



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #139 — MAY 16, 2012

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
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The War on the Planet Continues

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, May 16, 2012)

The War currently seems to have four fronts:

1. The War against the Poor
2. The war against Women
3. The war against Gays
4. The war against Planet Earth

I guess grown-up Republicans are exactly like the pr*cks Mitt R0mney and his friends were in prep-school—mean bullies who seek the weak, disadvantaged, and helpless as victims. I guess some things never change.

"Report: Global Biodiversity Down 30 Percent in 40 Years" by Stephanie Pappas, MSNBC

May 14, 2012, (http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/47421743/ns/technology_and_science-science/)

(Freshwater tropical species hardest hit, says World Wildlife Fund.)

The world's biodiversity is down 30 percent since the 1970s, according to a new report, with tropical species taking the biggest hit. And if humanity continues as it has been, the picture could get bleaker.

Humanity is outstripping the Earth's resources by 50 percent — essentially using the resources of one and a half Earths every year, according to the 2012 Living Planet Report, produced by conservation agency the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Colby Loucks, the director of conservation sciences at WWF, compared humanity to bad houseguests.

"We're emptying the fridge, we're not really taking care of the lawn, we're not weeding the flower beds and we're certainly not taking out the garbage," Loucks said.

The biannual Living Planet report is designed to call attention to the Earth's "invisible economy," said Emily McKenzie, the director of the WWF's Natural Capital Program. Natural resources — and the rate at which humans burn through them — rarely appear on policymakers' balance sheets, McKenzie said.

But humanity is essentially in debt to Mother Earth, conservationists find. As of 2008, the most recent year for which data is available, humans were outstripping Earth's biocapacity by 50 percent.

Biocapacity is the amount of renewable resources, land, and waste absorption (such as sinks for carbon dioxide) the Earth can provide. In other words, it takes the planet 1.5 years to restore what humanity burns through in a year. (The organization Global Footprint Network marks "Earth Overshoot Day" every year to draw attention to how fast humans use natural resources. In 2011, Earth Overshoot Day fell on Sept. 27, the day humans used up Earth's annual resources.)

The report scientists calculated the world's hogs when it comes to resources (called the ecological footprint) by determining each nation's productive land capacity and comparing it to the actual population and consumption per person. The United States has the fifth-largest ecological footprint of any nation on Earth, according to the report.

In order from most to least, the top 10 greediest resource users per capita are:

1. Qatar
2. Kuwait
3. United Arab Emirates
4. Denmark
5. United States
6. Belgium
7. Australia
8. Canada
9. The Netherlands
10. Ireland

All of this resource use is taking a toll. The Living Planet report also tracks biodiversity and species populations across the globe. This year's report details a startling loss of biodiversity around the globe: A loss of 30 percent of biodiversity on average, meaning a major decline in the number of different species of plants, animals and other organisms. Temperate species are doing relatively well, Loucks said, but tropical species have declined by 60 percent since the 1970s. Freshwater tropical species are the hardest-hit, having declined by 70 percent in that time period.

Globally, terrestrial species declined by 25 percent between 1970 and 2008, WWF reports. Marine (non-freshwater) species declined by 20 percent.

Many of the group's proposed solutions to humanity's out-of-control resource use center around Rio+20, the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development set for June 20, 2012.

The meeting is designed to help create pathways for sustainable development in the future, said Kate Newman, WWF's managing director of public sector initiatives. She cited the example of Mozambique, a poor country that may be home to one of the largest natural gas fields in the world. As international companies arrive to exploit this resource, local planners are concerned about how to make sure the entire nation benefits, she said.

In the same way, global decision-makers need to think long-term, Loucks said.

"As we're approaching a planet with 9 billion people on it, we need to find a global solution," he said. "The challenge for us is this is a long-term problem. This is the Earth for millennia. We need to move beyond the election cycle, beyond the quarterly report cycle."

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[20120515-01](#) 12:11 SteveG Fw: Common Cause Petition: Fix the Filibuster!

from Common Cause:

Common Cause has taken historic action to restore common sense in Washington. We have gone to federal court to file a constitutional challenge to the Senate's filibuster rules. In addition to Common Cause, our plaintiffs include four members of Congress, and three distinguished young people whose hopes of citizenship were dashed by the filibuster of the DREAM Act.

Once used to extend debate, the filibuster has become a partisan weapon that now is routinely used to block action – and even debate – on hundreds of bills and nominations.

Sign the petition and tell the Senate - end the gridlock:

http://www.commoncause.org/site/apps/ka/ct/contactus.asp?c=dkLNK1MQIwG&b=8090653&en=fqLGLONAjgJGIU_MzF4IFKUMEKpKQKQOuEeIUK4MGLoLZKdI

Fix the filibuster today!

No other democracy in the world gives a minority effective veto power over all legislation. It's a recipe for disaster, and puts America at a big disadvantage in the new world economy.

We need your support to restore the principle of majority rule and get America moving again. Sign the petition and tell the Senate - end the gridlock and fix the filibuster!

Most Americans have lost confidence in Congress and its ability to act in the best interest of the 'we the people.' And for good reason. The Senate is mired in gridlock that puts politics over the public interest, and the filibuster is a major weapon in that partisan warfare.

America can't wait any longer for Congress to tackle the issues facing our nation – whether it's the student loan debt crisis, creating jobs, reigning in Wall Street, or keeping the wealthy and huge corporations from drowning out our voices in elections.

Sign the petition today. Tell the Senate: get America moving again.

Thanks for all that you do, Bob Edgar and the rest of the team at Common Cause

[20120515-02](#) 14:00 SteveB "Colonized by Corporations"

"Colonized by Corporations" by Chris Hedges, Truthdig/NationofChange

May 15, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/colonized-corporations-1337090922>)

In Robert E. Gamer's book *The Developing Nations* is a chapter called "Why Men Do Not Revolt." In it Gamer notes that although the oppressed often do revolt, the object of their hostility is misplaced. They vent their fury on a political puppet, someone who masks colonial power, a despised racial or ethnic group or an apostate within their own political class. The useless battles serve as an effective mask for what Gamer calls the "patron-client" networks that are responsible for the continuity of colonial oppression. The squabbles among the oppressed, the political campaigns between candidates who each are servants of colonial power, Gamer writes, absolve the actual centers of power from addressing the conditions that cause the frustrations of the people. Inequities, political disenfranchisement and injustices are never seriously addressed. "The government merely does the minimum necessary to prevent those few who are prone toward political action from organizing into politically effective groups," he writes.

Gamer and many others who study the nature of colonial rule offer the best insights into the functioning of our corporate state. We have been, like nations on the periphery of empire, colonized. We are controlled by tiny corporate entities that have no loyalty to the nation and indeed in the language of traditional patriotism are traitors. They strip us of our resources, keep us politically passive and enrich themselves at our expense. The mechanisms of control are familiar to those whom the Martinique-born French psychiatrist and writer Frantz Fanon called "the wretched of the earth," including African-Americans. The colonized are denied job security. Incomes are reduced to subsistence level. The poor are plunged into desperation. Mass movements, such as labor unions, are dismantled. The school system is degraded so only the elites have access to a superior education. Laws are written to legalize corporate plunder and abuse, as well as criminalize dissent. And the ensuing fear and instability—keenly felt this past weekend by the more than 200,000 Americans who lost their unemployment benefits—ensure political passivity by diverting all personal energy toward survival. It is an old, old game.

A change of power does not require the election of a Mitt Romney or a Barack Obama or a Democratic majority in Congress, or an attempt to reform the system or electing progressive candidates, but rather a destruction of corporate domination of the political process—Gamer's "patron-client" networks. It requires the establishment of new mechanisms of governance to distribute wealth and protect resources, to curtail corporate power, to cope with the destruction of the ecosystem and to foster the common good. But we must first recognize ourselves as colonial subjects. We must accept that we have no effective voice in the way we are governed. We must accept the hollowness of electoral politics, the futility of our political theater, and we must destroy the corporate structure itself.

The danger the corporate state faces does not come from the poor. The poor, those Karl Marx dismissed as the Lumpenproletariat, do not mount revolutions, although they join them and often become cannon fodder. The real danger to the elite comes from déclassé intellectuals, those educated middle-class men and women who are barred by a calcified system from advancement. Artists without studios or theaters, teachers without classrooms, lawyers without clients, doctors without patients and journalists without newspapers descend economically. They become, as they mingle with the underclass, a bridge between the worlds of the elite and the oppressed. And they are the dynamite that triggers revolt.

This is why the Occupy movement frightens the corporate elite. What fosters revolution is not misery, but the gap between what people expect from their lives and what is offered. This is especially acute among the educated and the talented. They feel, with much justification, that they have been denied what they deserve. They set out to rectify this injustice. And the longer the injustice festers, the more radical they become.

The response of a dying regime—and our corporate regime is dying—is to employ increasing levels of force, and to foolishly refuse to ameliorate the chronic joblessness, foreclosures, mounting student debt, lack of medical insurance and exclusion from the centers of power. Revolutions are fueled by an inept and distant ruling class that perpetuates political paralysis. This ensures its eventual death.

In every revolutionary movement I covered in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, the leadership emerged from déclassé intellectuals. The leaders were usually young or middle-aged, educated and always unable to meet their professional and personal aspirations. They were never part of the power elite, although often their parents had been. They were conversant in the language of power as well as the language of oppression. It is the presence of large numbers of déclassé intellectuals that makes the uprisings in Spain, Egypt, Greece and finally the United States threatening to the overlords at Goldman Sachs, ExxonMobil and JPMorgan Chase. They must face down opponents who understand, in a way the uneducated often do not, the lies disseminated on behalf of corporations by the public relations industry. These déclassé intellectuals, because they are conversant in economics and political theory, grasp that those who hold power, real power, are not the elected mandarins in Washington but the criminal class on Wall Street.

This is what made Malcolm X so threatening to the white power structure. He refused to countenance Martin Luther King's fiction that white power and white liberals would ever lift black people out of economic squalor. King belatedly came to share Malcolm's view. Malcolm X named the enemy. He exposed the lies. And until we see the corporate state, and the games it is playing with us, with the same kind of clarity, we will be nothing more than useful idiots.

"This is an era of hypocrisy," Malcolm X said. "When white folks pretend that they want Negroes to be free, and Negroes pretend to white folks that they really believe that white folks want 'em to be free, it's an era of hypocrisy, brother. You fool me and I fool you. You pretend that you're my brother and I pretend that I really believe you believe you're my brother."

Those within a demoralized ruling elite, like characters in a Chekhov play, increasingly understand that the system that enriches and empowers them is corrupt and decayed. They become cynical. They do not govern effectively. They retreat into hedonism. They no longer believe their own rhetoric. They devote their energies to stealing and exploiting as much, as fast, as possible. They pillage their own institutions, as we have seen with the newly disclosed loss of \$2 billion within JPMorgan Chase, the meltdown of Chesapeake Energy Corp. or the collapse of Enron and Lehman Brothers. The elites become cannibals. They consume each other. This is what happens in the latter stages of all dying regimes. Louis XIV pillaged his own nobility by revoking patents of nobility and reselling them. It is what most corporations do to their shareholders. A dying ruling class, in short, no longer acts to preserve its own longevity. It becomes fashionable, even in the rarefied circles of the elite, to ridicule and laugh at the political puppets that are the public face of the corporate state.

"Ideas that have outlived their day may hobble about the world for years," Alexander Herzen wrote, "but it is hard for them ever to lead and dominate life. Such ideas never gain complete possession of a man, or they gain possession only of incomplete people."

This loss of faith means that when it comes time to use force, the elites employ it haphazardly and inefficiently, in large part because they are unsure of the loyalty of the foot soldiers on the streets charged with carrying out repression.

Revolutions take time. The American Revolution began with protests against the Stamp Act of 1765 but did not erupt until a decade later. The 1917 revolution in Russia started with a dress rehearsal in 1905. The most effective revolutions, including the Russian Revolution, have been largely nonviolent. There are always violent radicals who carry out bombings and assassinations, but they hinder, especially in the early stages, more than help revolutions. The anarchist Peter Kropotkin during the Russian Revolution condemned the radical terrorists, asserting that they only demoralized and frightened away the movement's followers and discredited authentic anarchism.

Radical violent groups cling like parasites to popular protests. The Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, the Weather Underground, the Red Brigades and the Symbionese Liberation Army arose in the ferment of the 1960s. Violent radicals are used by the state to justify harsh repression. They scare the mainstream from the movement. They thwart the goal of all revolutions, which is to turn the majority against an isolated and discredited ruling class. These violent fringe groups are seductive to those who yearn for personal empowerment through hyper-masculinity and violence, but they do little to advance the cause. The primary role of radical extremists, such as Maximilien Robespierre and Vladimir Lenin, is to hijack successful revolutions. They unleash a reign of terror,

primarily against fellow revolutionaries, which often outdoes the repression of the old regime. They often do not play much of a role in building a revolution.

The power of the Occupy movement is that it expresses the widespread disgust with the elites, and the deep desire for justice and fairness that is essential to all successful revolutionary movements. The Occupy movement will change and mutate, but it will not go away. It may appear to make little headway, but this is less because of the movement's ineffectiveness and more because decayed systems of power have an amazing ability to perpetuate themselves through habit, routine and inertia. The press and organs of communication, along with the anointed experts and academics, tied by money and ideology to the elites, are useless in dissecting what is happening within these movements. They view reality through the lens of their corporate sponsors. They have no idea what is happening.

Dying regimes are chipped away slowly and imperceptibly. The assumptions and daily formalities of the old system are difficult for citizens to abandon, even when the old system is increasingly hostile to their dignity, well-being and survival. Supplanting an old faith with a new one is the silent, unseen battle of all revolutionary movements. And during the slow transition it is almost impossible to measure progress.

"Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong," Fanon wrote in *Black Skin, White Masks*. "When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize, ignore and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief."

The end of these regimes comes when old beliefs die and the organs of security, especially the police and military, abandon the elites and join the revolutionaries. This is true in every successful revolution. It does not matter how sophisticated the repressive apparatus. Once those who handle the tools of repression become demoralized, the security and surveillance state is impotent. Regimes, when they die, are like a great ocean liner sinking in minutes on the horizon. And no one, including the purported leaders of the opposition, can predict the moment of death. Revolutions have an innate, mysterious life force that defies comprehension. They are living entities.

The defection of the security apparatus is often done with little or no violence, as I witnessed in Eastern Europe in 1989 and as was also true in 1979 in Iran and in 1917 in Russia. At other times, when it has enough residual force to fight back, the dying regime triggers a violent clash as it did in the American Revolution when soldiers and officers in the British army, including George Washington, rebelled to raise the Continental Army. Violence also characterized the 1949 Chinese revolution led by Mao Zedong. But even revolutions that turn violent succeed, as Mao conceded, because they enjoy popular support and can mount widespread protests, strikes, agitation, revolutionary propaganda and acts of civil disobedience. The object is to try to get there without violence. Armed revolutions, despite what the history books often tell us, are tragic, ugly, frightening and sordid affairs. Those who storm Bastilles, as the Polish dissident Adam Michnik wrote, "unwittingly build new ones." And once revolutions turn violent it becomes hard to speak of victors and losers.

A revolution has been unleashed across the globe. This revolution, a popular repudiation of the old order, is where we should direct all our energy and commitment. If we do not topple the corporate elites the ecosystem will be destroyed and massive numbers of human beings along with it. The struggle will be long. There will be times when it will seem we are going nowhere. Victory is not inevitable. But this is our best and only hope. The response of the corporate state will ultimately determine the parameters and composition of rebellion. I pray we replicate the 1989 nonviolent revolutions that overthrew the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. But this is not in my hands or yours. Go ahead and vote this November. But don't waste any more time or energy on the presidential election than it takes to get to your polling station and pull a lever for a third-party candidate—just enough to register your obstruction and defiance—and then get back out onto the street. That is where the question of real power is being decided.

May 14, 2012, (<http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=51344>)

(Human Events Reporter Hope Hodge spoke with Karl Rove, senior adviser and deputy chief of staff to former President George W. Bush, about presumptive GOP nominee Mitt Romney and key tenets of a winning strategy for the 2012 presidential campaign. She also captured his key points in an address to a Young America's Foundation event at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.)

Romney's prospects

Karl Rove: Sure he can [win]. Will he? I don't know; that's what the election is all about.

Romney's biggest roadblocks

I think the question is going to be how strong and powerful is (Romney's) argument going to be for economic growth. How strong is his emphasis going to be on reform. If he comes across as a reform conservative who's focused on growing the economy and putting America back to work, then he's going to be in good shape.

And we've seen in the last couple of weeks very strong strains of him. Talking about how we need to put America back to work, talking about how we need to reduce tax rates and simplify the code. Having him talk candidly about the problem with entitlements and endorsing things like premium support, those are all good signs.

Issues in Romney's favor

The economy, the deficits, spending, entitlements. The [Patient Protection and] Affordable care act is a big issue. This is something that really matters to a lot of people, and him being able to go on the offense not only to say 'let's repeal it,' but to say, 'here's what I'm going to do [that] is going to be really useful.'

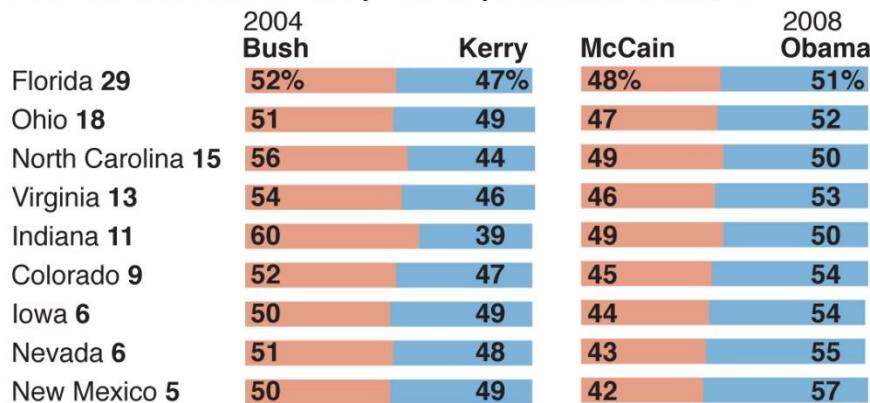
States Romney needs to take

Three, two, one—Indiana, Virginia, North Carolina. Three historically Republican states that went Democrat; Florida and Ohio—together they have 49 electoral college votes. Swung into the Democratic column in '08, but were Republican in '04 and swung by a smaller margin. And if Republicans win those five states, then all they need to win is one more state—New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Colorado, New Mexico, or Nevada.

GOP targets states Obama won

Republican strategists view 9 states that went to Bush in 2004 and Obama in 2008 as crucial to the GOP hopes in 2012.

Electoral votes in 2012 and previous presidential winners:



SOURCE: AP reporting

AP

President Obama's present position in the minds of the American people

We're right at the end of a really ugly Republican presidential process; it's not over yet. Today [Tuesday, April 30] in the Gallup, it is Obama 46, Romney 47. Shouldn't be that way. We have a popular incumbent. They like him; the American people like him. They don't agree with a lot that he's done as president, but he came into office with the best wishes of the American people and they like him. And he's personally popular.

But, they don't like what he's done in office. They expected something different. He had one of the best-run presidential campaigns, and you step back and take a look at the message of the 2008 campaign, it was like, you know, just watching Mickey Mantle pounding it out of the park. Some of the best lines of modern American politics: 'I don't want to be the president of red states or blue states, but the United States'—that's a brilliant line.

The American people were just ready to turn the page, and along came this guy who sounded like a centrist: 'I'm going to cut taxes for everybody who makes less than 250K a year.'

He spends roughly four words devoted to cutting taxes ... for every word devoted to raising taxes.

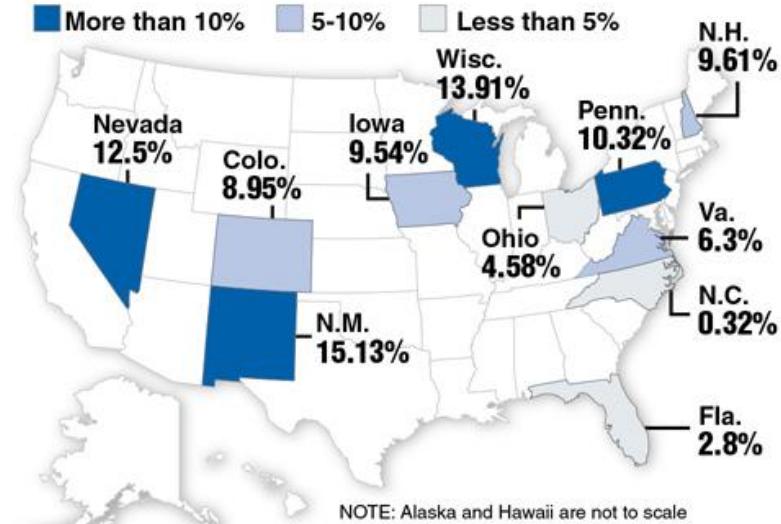
Also [he was] was really smart in how he talked about the deficit. Also talked about the deficits under the Bush years, saying 'I'm going to cut them in half' by the end of my first term in office.

People had been led to believe (Obama) would be a centrist, and he has not been. And that's the first and most important thing that Romney needs to understand.

States to watch

President Barack Obama faces a challenge winning some of the swing states he carried in 2008. Tossup states for the last three presidential elections:

Obama's margin of victory in swing states in 2008



Margins of victory in recent elections

Swing state	2000		2004	
Florida	0.01%	Bush	5.01%	Bush
Ohio	3.51	Bush	2.10	Bush
Nevada	3.54	Bush	2.59	Bush
Colorado	8.36	Bush	4.67	Bush
Pennsylvania	4.17	Gore	2.50	Kerry
Wisconsin	0.22	Gore	0.38	Kerry
New Mexico	0.06	Gore	0.79	Bush
Iowa	0.32	Gore	0.67	Bush
New Hampshire	1.27	Bush	1.37	Kerry

Source: Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections
Graphic: Julie Sheer, Doug Stevens, Los Angeles Times

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Romney should focus on three key strategic ingredients

He needs to take President Obama on his own words and own actions, get him on video saying these things and hold him to account for it in a respectful manner. This is not about getting angry, this isn't about getting belligerent, it isn't about pounding the table. This is simply about saying, 'this is what the president said he was going to do when he was in office, and here's what he's done'—the facts.

The second [key strategic ingredient]: Mr. Romney needs to understand that he's going to have to absorb a lot of blows. This is not going to be the normal presidential re-election year. The presidency is a powerful presence in American minds. You have a lot of authority and prestige in office and if you use it effectively, it makes it relatively easy for a president to get re-elected. But President Obama has not used the power and prestige of the office to prepare for his re-election.

Last year—do you remember what the topics of the State of the Union were last year? Three of them. The most compelling and centered issues in America's life as a nation: High speed rail, high speed Internet, and countless green jobs. The last one doesn't sound too good after Solyndra. The first two are just plain weird.

I defy you to tell me what the theme of this year's State of the Union was. You think what are the two biggest signature accomplishments of president Obama—the stimulus bill, which got not one word in this year's State of the Union address, and the Affordable Care Act, which got 44 words and two sentences.

Obama campaign strategy: Kill Romney. We're going to see this. We're going to see it every day of the campaign. And it is not going to work to President Obama's advantage unless and until Mitt Romney stops replying to it. They want to see where these attacks are going. We're going to have this constantly throughout the campaign.

Third key strategic ingredient for Romney campaign: understand it's not merely enough to set the record straight or to use the president's own words and own statements and his own pledges and promises and statements to hold him accountable, but it's also very important for the American people to get a sense of who Mitt Romney is and what it is that he'll do. They want to know what he's going to do in office. They want to know that he's got an idea of what he wants to achieve.

Romney's going to be tested. What's he all about? How authentic is he? Who is he? You don't have to agree with someone 100 percent of time to kind of cave and say, you know what, 'I trust him.'

Romney needs to lay out an agenda. And it needs to be what he believes. This is not just about Obama did or didn't deliver. It's not just about going toe to toe with Obama, 'as he throws a punch at me I can defend myself and push back.' It's going to have to be 'what is it am I going to do if I get elected.' And that's really tough for people to do. That's conventional politics.

The stuff of laying out a vision sometimes comes across to the media as prosaic. That's strategic.

A few useful tactics

First of all, (the Romney camp) has to worry about money. I add it all up, Obama is likely to have \$1.2 billion dollars. So Romney has to worry about money and close the gap. He can't be like McCain... Obama vs. McCain \$850 million to \$525 million. So Romney needs to narrow that gap.

Romney also needs to be careful about his travel and what states he focuses on. One way to look at this is 12—that's how much closer the electoral college is going to be in 2012 if Romney only wins the states that McCain carried. Because between '08 and '12 we reapportioned the electoral college.

This is going to be one of the most interesting contests in recent memory.

[20120515-04](#) 14:36 SteveB Fw: Daily Kos Action: Contribute to help Tom Barrett Defeat Scott Walker

from Daily Kos:

Steven, Wisconsin Democrats say they aren't getting the help they need from national Democratic Party committees to counter the avalanche of Republican money supporting Scott Walker:

"We are frustrated by the lack of support from the Democratic National Committee and the Democratic Governors Association," a top Wisconsin Democratic Party official tells me. "Scott Walker has the full support and backing of the Republican Party and all its tentacles. We are not getting similar support."

"Considering that Scott Walker has already spent \$30 million and we're even in the polls, this is a winnable race," the Wisconsin Dem continues. "We can get outspent two to one or five to one. We can't get spent 20 to one."

The Obama campaign has sent its Wisconsin supporters an email about the recall and has been working on ensuring that Wisconsin Democrats know how they will be affected by new voter ID laws. However, those efforts don't come with financial help. While unions have committed resources to this election, what they can give pales beside the huge amounts the Republican Party and the Koch brothers have put into keeping Walker in office.

The Democratic Party can't somehow make Wisconsin insignificant by not contributing—it's a win or lose proposition. Win, and you get the chance to undo some of the damage Scott Walker has done. Lose, and Walker gets the chance to make it worse—and especially to do his best to prevent Democrats from voting in November, thus forcing the Obama campaign to concentrate resources on Wisconsin that could be spent elsewhere if the governor of Wisconsin is Tom Barrett rather than Scott Walker.

The key to beating Scott Walker on June 5 is having a well-funded, effective GOTV operation. Please contribute \$4 to help Tom Barrett defeat Scott Walker:

https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/dailykoswisconsin?refcode=5_15_em3.

Keep fighting, Laura Clawson, Labor Editor, Daily Kos

20120515-05 15:38 SteveB From the Right: "Fuzzy Math on Energy"

"Fuzzy Math on Energy" by Mark LaRochelle, Human Events

May 15, 2012, (<http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=51502>)

"We [Americans] consume about 25 percent of the world's oil," says President Barack Obama, but we "only have 2 percent of the reserves."

Obama uses this statistic to argue against increasing U.S. oil production, saying that even if Americans "drilled every drop of oil" we have, "it still wouldn't be enough to meet our long-term needs." Instead, he says, "We've got to discover and produce cleaner, renewable sources of energy."

BUNK

As others have noted, the president's figures are suspect. However, let's assume for the sake of argument that his numbers are correct. If the U.S. share of global oil consumption is 25 percent, and the U.S. share of global reserves is 2 percent, the ratio of our shares of consumption to reserves is 25:2, or 12.5 to 1.

To put this ratio in perspective, let's compare the U.S. with other industrialized nations, using the CIA World Factbook's figures for consumption and proved reserves: For the European Union, this ratio is about 32:1; for Japan, 1,300:1; for Taiwan, 5,400:1. For Switzerland, Hong Kong, or Singapore, the ratio is infinite, since they have no proved reserves at all.

What exactly does the president think this proves? That the Swiss should use no oil?

Oil consumption compared with GDP

Global oil demand was 89.1 billion barrels per day last year, according to the International Energy Agency. The U.S. Energy Information Administration put daily U.S. consumption at 18.8 million barrels; so, our consumption was actually about 21 percent of the total.

However, global GDP was about \$63.3 trillion last year, according to the World Bank. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Research put U.S. GDP at \$15.3 trillion; so the U.S. contributed about 24.2 percent of the total. Thus, as a share of the totals, the U.S. contributes more to global GDP than to global oil consumption.

Is it unreasonable to use 21 percent of the world's oil to produce 24 percent of the world's total value of goods and services? Many other countries' shares of oil consumption are actually greater than their contribution to global output. Such countries range from Canada and Mexico, to Belgium and the Netherlands, to South Korea and Singapore.

As the world's third-largest oil exporter, the U.S. is unusual. According to the International Monetary Fund's GDP figures for 2011, most major oil-exporting countries contribute far more to global oil consumption than to global GDP. For example, Iran's share of global oil consumption is 58 percent greater than its contribution to global GDP; for Venezuela the figure is 69 percent; for Saudi Arabia, over 200 percent.

U.S. has more than "proved" [sic] reserves

Obama's claim that the U.S. has only 2 percent of the world's oil reserves refers only to currently "proved" [sic] reserves. But despite rising consumption, proved reserves more than doubled from 1980 to 2009. As oil analyst Daniel Yergin observes, "Just in the years 2007 to 2009, for every barrel of oil produced in the world, 1.6 barrels of new reserves were added."

Regarding what the president calls "our long-term needs," the U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that "ultimately recoverable global reserves" of oil and natural gas total 2.4 trillion barrels, of which 185 billion barrels—more than 15 percent—are in North America. In addition, the U.S. Geological Survey estimates domestic reserves to include another 2 trillion barrels of shale oil. This is nearly twice the reported reserves of all OPEC countries combined, meaning that the total U.S. share is not 2 percent, but closer to two-thirds of global reserves.

The president's fuzzy math has resulted in millions of dollars transferred from the American public to Obama's cronies at "green energy" black holes like Solyndra, failed maker of solar panels, while gas prices have doubled. It's time to put a stop to that, and to get serious about American energy, and energy self-reliance.

20120515-06 7:23 Charis "Bolivia's Main Private Airline AeroSur in Doubt"

"Bolivia's Main Private Airline AeroSur in Doubt" by Carlos Valdez, AP

May 14, 2012, (<http://www.wandtv.com/story/18394549/bolivias-main-private-airline-aerosur-in-doubt>)

(LA PAZ, Bolivia) Bolivia's principal privately owned airline, AeroSur, was down to a single domestic route Monday and hoping for an infusion of capital to stave off bankruptcy.

U.S. mining investor William Petty was in talks with company executives after proposing to make an investment without assuming any of the airline's debts, which exceed \$20 million. Petty is a shareholder in Franklin Mining Inc. of Colorado.

A representative of the airline's owners, Sergio Asbun, told The Associated Press that they were analyzing an offer from Petty but would not offer details.

A dozen AeroSur workers declared themselves on strike Monday at La Paz's international airport, saying they were going on a hunger strike, union leader Elias Quispe said. The company has more than 1,000 employees and Quispe said none have been paid for at least three months.

AeroSur's troubles were complicated in March when a court ordered that 100 percent of the company's revenues from ticket sales be seized by Bolivia's tax agency to cover unpaid taxes.

Beginning in January, AeroSur suspended nearly all its flights.

Until December, it had 26 daily flights with leased planes on routes within Bolivia and to Buenos Aires, Argentina, Sao Paulo, Brazil, Miami, Florida, and Madrid, Spain.

Now, the company can't afford jet fuel, Vladimir Sanchez, Bolivia's public works minister, said recently. He said the government would not help the airline until it pays its debts, makes its finances more transparent and defines a restructuring plan.

The airline's crisis exposed tensions between investors with blood relations.

The company's president, Sergio Sanzetenea, accused his half-brother and predecessor in the job, Humberto Roca, of embezzling \$37.2 million from the company. Roca says Sanzetenea misappropriated stock.

Roca has lived in Miami since leaving Bolivia last year when the government of President Evo Morales accused him of illegal enrichment. Sanzetenea lives in Argentina.

AeroSur began in 1992 after the collapse of state-run flag carrier LAB Airlines and it expanded market share until Morales launched state-owned Boliviana de Aviacion two years ago.

The state company lowered ticket prices to woo customers from AeroSur, which accused it of using government subsidies to undercut its private competition.

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[20120515-07](#) 18:36 SteveB Fw: MoveOn Petition: Tell DNC: Help Unseat Gov. Scott Walker

from MoveOn:

As a Wisconsin progressive working day and night for the recall of Scott Walker, I'm shocked: The Democratic National Committee still isn't giving financial support to the recall fight in Wisconsin.

After more than a year of grassroots efforts, Wisconsin citizens have accomplished more than anyone thought possible. We now have a Democratic challenger to Scott Walker who is neck and neck in the polls, even though Tom Barrett is being outspent by Walker's millions from out-of-state donations.

There is no more time for the Democratic National Committee to wait—if Walker wins, it would be a huge setback to Democrats in races across the country this year. We need the DNC's support immediately!

That's why I created a petition on SignOn.org to DNC Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, which says:

Democratic National Committee and Debbie Wasserman Schultz, invest now in the crucial fight to remove Scott Walker from office in Wisconsin—the people have worked hard and it's time to help.

Will you sign the petition? Click here to add your name, and then pass it along to your friends:

<http://www.moveon.org/r?r=275536&id=41481-20195165-YT0Jzhx&t=2>

Thanks! —Mary Magnuson

Source:

"**EXCLUSIVE:** Wisconsin Dems furious with DNC for refusing to invest big money in Walker recall," *The Washington Post*, May 15, 2012, <http://www.moveon.org/r?r=275547&id=41481-20195165-YT0Jzhx&t=3>.

CHRISTIAN NATION?



So, America was founded on a Foreign born, Brown skinned, Jewish guy that never spoke a word of English, fed and healed the poor for free. Defended a woman from being slut shamed and killed, and chose not to conform to either Religious or Political nonsense?

Cool... When are we gonna start that?

@OlaBetiku

20120515-09 23:59 SteveB Photo: Empty Plate

<http://the-empty-plate.blogspot.com/>



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

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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.

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