomes of their employees.

When the executives who control big-business investment decisions place a high priority on innovation and job creation, then we all have a chance for a prosperous tomorrow. Unfortunately, over the past few decades, the top executives of our major corporations have turned the productive power of the people into massive and concentrated financial wealth for themselves. Indeed the very emergence of “the 1 percent” is largely the result of this usurpation of corporate power. And executives’ use of this power to benefit themselves often undermines investment in innovation and job creation.

These corporations do not belong to them. They belong to us. We need to confront some powerful myths of corporate governance as part of a movement to make corporations work for the 99 percent. To start, we have to recognize these corporations for what they are not.

- They are not “private enterprise.”
- They should not be run to “maximize shareholder value.”
- The mega-millions in remuneration paid to top corporate executives are not determined by the “market forces” of supply and demand.

Let's take a closer look at each of these myths.

### 1. Public corporations are not *private* enterprise.

Here's something you'll rarely hear stated by today's politicians and pundits: Publicly listed and traded corporations are not private enterprise. As documented by the pre-eminent business historian Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., in a book aptly called *The Visible Hand*, about 100 years ago the managerial revolution in American business placed salaried managers in charge of running the nation's largest and most productive business corporations.

This was a peaceful revolution in which a generation of owner-entrepreneurs who had founded these companies some decades earlier used initial public offerings on the New York Stock Exchange to sell their ownership stakes to the public, leaving decision-making power in the hands of salaried managers. In effect, these corporate employees, and the boards of directors whom they selected, became trustees of the immense productive power that these corporations had accumulated.

Even when founders of companies that evolve into major public corporations become their CEOs, they generally occupy the top positions as corporate employees, not owners. For example, when the late Steve Jobs returned to Apple Computer in 1997, 11 years after being denied the CEO position of the company he had founded, his ascent to the top position was as a manager, not an owner. When a company founder like Larry Page of Google gives up private ownership by publicly selling shares, he may become CEO of the new corporation, but he is occupying this position as a hired hand, not as a private entrepreneur.

In other words, private owners make choices to transform a private enterprise into a public company that then needs to be regulated as such. There are other choices that could have been made. When the retiring owner of a private company wants to pass on control over a prosperous company to his or her employees, an alternative to the public corporation is to establish an Employee Stock Ownership Plan, or ESOP. There are many successful companies in the U.S. that are not public corporations precisely because they are under the collective ownership of their employees.

It is also possible for some investors to agglomerate sufficient shares to take a public company private (Mitt Romney made his millions doing just that), but that only emphasizes the point: public corporations are not private enterprise. We regulate public corporations far more stringently than private businesses precisely because they are publicly held. And as U.S. citizens, how we regulate public corporations (or even private businesses, for that matter) is up to us.

### 2. Corporations should be run to benefit everyone who contributes to their success – not just shareholders.

It's a myth that corporations have a legal duty to maximize profits to shareholders at the expense of everyone else. Historically, the executives and directors of U.S. public corporations understood that they had a responsibility to other constituencies – customers, employees, suppliers, creditors, the communities in which they operate, and the nation.

Today, however, the dominant ideology is that a corporation should "maximize shareholder value." At the most basic level, the rationale for this ideology is that shareholders own the company's assets, and therefore have exclusive claim on its profits. A more sophisticated argument is that among all stakeholders in the business corporation only shareholders bear the risk of getting a positive return from the firm, while all other participants receive guaranteed returns for their productive contributions. If society wants risk-bearing, so the argument goes, firms need to return value to shareholders.

This argument sounds logical – until you question its fundamental assumption. Innovation, defined as the process that generates goods or services that are higher quality and/or lower cost than those previously available, is an inherently uncertain process. Anyone who invests their labor or their capital in the innovation process is taking a risk that the investment may not generate a higher quality, lower cost product. Once you understand the collective and cumulative character of the innovation process, you can easily see that the

assumption that shareholders are the only participants in the business enterprise who make investments in productive resources without a guaranteed return is just plain false. In an innovative economy, workers and taxpayers habitually make these risky investments.

How do workers make these risky investments? As is generally recognized by employers who declare that "our most important assets are our human assets", the key to successful innovation is the extra time and effort, above and beyond the strict requirements of the job, that employees expend interacting with others to confront and solve problems in transforming technologies and accessing markets. Anyone who has spent time in a workplace knows the difference between workers who just punch the clock to collect their pay from day to day and workers who use their paid employment as a platform for the expenditure of creative and collective effort as part of a process of building their careers.

As members of the firm, these forward-looking workers bear the risk that their extra expenditures of time and effort will not yield the gains to innovative enterprise from which they can be rewarded. If, however, the innovation process does generate profits, workers, as risk-bearers, have a claim to a share in the forms of promotions, higher earnings and benefits. Instead, shareholder-value ideology is often used as a rationale for laying off workers whose hard and creative work has contributed to the company's success. That's grossly unfair.

Taxpayers also invest in the innovation process without a guaranteed return. Through government agencies, taxpayers fund infrastructural investments that, given their cost and the uncertainty of returns, business enterprises would not have made on their own. It is impossible to explain U.S. leadership in information technology and biotechnology without recognizing the role of government in making investments to develop new knowledge and facilitate its diffusion. As one example, the current annual budget of the National Institutes of Health is about \$31 billion, twice in real terms its level in the early 1990s. Without this government expenditure on research, year in and year out, we would not have a medicinal drug industry. Yet shareholder-value ideology is often used to justify low taxes that deny taxpayers a return on these investments.

So shareholder-value ideology provides a flawed rationale for excluding workers and taxpayers from sharing in the gains of innovative enterprise. To turn this ideology on its head, what risk-bearing role do public shareholders play in the innovation process? Do they confront uncertainty by strategically allocating resources to innovative investments? No. As portfolio investors, they diversify their financial holdings across the outstanding shares of existing firms to minimize risk.

They do so, moreover, with limited liability, which means that they are under no legal obligation to make further investments of "good" money to support previous investments that have gone bad. Even for these previous investments, the existence of a highly liquid stock market enables public shareholders to cut their losses instantaneously by selling their shares – what has long been called the "Wall Street walk".

### 3. Executive compensation is a rigged game, not the result of the laws of supply and demand.

You often hear that stratospheric executive pay is the result of some inexorable law of supply and demand. If we don't give top executives their multimillion dollar compensation, they won't be willing to come to work and do their jobs. They are supposedly the bearers of "scarce talent" that demands a high price in the market place. Even Robert Reich, Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration and a critic of U.S. income inequality, has justified the explosion in executive pay, arguing that intense competition makes it much more difficult than it used to be to find the talent who can manage a large corporation (*Supercapitalism*, 2008, pp 105-114).

That is not what determines executive pay. Here is how it works: Top executives select other top executives to sit on "their" boards of directors. These directors hire compensation consultants to recommend an executive pay package, which consists of salary, bonus, incentive pay, retirement benefits, and all manner of other perks. The consultants look at what top executives at other major corporations are getting, and say that, well, this executive should get more or less the same. Since the directors are mostly these very same

“other executives”, they have no interest in objecting – and if any of them were to do so, they would find that they are no longer being invited to sit on corporate boards.

Meanwhile, given the preponderance of stock-based compensation (especially stock options) in executive pay, whenever there is speculative boom in the stock market, top executives of the companies with most rapidly rising stock prices make out like bandits. The higher compensation levels then create a “new normal” for executive pay that, via the compensation consultants and compliant directors, ratchets up the pay of all the top dogs. And, when the stock market is less speculative, these corporate executives do massive stock buybacks to push stock prices up.

What we have here is not “market forces” at work but an exclusive club that promotes the interests of the 0.1 percent. All too often executives allocate corporate resources to benefit themselves rather than to invest in innovation and job creation. It is time that the 99 percent see through the ideology, break up the club, and get the U.S. economy back on track.

### Corporate power for the people!

Business corporations exist as part of the collective and cumulative development of our economy. The investments in innovation and job creation that these corporations make or decline to make are key to our future prosperity. Public shareholders, the supposed owners of these corporations, are in general only willing to hold shares in a company because of the ease with which they can terminate this relation by selling their shares on the stock market. Yet, almost unanimously, corporate executives proclaim that they run their companies for the sake of shareholders. In fact, their personal coffers pumped up with stock-based compensation, our business “leaders” have increasingly run the corporations for themselves.

The real corporate investors are taxpayers and workers. Through government agencies at federal, state, and local levels, taxpayers supply business corporations with educated labor and physical infrastructure. Through their interaction in business organizations, workers expend the time and effort that can generate innovative products. In the name of shareholder value, however, taxpayers and workers have been losing out. It’s time to confront the myths of “private enterprise”, “shareholder value”, and “market-determined executive compensation” with arguments about how the innovation process actually works with sustainable prosperity as the result.

What will it take to build a movement that can make the business corporation work for the 99 percent ?

We have to elect politicians who will take on corporate power rather than shill for corporate power-brokers. We have to support labor leaders who recognize that gaining a voice in corporate governance is the only way to ensure that corporations will invest in workers and create good jobs. We need teachers at all levels of the education system who understand what business corporations are and what they are not. We need the responsible media to escape from the grip of corporate control. And we have to put in place business executives who represent the interests of civil society rather than those of an elite egotistical club.

**FotM NEWSLETTER #116 (Apr. 13, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX**

<b><u>DATE-ID</u></b>	<b><u>TIME</u></b>	<b><u>FROM</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT/TITLE</u></b>
<a href="#">20120413-00</a>		SteveB	<b>The Most Dangerous Lies</b> by Steven W. Baker / SteveB ("The 1%'s Most Dangerous Lies")
<a href="#">20120412-06</a>	19:02	SteveBA	Hilary Rosen vs. Anne R0mney (Stay-at-Home Moms)
<a href="#">20120412-01</a>	09:35	Pam	reply to SteveB, Mar. 11, 2012, ref: SOUNDS LIKE DANGEROUS RHETORIC TO ME!
<a href="#">20120412-02</a>	11:54	Dale	Video: Viral Ethics
<a href="#">20120412-04</a>	15:13	SteveB	Ah...the Benefits of Being Mitt R0mney ("How Did Mitt Make So Much Money and Pay So Little in Taxes?")
<a href="#">20120412-05</a>	17:17	SteveB	Fw: Avaaz Petition: Stop Jail Time for Birth Control in Honduras
<a href="#">20120412-07</a>	20:39	Tom	Cartoon: Hoodies
<a href="#">20120412-03</a>	13:26	SteveB	From the Wrong Side ("Fighting the Last War")
<a href="#">20120412-08</a>	23:59	SteveB	Photos: Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia

<a href="#">20120412-06</a>	19:02	SteveBA	Hilary Rosen vs. Anne R0mney (Stay-at-Home Moms)
-----------------------------	-------	---------	--

Dear SteveB,

Looks like your friends on the DNC have shown their true colors today with Hilary roses remarks about stay at home moms. With you misnomer of a newsletter you would distance yourself from here remarks. By the way Rosen visited the white house 35 times to see the great one. General petraeus only 9 times

[I'll ignore the unexpected and unwarranted personal attack, my old friend. I see no reason for any distancing. I understand the sensitivity of stay-at-home moms, Mrs. R0mney has never "worked" a day in her life (government's definition), so she does not understand the lives of working moms, just as her husband doesn't understand anything but stinking, filthy rich. These simply facts are the essence of what this minor flap is all about. It should be perfectly acceptable to state them, or even to Tweet them, no matter how they become slanted. -SteveB]

<a href="#">20120412-01</a>	09:35	Pam	reply to SteveB, Mar. 11, 2012, ref: SOUNDS LIKE DANGEROUS RHETORIC TO ME!
-----------------------------	-------	-----	--

"Raise your fists, break your chains. Shake the world under your feet, and make a noise so loud, that the 1% will cower in their marble halls. For the time of The People has come. Those who consider themselves our masters will find themselves standing in the path of a force the likes of which the world has never seen. For the world relied on our compliance. Our silence, our sheepish ways of living how we are told, for our acceptance of the oppressor's so called power. But this power was an illusion. Yes the power did not lie in the bank accounts, the pockets of CEOs, the chambers of Ivory towers under lock and key. No. the power has been with The People. The people who survive day to day. The children who cry at night from the pains of hunger, the students who dreams were stolen from them, or sold at prices so high, there is no hope of escape. Those who face violence and weaponry, and defend themselves with nothing but an idea. But it is this idea you see, that makes them strong. An idea cannot be beaten. An idea cannot be gassed, or shot. For it lives in our very souls, and no matter what stands against us, this idea cannot be destroyed."

No, Steve, you're not turning conservative. When I read this, my blood ran cold. This is the kind of rhetoric and squishy thinking that drives conservatives nuts, and it makes me squirm too. All the hand-wringing, bombast, and ideology are creepy in the extreme. "The People"--code word. "our masters"--code word. "a force the likes of which the world has never seen."--Piffle. An idea that "lives in our souls?"--please. This sort of thing really turns me off, big time. It's an appeal to emotion, which is the foundation of propaganda. This would have gone down well at the Nuremburg (sp?) rallies. We could have our very own "Triumph of the Will."

[Thank you, Pam. I feel more "normal" already. Hopefully, these inflammatory, violent words will not set the dominant OWS tone. –SteveB]

<a href="#">20120412-02</a> 11:54 Dale Video: Viral Ethics
--

You should find this site very interesting: <http://www.viraethics.com/>.

<a href="#">20120412-04</a> 15:13 SteveB Ah...the Benefits of Being Mitt R0mney ("How Did Mitt Make So Much Money and Pay So Little in Taxes?")
---

"How Did Mitt Make So Much Money and Pay So Little in Taxes?" by Robert Reich, NationofChange

Apr. 12, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/how-did-mitt-make-so-much-money-and-pay-so-little-taxes-1334245518>)

Now that Mitt Romney is the presumed Republican candidate, it's fair to ask how he made so much money (\$21 million in 2010 alone) and paid such a low rate of taxes (only 13.9 percent).

Not only fair to ask, but instructive to know. Because the magic of private equity reveals a lot about how and why our economic system has become so distorted and lopsided – why all the gains are going to the very top while the rest of us aren't going anywhere.

The magic of private equity isn't really magic at all. It's a magic trick – and it's played on you and me.

Jake Kornbluth and I have made this 2 minute video that explains it all in eight simple steps. (Thanks to MoveOn.org for staking us.)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rodifJlis2c&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rodifJlis2c&feature=player_embedded)

By the way, the "other people's money" that private equity fund managers (as well as other so-called "hedge" fund managers) play with often comes from pension funds that contain the savings of millions of average Americans.

The pension fund managers who dole out our savings to private equity and hedge-fund guys also take a hefty slice in bonuses. And like the others, they bear no risk if their bets later turn bad. They get their bonuses regardless.

Nor are any of them — private-equity, hedge-fund, or pension-fund managers — personally liable for doing adequate due diligence. They can bet our money on the basis of no more information than what they had for breakfast.

But if these funds lose, you lose. That's what happened in 2008 and 2009. Some of the losses are also shifted to the government's Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation – which means taxpayers lose.

**It's a giant con game, and it continues to this day.**

Here's what has to be done to stop it:

1. End the "carried interest" loophole that allows private-equity managers like Mitt Romney to treat their income as capital gains, taxed at 15 percent, even though they don't risk a dime of their own income. Their earnings should be treated as ordinary income.
2. Hold the managers of private-equity funds, hedge funds, and pension funds to a "due diligence" standard. So if the funds lose money and these managers didn't exercise due diligence, the Pension Guaranty Corporation can claw back their bonuses.

3. Raise the capital-gains rate to match the tax rate on ordinary income – especially for short-term investments. Give a tax preference only to “patient capital” – that is, for investments held for, say, five years or more.

4. Resurrect Glass-Steagall.

Mitt and others like him won't like any of these reforms. They'd eliminate the humongous profits they've enjoyed at the expense of the rest of us.

But these reforms are necessary if we're to take back our economy.

20120412-05 17:17 SteveB Fw: Avaaz Petition: Stop Jail Time for Birth Control in Honduras

from Avaaz:

Honduras is just days away from approving an extremist law that would put teenagers in prison for using the morning-after pill, even if they've just been raped. But we can stop this law and ensure women have the chance to prevent unwanted pregnancy.

Some Congress members agree that this law -- which would also jail doctors or anyone who sells the pill -- is excessive, but they are bowing to the powerful religious lobby that wrongly claims the morning-after pill constitutes an abortion. Only the head of the Congress, who wants to run for the Presidency and cares about his reputation abroad, can stop this. If we pressure him now we can shelve this reactionary law.

The vote could happen any day -- let's show Honduras that the world won't stand by as it jails women for preventing pregnancy even after sexual violence. Sign the urgent petition calling on the President of the Honduran Congress to stand up for women's rights. Avaaz will work with local women's groups to personally deliver our outcry.

A few countries, including Honduras, have banned the emergency contraceptive pill, which delays ovulation and prevents pregnancy -- like ordinary birth control pills. But if this new bill passes, Honduras will be the only state in the world to punish the use or sale of emergency contraception with a jail term. Anyone -- teenagers, rape victims, doctors -- convicted of selling or using the morning-after pill could end up behind bars, in flagrant contravention of World Health Organisation guidelines.

Latin America already has too many tough laws which restrict women's reproductive rights. The Honduras Congress first passed this draconian measure in April 2009, but just a month later then-President José Manuel Zelaya bowed to pressure from campaigners and vetoed it. Then Zelaya was removed in a coup, and the new regime has taken a sledgehammer to the country's judicial processes and forced the bill back to a vote.

Time is short, but we can stop this awful proposal in its tracks. Congress has the final vote on the matter and the government doesn't want to risk its already fragile global reputation. Let's tell the President of the Congress not to make Honduras the region's most repressive country against women. Sign this urgent petition now:

[http://www.avaaz.org/en/no\\_prison\\_for\\_contraception\\_global/?v](http://www.avaaz.org/en/no_prison_for_contraception_global/?v)

Emergency contraception is vital for women everywhere, but especially where sexual violence against women is rampant, unplanned pregnancy rates are high and access to regular birth control is limited. Let's stand with the women of Honduras and help them stop this bill.

With hope and determination, Alex, Laura, Dalia, Alice, Emma, Ricken, Maria Paz, David and the whole Avaaz team

More Information:

Honduras Supreme Court upholds absolute ban on emergency contraception (ReproRights):

<http://reproductiverights.org/en/press-room/honduras-supreme-court-upholds-absolute-ban-on-emergency-contraception-opens-door-to-crim>.

Honduras, most sweeping ban on emergency contraception anywhere (RH Reality Check):  
<http://www.rhrealitycheck.org/article/2012/02/14/honduran-supreme-court-upholds-complete-ban-on-emergency-contraception-0>.

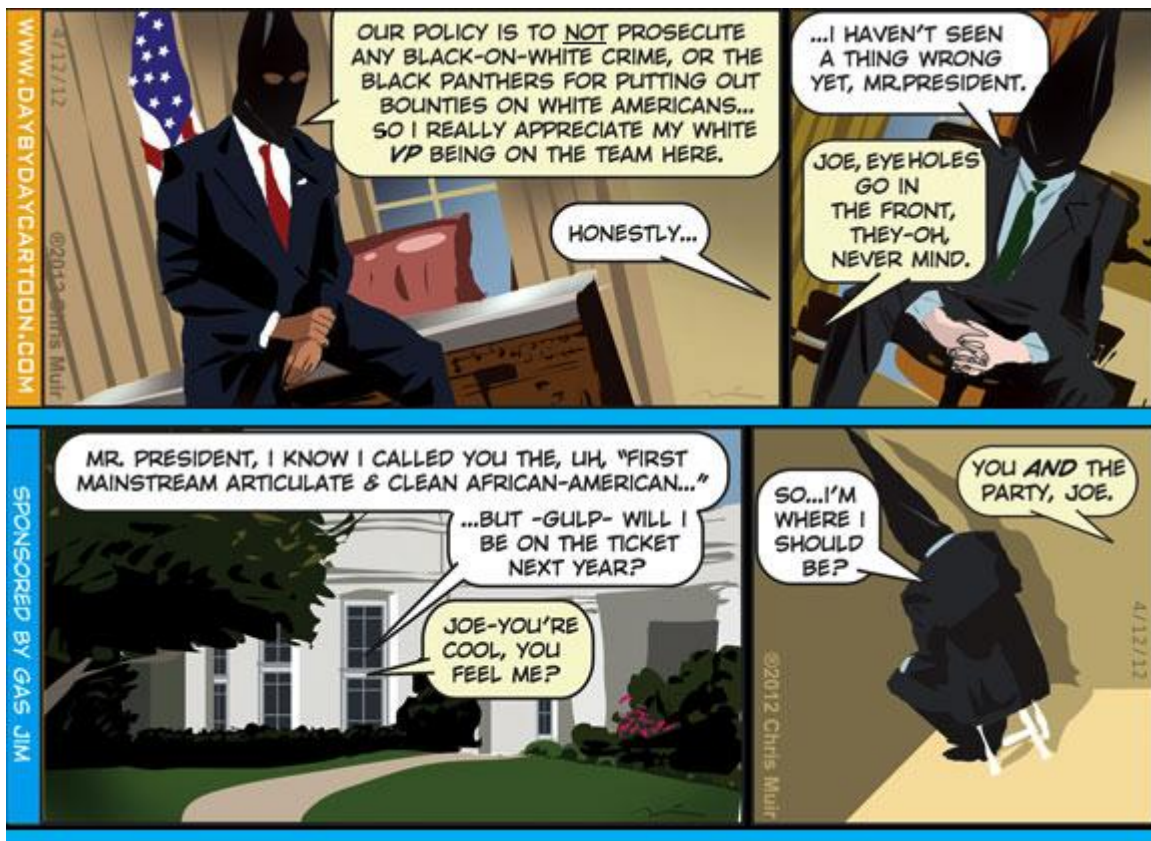
Women's rights under attack with Honduran coup (LatinoPolitics):  
<http://latinopoliticsblog.com/2009/11/16/women%E2%80%99s-rights-reproductive-freedoms-under-attack-with-honduran-coup/>.

The legal status of emergency contraception in Latin America (Hevia M.):  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22088410>.

The prohibition of emergency contraception in Honduras is inadmissible (WLW):  
[http://www.womenslinkworldwide.org/wlw/new.php?modo=detalle\\_prensa&dc=163&lang=en](http://www.womenslinkworldwide.org/wlw/new.php?modo=detalle_prensa&dc=163&lang=en).

Emergency Contraception in the Americas (Pan American Health Organization):  
[www.paho.org/english/ad/ge/emergencycontraception.PDF](http://www.paho.org/english/ad/ge/emergencycontraception.PDF).

20120412-07 20:39 Tom Cartoon: Hoodies



[http://www.daybydaycartoon.com/2012/04/12/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+daybydaycartoon%2FkUnt+%28Day+by+Day+Cartoon+by+Chris+Muir%29#006489](http://www.daybydaycartoon.com/2012/04/12/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+daybydaycartoon%2FkUnt+%28Day+by+Day+Cartoon+by+Chris+Muir%29#006489)

[Sorry, Tom, I must be getting dense, but this is the second cartoon you've sent me that I simply don't understand. Thanks for sending it anyway. I'll keep publishing and trying. -SteveB]



This woman can be incredibly irritating, but she must have taken some kind of "mellow" pill before she wrote this view from nearer the Middle.

Always good to have a "mole" in the enemy's camp.

"Fighting the Last War" by Ann Coulter, Human Events

Apr. 11, 2012, (<http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=50786>)

In a fast-changing world, a common mistake is to keep fighting the last war.

For example, why would Republicans support sending more troops to Afghanistan, when that war was long over, or helping topple Moammar Gadhafi, who had become an ally in the war on terrorism? Some Republicans seem to support all military deployments just out of habit.

For years after the 9/11 terrorist attack on America, Democrats hysterically bemoaned any military action, especially in Iraq. They claimed to have many precious objections, but the truth was, they thought we deserved the attack -- or at best, both sides were at fault.

So when it came to Obama's pointlessly sending more troops to Afghanistan or foolishly intervening in Libya, some Republicans' first instinct was to demand muscular American military action, forgetting that we are the party that cares about American national security and does not fling troops around the globe just to look tough, as the Democrats do.

Republicans who supported sending more troops to Afghanistan and taking out Gadhafi were fighting the last war.

Similarly, sometimes it seems as if Republicans' only move on the economy is to cut taxes. With the highest corporate tax rate in the world, there's much to be said for cutting taxes. But, unlike when Reagan ran for president, it's going to take a lot more than tax cuts to rescue this country from its \$16 trillion debt.

When Reagan took office, the top marginal tax rate in this country was a staggering 70 percent. Lowering that to 28 percent was an enormous shot in the arm to the economy.

Cutting the top tax rate today from 35 percent to 30 percent -- or even 20 percent -- cannot possibly have the same dramatic effect. Republicans, as the only responsible party, are going to have to do something that's never been tried before in Washington: Cut government spending.

To keep prattling about cutting taxes, rather than cutting our behemoth, useless government is fighting the last war.

[Amen! But substitute "military" for "government". --SteveB]

Finally, some Republicans have been fighting the last war in our primaries.

For at least the last half-century -- probably since Abraham Lincoln ran -- there has always been liberal Republican pain in the ass in the GOP primary race. (You can tell who the liberal is by whom *The New York Times* calls a "pragmatic" or "moderate" Republican.)

In 1968, there were two liberals -- Richard Nixon and Nelson Rockefeller -- and one conservative, Ronald Reagan, who nearly won the nomination.

In 1976, it was Reagan again, vs. Gerald Ford ("moderate"). In 1980, it was Reagan a third time, vs. pro-choice, "voodoo economics" George H.W. Bush.

In 1992, it was Pat Buchanan, the conservative, against "Read My Lips" betrayer Bush. In 1996, it was, again, Buchanan against moderate Bob Dole ("tax collector for the welfare state" in the immortal words of Newt Gingrich).

[LOL! "Betrayer" Bush. I love it. –SteveB]

In 2000, we had conservative George W. Bush against liberal John McCain. In 2008, it was liberal McCain vs. Mitt Romney, the conservative.

You will note that liberal Republicans have always stayed liberal Republicans and conservative Republicans have always stayed conservative Republicans. Only their match-ups change.

Until this year.

For the first time, the last cycle's conservative has been rebranded a "liberal" by right-wingers eager to resume their battle against liberal Republicans. This year's actual liberal Republican, much admired by the Non-Fox Media, was Jon Huntsman. But he dropped out after the New Hampshire primary.

Mitt Romney isn't a liberal. He isn't even a moderate. And he certainly isn't liked by the *Times*.

Liberals so loathe Romney that in 2008, their most Christian-phobic columnist, Frank Rich, was forced to write admiringly about pro-life Christian conservative Mike Huckabee. He may have been a Christian, but at least he wasn't Mitt Romney!

Conservatives know perfectly well Romney isn't a "moderate" -- he was our conservative hero just four years ago!

Indeed, when Romney withdrew from the 2008 primary at CPAC that year, gallantly throwing his support to the front-runner, McCain, a college-age Christian standing next to a friend of mine expressed the general sentiment of the 10,000 assembled right-wingers by saying, "This f-ing blows."

But the need to revert to comfortable old roles has forced some right-wingers to designate our 2008 hero as the Rockefeller Republican this time around.

It has nothing to do with the facts. Conservatives who attack Romney as the "establishment Republican" are behaving like Democrats, giving us epithets in lieu of facts.

Perhaps it is because they were asleep at the wheel four years ago when Republicans actually did run a liberal for president that these conservatives feel the need to create an imaginary liberal Republican to oppose ferociously this time.

John McCain was worshipped by the liberal media, was the author of the unconstitutional campaign finance law and a global warming bill, adamantly supported amnesty for illegal aliens, opposed the Bush tax cuts as "tax cuts for the rich," wanted to shut down Guantanamo, called waterboarding "torture" and viciously attacked Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson as "agents of intolerance" (and then immediately faxed that speech to *The New York Times*).

And he was from a conservative state! Where were you people four years ago when we were running him?

By contrast, when he was governor, every single budget Romney submitted to the 85 percent Democratic legislature in Massachusetts included tax cuts. He became a pro-lifer when it mattered -- while he was governor -- and vetoed a stem cell research bill. He slashed government spending in one of the most liberal states of the union. He is the rare elected Republican who is tough on illegal immigration. He has forcefully denounced Obama's dangerous foreign policy.

[A Republican calling President Obama's foreign policy "dangerous"? Ridiculous, Ann. –SteveB]

But the facts are irrelevant to people busy fighting the last war. It's not about Romney at all, but their own posing. Romney is the Emmanuel Goldstein of GOP primary voters looking for a moderate to hate because they fell down on the job last time.

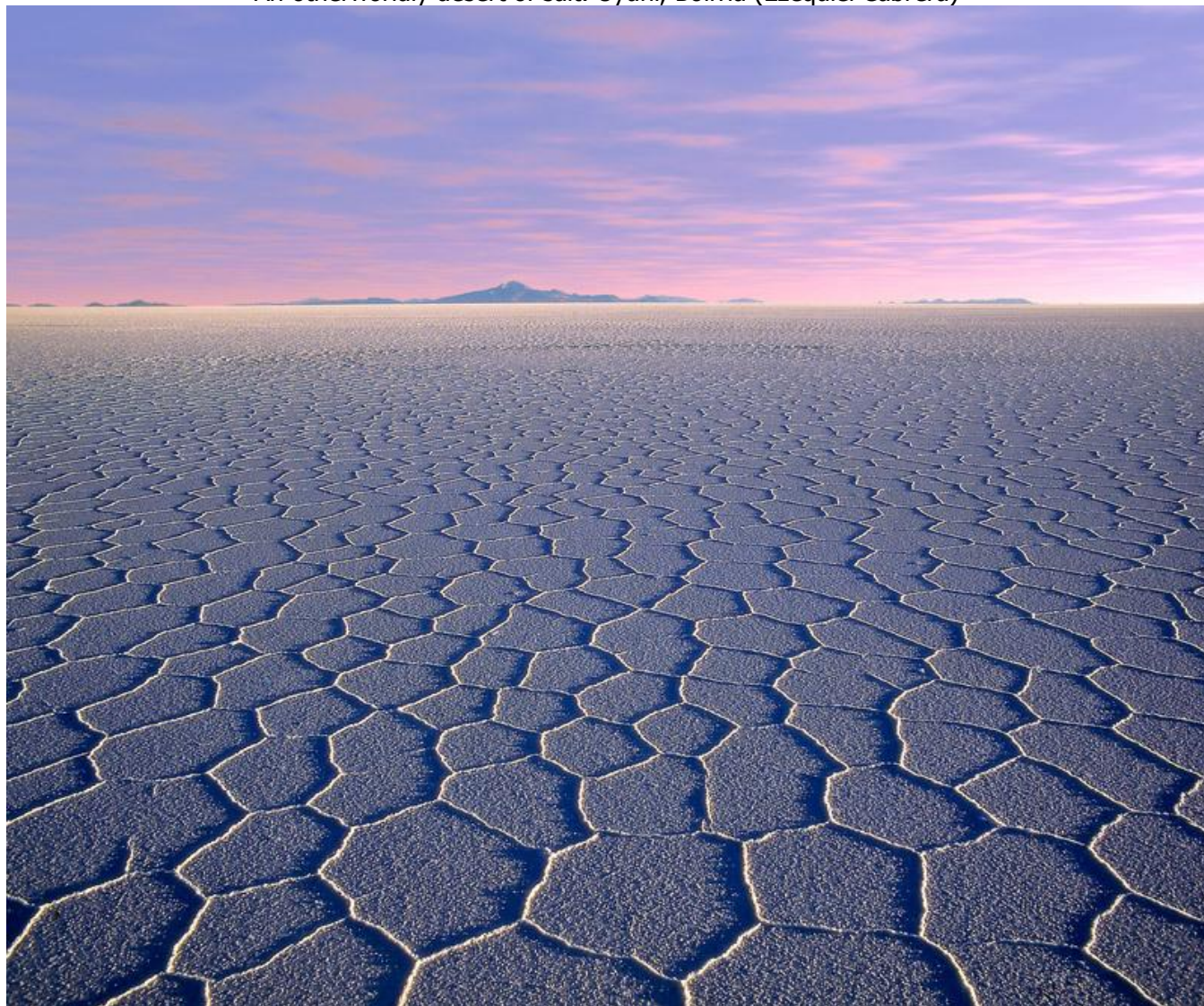
Liberal Republicans always lose. Because he is not a liberal, Romney stands a good chance of beating Obama this fall. But if the fantasist posers keep turning this presidential race into their personal "Dungeons and Dragons" battle against "moderates," Romney's victory will go into the "Liberal Wins" column, when it is anything but.

(Ann Coulter is Legal Affairs Correspondent for Human Events and author of *High Crimes and Misdemeanors*, *Slander*, *Treason*, *How to Talk to a Liberal (If You Must)*, *Godless*, *If Democrats Had Any Brains, They'd Be Republicans*, *Guilty: Liberal "Victims" and their Assault on America*, and *Demonic: How The Liberal Mob Is Endangering America*.)

20120412-08 23:59 SteveB Photos: Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia

<http://beautifulplacetovisit.com/deserts/salar-de-uyuni-bolivia/>

An otherworldly desert of salt. Uyuni, Bolivia (Ezequiel Cabrera)





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

You can subscribe to this free, no-obligation, daily Newsletter filled with lively, intelligent discussion centered on politics and government, but ranging to anything members feel is important, interesting, or entertaining. To subscribe, use the form on our website or blog, or simply reply to this email with "Yes" or "Start" in the Subject line, then add our email address (below) to your Contacts or Safe list. To opt-out, reply with "No" or "Stop" in the subject line.

Welcome to all our new members who may be here for the first time. We want to hear from YOU! To submit your comment, you can use the form on our website or blog, or reply to this email with your two cents worth. Be sure to sign with your desired user name.

Your email address will always be kept strictly confidential.

Feel free to forward this Newsletter to anyone you know on the Right or the Left, though your motives might be different in each case. Regardless, PASS IT ON! Help keep your friends and acquaintances informed and thinking.

<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org>  
[FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com](mailto:FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com)