



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #166 — JUNE 22, 2012

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org> FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com

[INDEX: Click here.](#)

R0mney Tells Governors to Lie About Recovery

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, June 22, 2012)

"Romney Campaign Asks Florida Governor to Downplay Good Economic News" by Sam Stein, Huffington Post

June 21, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/20/romney-campaign-asks-flor_n_1614252.html#s=901317)

(NEW YORK) There has always been friction between Mitt Romney and certain Republican governors over how best to frame the state of the economy. While the presumptive GOP nominee has argued during his campaign that the recovery is far too slow, the electoral implications for making that case in states that include Virginia, Ohio and Michigan are much more complicated.

Republican governors Bob McDonnell of Virginia, John Kasich of Ohio and Rick Snyder of Michigan all must show that they are leading their states' economies in the right direction. Occasionally, that means discussing the economy in rosy terms, putting them at odds with the Romney campaign.

Bloomberg News dug a bit deeper than usual On Wednesday night into how much friction this has caused, reporting that the Romney campaign has asked Florida Gov. Rick Scott to tone "down his statements heralding improvements in the state's economy because they clash with the presumptive Republican nominee's message."

The story is well reported, going so far as to quote a Republican operative as saying that the ads being run by the Florida GOP seemed like they were crafted at President Barack Obama's re-election campaign headquarters:

The state Republican party ran a television ad in March crediting Scott, who is a year and a half into a four-year term, for drops in the unemployment rate.

'Companies are hiring, expanding, putting more Floridians to work,' the ad narrator said. 'Florida's unemployment rate continues to get better.'

Florida's jobless rate was 11.1 percent in December 2010 before Scott took office and 8.2 percent two years earlier when Obama was sworn in.

'The first time I saw that ad I initially thought it was an Obama ad,' said Brad Coker, managing director of the Washington-based Mason-Dixon Polling & Research. 'They'll have to tamp it down.'

The Romney campaign is quoted in the piece as arguing that the former governor routinely praises Scott and others for overcoming " the job-stifling policies of the Obama administration." But, not surprisingly, the Obama campaign wasn't willing to grant them a pass. Obama's campaign press secretary Ben LaBolt emailed the following statement:

Whether it's touting the auto recovery, the resurgence of manufacturing, or the growth of our exports, Republican governors across the country have recognized what Mitt Romney refuses to: that we've made progress since the economic crisis. Not only does Mitt Romney deny that progress -- he rejects the policies that led to it and would instead return to the policies that caused the crisis in the first place.

It's worth noting that among state economies, Florida's is doing relatively poorly. It's also worth noting that this campaign theme was played out in the 2004 election as well, with John Kerry arguing that George W. Bush had not shepherded a struggling economy in an overwhelming positive direction. The Bush team responded by essentially accusing Kerry of being a sourpuss.

FotM NEWSLETTER #166 (June 22, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

<u>DATE-ID</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>SUBJECT/TITLE</u>
20120622-00		SteveB	R0mney Tells Governors to Lie About Recovery by Steven W. Baker / SteveB ("Romney Campaign Asks Florida Governor to Downplay Good Economic News")
20120621-01	07:35	SteveB	"Yes, Iraq Definitely Had WMD, Vast Majority of Polled Republicans Insist"
20120621-09	16:02	Pam	Re: "Yes, Iraq Definitely Had WMD, Vast Majority of Polled Republicans Insist" (reply to SteveB, above)
20120621-11	16:32	SteveG	Re: "Yes, Iraq Definitely Had WMD, Vast Majority of Polled Republicans Insist" (reply to Pam, above)
20120621-15	18:04	Art	Re: "Yes, Iraq Definitely Had WMD, Vast Majority of Polled Republicans Insist" (reply to Pam, above)
20120621-02	07:56	SteveB	"Ron Paul Admits He's on Social Security, Even Though He Believes It's Unconstitutional"
20120621-10	16:05	Pam	Re: "Ron Paul Admits He's on Social Security, Even Though He Believes It's Unconstitutional" (reply to SteveB, above)
20120621-19	22:33	Jim	Re: "Ron Paul Admits He's on Social Security, Even Though He Believes It's Unconstitutional" (reply to SteveB, above)
20120621-03	09:37	Art	Re: Word Origins for Oldies (reply to SteveG, FotM Newsletter #165)
20120621-04	12:45	Ben	"LEGO Turing Machine Is Simple, Yet Sublime"
20120621-05	14:22	SteveB	Fw: MoveOn Action: Donate to Help Stop Mitt R0mney!
20120621-06	14:46	Ben	First Hand Reporting from Apple's Lunchroom
20120621-07	15:06	SteveB	From the Right: "Romney Needs Big Share of White Working-Class Vote"
20120621-08	15:11	Dennis	"The Crisis of Capitalism"
20120621-13	17:12	Pam	Re: "The Crisis of Capitalism" (reply to Dennis, above)
20120621-14	17:47	Art	Re: "The Crisis of Capitalism" (reply to Pam & Dennis, above)
20120621-12	17:06	Dennis	"The New Obama Doctrine, A Six-Point Plan for Global War"
20120621-16	18:06	Art	Re: "The New Obama Doctrine, A Six-Point Plan for Global War" (reply to Dennis, above)
20120621-17	19:17	Art	"Gallup Poll: Confidence in America's Public Schools Hits Record Low"
20120621-18	20:45	Pam	Re: "Gallup Poll: Confidence in America's Public Schools Hits Record Low" (reply to Art, above)
20120621-20	23:57	Anne	Signs of the Times, Part 8
20120621-21	23:58	SteveG	Cartoon: Bank CEOs Play Us All for Suckers
20120621-22	23:59	SteveB	Photo: Explosion

20120621-01	07:35	SteveB	"Yes, Iraq Definitely Had WMD, Vast Majority of Polled Republicans Insist"
-----------------------------	-------	--------	--

What a tragic event for reality to be denied and lies believed in such a major way.

"Yes, Iraq Definitely Had WMD, Vast Majority of Polled Republicans Insist" by Dan Froomkin, Huffington Post

June 21, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/21/iraq-wmd-poll-clueless-vast-majority-republicans_n_1616012.html)

(WASHINGTON) How misinformed are Republicans about world affairs? If presumptive GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney's assertion that Russia is "without question our number one geopolitical foe" is any indication, then the answer would appear to be very.

A new poll supports that theory.

The poll, constructed by Dartmouth government professor Benjamin Valentino and conducted by YouGov from April 26 to May 2, found that fully 63 percent of Republican respondents still believed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction when the U.S. invaded in 2003. By contrast, 27 percent of independents and 15 percent of Democrats shared that view.

Jim Lobe, chief of the Inter Press Service's Washington bureau, reported the finding in his blog on Wednesday.

The Bush administration's insistence that the Iraqi government had weapons of mass destruction and might give them to terrorists was a key selling point in its campaign to take the country to war. It turned out to be untrue.

Debate continues over whether former President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, and other top officials knew there were no WMD, but intentionally deceived the American people and Congress because they were intent on attacking Iraq for less palatable reasons -- or whether they managed to convince themselves that it was true using cherry-picked intelligence.

There is no reality-based argument that Iraq actually had WMD, after extensive searches found none, but this is hardly the first time many Americans have been certain of something that simply wasn't true.

A *Washington Post* poll in September 2003 found that nearly 70 percent of all Americans were convinced that Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the 9/11 terrorist attacks -- even though he was not.

Bush, Cheney and others consistently linked al Qaeda to Hussein in speeches they gave in the run-up to war, and the media rarely pushed back. But neither Bush nor Cheney continued to claim that there were actual WMDs in Iraq once the searches came up empty -- although they both continued to insist that Saddam had the "capability" to produce them.

Rather than a failure of the media, therefore, this latest poll result seems to indicate a refusal -- unique to the modern Republican Party -- to acknowledge facts.

According to this poll, an even larger proportion of Republican respondents who said Iraq had WMD -- 64 percent -- said they have either always believed (or have come to believe) that Barack Obama was born in another country, which he was not.

Overall, the poll found Republicans to be considerably more militaristic in their worldview than Democrats and independents.

In a finding that would indicate plenty of GOP support for yet another war in the Middle East, nearly two-thirds of Republicans said it's very likely that if Iran produces a nuclear weapon, it would use it against Israel.

[20120621-09](#)

16:02

Pam

Re: "Yes, Iraq Definitely Had WMD, Vast Majority of Polled Republicans Insist" (reply to SteveB, above)

What we have is an ignorant bunch of people who control most of the wealth, a recipe for disaster if there ever was one. I have always believed--can't prove it--that Bush, Cheney knew there were no WMD and wanted an excuse to go to war. And I think they believed it would be a walk in the park.

Today on our NC NPR station, I heard a discussion of a recent law that has been introduced in our State Legislature to forbid developers--or anyone--from using data drawn from the past ten years about global warming when making projections into the future. They have to use data from the past 100 years, which gives a far different result. All scientists agree that the past ten years have seen extraordinary changes in the climate, whatever the cause. But our legislature, in its wisdom, wants to deliberately close its eyes and simply will reality to change. The 100 year projection is a rise in sea level of 8". For ten years, it's over three feet. That difference is not trivial. If we thought Katrina and the swamping of the ninth district was a disaster, just imagine all the major cities along our

coasts being inundated with water. I am so flabbergasted by what I heard, I hardly know what to say. Our legislature wants to make it a LAW to not recognize science. I wish I could believe that this too shall pass.

20120621-11	16:32	SteveG	Re: "Yes, Iraq Definitely Had WMD, Vast Majority of Polled Republicans Insist" (reply to Pam, above)
-----------------------------	-------	--------	--

IMHO it will not get better in the next 20 years and then it will be gradual. I hope I am wrong. It seems that the ones coming into politics and getting elected lean to the right significantly. Religion seems to be increasing in the political arena also – except for JFK when was religion a major concern in national politics? Money and corporations need to get out before things start changing.

20120621-15	18:04	Art	Re: "Yes, Iraq Definitely Had WMD, Vast Majority of Polled Republicans Insist" (reply to Pam, above)
-----------------------------	-------	-----	--

To really address the elephant in the room, if we really pay attention to what is happening and take the necessary steps to began to correct the situation, it will require the equivalent national effort and sacrifice of fighting WW II. And we have to get the rest of the world to go along. The business community, especially the energy community - oil coal, but also real estate developers (that is the North Carolina issue - all those beachfront house etc will soon be gone) will have to accept reality and change. None are willing to do this and so they have probably become adept at lying to themselves that this is all just a shibboleth. The alternative is just to personally discordant to comprehend - forget the country, I'm talking about their personal business interests.

Climate issues and corrective action are just to inconvenient to be bothered with but then so was WW II. What we really need, terrible to say, is a giant hurricane that wipes out Florida and half the rest of the South maybe to get everyone's attention. A sort of Pearl Harbor II.

Trouble is nature usually just doesn't work that way.

20120621-02	07:56	SteveB	"Ron Paul Admits He's on Social Security, Even Though He Believes It's Unconstitutional"
-----------------------------	-------	--------	--

Nothin' but hypocrites in the entire party! It's just a matter of asking the right question of a man too surprised to tell his usual lies. I thought Congress had their own retirement system and didn't partake in Social Security? Ron Paul certainly has his undeserving hand in the till. You see, if it has a dollar sign (\$), a Republican can't say no.

["Ron Paul Admits He's on Social Security, Even Though He Believes It's Unconstitutional" by Erin Mershon, Huffington Post](#)

June 20, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/20/ron-paul-social-security_n_1612117.html?utm_hp_ref=mostpopular)

Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) may rail against Social Security insolvency in the public eye, but that hasn't stopped him from accepting the government checks.

The libertarian-leaning Republican and former presidential candidate admitted Wednesday that he accepts Social Security checks just minutes after he called for younger generations to wean themselves off the program, in an interview on MSNBC's "Morning Joe."

"I want young people to opt out of Social Security, but my goal isn't to cut," he said.

The Huffington Post's Sam Stein then asked Paul, "A bit of a personal question -- Are you on Social Security? Do you get social security checks?"

Paul admitted he does, stating, "[It's] just as I use the post office, I use government highways, I use the banks, I use the federal reserve system. But that doesn't mean that you can't work to remove this in the same way on Social Security."

Paul also said he still pays more into Social Security than he gets in his checks.

Paul is outspoken about the need to end government programs like the Federal Reserve and the departments of energy and education. But he said he would not eliminate programs like Social Security and Medicare, despite his belief that the programs are unconstitutional. He planned to allow citizens under the age of 25 to opt out of the system in order to save their own money for retirement, if elected to the presidency.

20120621-10	16:05	Pam	Re: "Ron Paul Admits He's on Social Security, Even Though He Believes It's Unconstitutional" (reply to SteveB, above)
-----------------------------	-------	-----	---

Right. Let's make speculators out of 25-yr olds [in lieu of Social Security]. That sounds like a plan

20120621-19	22:33	Jim	Re: "Ron Paul Admits He's on Social Security, Even Though He Believes It's Unconstitutional" (reply to SteveB, above)
-----------------------------	-------	-----	---

All Congressmen have been in the Social Security system since 1986 just like the rest of us.

[Thanks, Jim, I should have known that or looked it up. I think I got confused by the Congressional health care system. I guess Ron Paul probably isn't in the Medicare system... I love the way Friends of the Middle members come up with answers like Jim's, in this case, and really appreciate the help! -SteveB]

20120621-03	09:37	Art	Re: Word Origins for Oldies (reply to SteveG, FotM Newsletter #165)
-----------------------------	-------	-----	---

Loved the history lesson. Good stuff!!! Thanks.

20120621-04	12:45	Ben	"LEGO Turing Machine Is Simple, Yet Sublime"
-----------------------------	-------	-----	--

"LEGO Turing Machine Is Simple, Yet Sublime" by Geeta Dayal, Wired

June 20, 2012, (<http://www.wired.com/underwire/2012/06/lego-turing-machine/>)

Video: <http://vimeo.com/44202270>.

Two researchers in the Netherlands helmed the construction of a LEGO Turing machine, a quirky manifestation of the classic computer science concept first devised by Alan Turing in 1936.

The device, built by Jereon van den Bos and Davy Landman using a single LEGO Mindstorms NXT set, is one of the most impressive — and simple — attempts we've seen at building a physical Turing machine.

"Alan Turing's original model has an infinite tape," write the researchers, "but LEGO had a slight problem supplying infinite bricks. So we chose to fix our tape size to 32 positions."

The Turing machine was a purely theoretical concept. Several attempts at crafting LEGO Turing machines have been made in the past, with varying levels of success. And a fanciful mechanical Turing machine built by Jim MacArthur was unveiled in 2011 at Maker Faire UK.

Turing would have turned 100 years old this Saturday. Events are being organized worldwide this year to commemorate the centennial of the computer scientist's birth.

The LEGO Turing machine is currently on display as part of a Turing exhibition at the Centrum Wiskunde and Informatica in the Netherlands.

The Science Museum in London is also unveiling a special exhibition this week in honor of Turing, titled Codebreaker. At the center of the exhibition is the Pilot ACE computer, thought to be the most important surviving physical artifact left by the computer scientist.

20120621-05 14:22 SteveB Fw: MoveOn Action: Donate to Help Stop Mitt R0mney!
--

It sounds like they're thinking creatively...

from MoveOn:

This past week, we tried a new grassroots strategy to take on Mitt Romney. And it worked, better than we could have ever dreamed!

Right now, President Obama is sinking in the polls, and the race looks very tough. But the more people know about Mitt Romney's economic plans—tax breaks for millionaires, layoffs and cutbacks for the rest of us—the less support he gets. That's why we're launching a huge program to make sure that swing voters realize that Romney isn't just some rich guy who happens to be running for office—he's running to raid America for the 1%.

Our first action already had great results: we followed Mitt on his bus tour with our own "Romneymobile", a Cadillac covered in corporate NASCAR-style decals (with a fake dog strapped to the roof). MoveOn members came out to join the Romneymobile wherever Mitt went, carrying "**President of the 1%**" signs.

There were so many of us at a WaWa in Pennsylvania where Romney was scheduled to stop that his bus just drove right by, leaving his supporters and reporters baffled.¹ Romney's lavish and carefully orchestrated tour was focused on getting him positive local news stories—but our message about Romney and the 1% made it into much of the tour press coverage!²

In our MoveOn member vote yesterday, 91% of us voted endorse President Obama. It's time to go all-in to stop Mitt Romney and use people power to counter Super PAC dollars. Our campaign has just gotten off the ground and is already getting great media coverage in key swing states. But we need to raise \$350,000 this week to replicate our success everywhere Mitt goes. Can you chip in?

Yes, I can chip in \$5 to help keep Mitt Romney on the run:

https://pol.moveon.org/donate/onepercentromney.html?bg_id=hpc5&id=44263-20195165-YiGKAex&t=1.

We've launched "99Airlines," our plan to fly a plane overhead at all of Romney's big events with a message from MoveOn members. Our banners were getting so much attention that Romney got his own plane with a banner in the air. Only his team didn't quite think it through.

The Romney campaign's banner read: "Romney for President 2012." Our plane was following right behind it with one that read "Romney: Every Millionaire Counts Tour." It looked like the Romney campaign was saying our message himself! The media loved it and wrote tons of stories.

Getting the real truth out about Mitt Romney is priceless. But keeping the planes in the air, funding the "Romneymobile," and all the other elements of our election program cost money. If we can raise \$350,000 we can make sure that swing voters nationwide know that Romney truly would be "President of the 1%." Can you chip in today?

MoveOn is independent of political parties and politicians, and we know that re-electing the president will not bring progress in itself, but rather is a precondition to progress. We're going all-in not just to win this election, but to keep building progressive power for the battles to come.

Thanks for all you do. –Justin, Garlin, Victoria, Emily, and the rest of the team

Sources:

¹"Obama supporters disrupt Romney event," CBS News, June 16, 2012, <http://www.moveon.org/r?r=276535&id=44263-20195165-YiGKAex&t=5>.

²Here's a list of some of our press hits: http://s3.moveon.org/pdfs/romneytour_press.pdf?id=44263-20195165-YiGKAex&t=6.

20120621-06 14:46 Ben First Hand Reporting from Apple's Lunchroom

It was almost precisely the "Noon Meal" today. No visitors today.

Once I got a quick look, and had breathed the heady vapors around the Bistro station, there was no hesitation at all in telling Chef Patricia that I wanted her meal. The trout was perfectly cooked -- for me, since trout is a freshwater fish, this means completely cooked, but not beyond that -- with a crispy, flavorful skin and an all-permeating floral essence of coriander. The haricots vert were very tasty and wonderfully seasoned with olive oil, minced garlic and coarse pepper. Perhaps a tad more done than I'd prefer; I am of the 'fresh vegetables should be noticeably crisp' school, but a delicious complement to the perfect trout and red potatoes. The red potatoes, you ask? Tender, lightly olive-oiled, and also redolent of garlic and black pepper. The beautiful orange smear (some of which is going home with me today as a result of diffusion through my customary napkin-bib) was tangy and a little zesty and a bit sweet, with the wonderful pungent taste of fresh red bell peppers. I slurped it down with chunks of red potato and occasionally with a morsel of that fine trout.

Seared Coriander Trout with Haricots Verts and Red Taters





Chef Alejandro's Beautiful Bhan Mi

20120621-07 15:06 SteveB From the Right: "Romney Needs Big Share of White Working-Class Vote"

Isn't this just an admission that their constituency is now down to a few extremely rich people and all the stupid, uneducated white people? Everybody else seems to understand the grand scam!

"Romney Needs Big Share of White Working-Class Vote" by Michael Barone, *Human Events*

June 21, 2012, (<http://www.humanevents.com/2012/06/21/michael-barone-romney-needs-big-share-white-working-class-vote/>)

What's up with the white working class vote? For years, the horny-handed blue-collar worker was the star of the New Deal Democratic coalition. It was for him, and his wife and family, that Democrats taxed the rich, invented Social Security and supported militant labor unions.

Well, that was then, and this is now. White working class voters -- or white non-college voters, the exit poll group most closely approximating them -- are now a mainstay of the Republican coalition.

[Ya, this group was the biggest booster of Hitler too. --SteveB]

Ronald Brownstein, a clear-sighted and diligent analyst of demographic voting data, provided some useful perspective in his most recent National Journal column. His bottom line is that in order to win this year, Mitt Romney must capture two-thirds of white non-college voters -- about the same percentage that voted for Ronald Reagan in his 1984 landslide re-election.

The reason Romney must do so well is that white non-college voters are a smaller part of the electorate now than they were then. In 1984, they comprised 61 percent of all voters. In 2008, they comprised 39 percent.

The good news for Romney is that Republicans have been running near these levels for some time. In 2008, the white non-college vote went 58 to 40 percent for John McCain. In 2010, the white non-college vote for the House of Representatives was 63 to 33 percent Republican. Current polling shows Obama at about 33 percent among this group.

Another way to look at it is that in 1984, white non-college voters came in 7 percent more Republican than the national average. In 2008 and 2010, they came in 11 to 12 percent more Republican than average.

Such data tends to undercut the theory, first advanced by Ruy Teixeira and John Judis in their 2002 book *The Emerging Democratic Majority*, that as minorities and working women became a larger share of the electorate, Democrats could command majorities for years to come.

That was true in some years, like 2006 and 2008, but not in others, like 2009 and 2010. Then it was counterbalanced by heavy Republican margins among white non-college voters.

As a majority group -- 86 percent of voters in 1940 and 61 percent in 1984 -- white non-college voters could not be ignored by either party. Party platforms and candidate rhetoric were aimed at them. A party that failed to win over this group, like the Democrats in 1984, would suffer landslide defeat.

Also, voters who are conscious they are part of a group that accounts for a large majority of the electorate will be open to appeals from both parties. They can be confident that both, over time, will be looking for their votes.

Things operate differently with groups that are self-conscious minorities. One party may antagonize them in search of votes from other groups. Democrats' efforts to woo blacks and liberal college-educated whites turned off the white working class in the 1980s.

Barack Obama seems to be doing the same thing this year. His support of same-sex marriage won't help with non-college whites. Nor will his blocking the Keystone pipeline with all its blue-collar jobs.

Add to the list the contraception mandate being denounced in Catholic churches. And the move to give work permits to something like 1 million illegal immigrants.

In each case, Obama is trying to instill enthusiasm in a core Democratic constituency -- and poking a finger in the eye of the white working class.

Meanwhile, there is evidence that demographics may not work as strongly for Democrats as many predicted.

The Pew Hispanic Center reported in April there has been more reverse migration to Mexico than Mexican migration into the U.S. since 2007, and the Pew Research Center reported Monday that in 2010 there were more mostly high-skill immigrants from Asian than mostly low-skill immigrants from Latin America.

According to exit polls, Latinos made up 9 percent of the electorate in 2008 and 8 percent in 2010. They voted 67 to 31 percent for Obama in 2008 and 60 to 38 percent Democratic for House candidates in 2010.

Obama's support among them seems to be holding up well, but Latino turnout may be low, as it was in California's primary. The virtual halt in Latin immigration makes it unlikely Latinos will double their share of the electorate soon, if ever.

Meantime, there are four times as many white non-college voters leaning Republican by a similar margin. Demographics can work both ways.

20120621-08	15:11	Dennis	"The Crisis of Capitalism"
-------------	-------	--------	----------------------------

Watch this entertaining and easy to follow 11 minute video [and transcript, below] on an alternative economic view of the crisis of capitalism and the distribution of wealth by a British geographer. Terrific follow-up discussion as well. Well worth the time if you want a clearer understanding of where we are and how we got to this point in history. (Warning: You probably won't bother to vote in November after seeing this.)

"The Crisis of Capitalism" by David Harvey, RSA (w/ video)

Apr. 26, 2010, (<http://comment.rsablogs.org.uk/2010/06/28/rsa-animate-crisis-capitalism/>)

(In this short RSA Animate, renowned academic David Harvey asks if it is time to look beyond capitalism, towards a new social order that would allow us to live within a system that could be responsible, just and humane. This is based on a lecture at the RSA.)

David Harvey: Okay so we've been through this crisis and there are all sorts of explanatory formats out there. And it's interesting to look at the different genres. One genre is that it's all about human frailty. Alan Greenspan took refuge in the fact "It's human nature" he said, "and you can't do anything about that." But there's a whole world of explanations that kind of say it's the predatory instincts, it's the instincts, the mastery, it's the delusions of investors, and the greed and all the rest of it. So there's a whole range of discussion of that. And, of course, the more we learn about the daily practices on Wall Street we forget there's a great deal of truth in all of that.

The second genre is that there's institutional failures; regulators were asleep at the switch; the shadow banking system innovated outside of their purview etc, etc, etc and, therefore, institutions have to be reconfigured and it has to be a global effort by the G20s something of that kind. So we look at the institutional level and say that has failed and that has to be reconfigured.

The third genre is to say everybody was obsessed with a false theory, they read too much, and believed in the efficiency of markets and it's time we actually got back to something like Keynes or we took seriously Hyman Minsky's theory concerning the inherent instability of financial activities.

The next genre is it has cultural origins. Now we don't hear that much in the United States but if you were in Germany and France there are many people there who would say this is an Anglo Saxon disease and it's nothing to do with us. And I happened to be in Brazil when it was going on and Lula was kind of saying, well first off he was saying, "Oh thank God the United States is being disciplined by the equivalent of the IMF. We've been through it eight times in the last twenty five years and now it's their turn. Fantastic" said Lula and all the Latin Americans I knew until it hit them, which it does, and then they kind of changed their tune a little bit. So there was a way of which it became cultural and you can see that by the way in which this whole Greek thing is being handled. The way the German press is saying, "Well it's the Greek character, it's defects in the Greek character." And there's a lot of rather nasty stuff going on around that but actually there are some cultural features which have led into it.

For instance, the U.S. fascination with home ownership which is supposedly a deep cultural value; so 67%/68% of U.S. households are home owners. It's only 22% in Switzerland. Of course it's a cultural value in the United States of being supported by the mortgage interest tax deduction which is a huge subsidy. It's been promoted since the 1930s, very explicitly in the 1930 it was built up because the theory was that debt encumbered homeowners don't go on strike.

And then there's the kind of notion that it's a failure of policy and that policy has actually intervened. And there's a funny kind of alliance emerging between the Glenn Beck wing of Fox News and the World Bank both of whom say the problem is too much regulation of the wrong sort.

So there are all of these ways and all of them have a certain truth. And skilled writers will take one of other of those perspectives and build a story and actually write a very plausible kind of story about this. And I thought to myself well what kind of plausible story can I write which is none of the above, which is one of the things I always think to myself. And it's not hard to do particularly if you're coming from a Marxist perspective because there aren't many people who try to do this analysis from a Marxist perspective.

And I was really clued into this by this thing that happened at the London School of Economics about a year and a half ago when Her Majesty the Queen asked the economists "How come you guys didn't see this thing coming". She didn't say it exactly that way but, you know, a similar sentiment. And they got very upset. And then she actually called the Governor of the Bank of England and said, "How come you didn't see it coming". And then the British Academy put forward this, got all together all these economists and they came up with this fabulous letter to Her Majesty. And it was absolutely astonishing, it said, "Well many dedicated people, intelligent, smart, spend their lives

working on aspects of this thing very, very seriously, but the one thing we missed was systemic risk" and you say, "What!" And then it went on to talk about the politics of denial and all the rest of it so I thought well systemic risk I can translate it into the Marxian thing, you're talking about the internal contradictions of capital accumulation. And maybe I should write a thing about the internal contradictions of capital accumulation and try to figure out the role of crisis in the whole history of capitalism and what's specific and special about the crisis this time around.

And there were two ways in which I thought I would do that. One was to look at what's happened since the 1970s to now. And the thesis there is that in many ways the form of this current crisis is dictated very much by the way we came out of the last one.

The problem back in the 1970s was excessive power of labour in relationship to capital. That, therefore, the way out of a crisis last time was to discipline labour, and we know how that was done. It was done by off shoring, it was done by Thatcher and Regan and it was done by neo-liberal doctrine, it was done all kinds of different ways. But by 1985 or '86 the labour question had essentially been solved; it had access to all the world's labour supplies, nobody in this particular instance has cited greedy unions as the root of the crisis. Nobody in this instance is saying it's ever anything to do with excessive power of labour. If anything it's the excessive power of capital and in particular the excessive power of finance capital, which is the root of the problem.

Now how did that happen? Well we've been since the 1970s in a phase of what we call wage repression, that wages have remained stagnant, the share of wage as a national income right throughout the OECD countries has steadily fallen. It's even steadily fallen in China of all places. So that there are less and less being paid out in wages. Well wages turn out to be also the money which buys goods, so if you diminish wages then you've got a problem with where's your demand going to come from. And the answer was well get out your credit cards, we'll give everybody credit cards. So we'll overcome, if you like, the problem of effective demand by actually pumping up the credit economy. And American households and British households have all roughly tripled their debt over the last 20/30 years. And a vast amount of that debt, of course, has been within the housing market.

And out of this comes a theory which is very, very important that capitalism never solves its crisis problems, it moves them around geographically. And what we're seeing right now is a geographical movement of that. Everybody says, "Well, okay everything's beginning to recover in the United States" and then Greece goes bang and everybody says, "What about the Piigs".

And it's interesting you had a finance crisis in the financial system, you've sort of half solved that but at the expense of a sovereign debt crisis. Actually if you look at the accumulation process of capital you see a number of limits and a number of barriers and there's a wonderful language that Marx uses in the Grundrisse where he talks about the way in which capital can't abide a limit, it has to turn it into a barrier which it then circumvents or transcends.

And then when you look at the accumulation process you look at where the barriers and limits might lie. And the simple way to look at it is to say look a typical circulation process of accumulation goes like this. You start with some money, you go into the market and you buy labour, power and means of production, and you put that then to work with a given technology and organisational form, you create a commodity which you then sell for the original money plus a profit. Now you then take part of the profit and you recapitalise it into an expansion for very interesting reasons.

Now there are two things about this: one is there are a number of barrier points in here. How is the money got together in the right place at the right time, in the right volume - and that takes financial ingenuity. So the whole history of capitalism has been about financial innovation. And financial innovation has the effect of also empowering the financiers, and the excessive power of the financiers can sometimes... they do get greedy, no question about it. And if you look at financial profits in the United States they were soaring after 1990, they were going up like this. Profits in manufacturing were coming down like this. And you could see the imbalance.

In this country I think the way in which this country has sided with the City of London against British manufacturing since the 1950s onwards has had very serious implications for the economy of this country. You've actually screwed industry in order to keep financiers happy. Any sensible person right now would join an anti-capitalist organisation. And you have to because otherwise we're going to have the continuation, and notice it's the continuation of all sorts of negative aspects. For instance, the racking up of wealth you would have thought the crisis would have stopped

that. Actually more billionaires emerged in India last year than ever – they doubled last year. The wealth of the rich – and I just read something this morning – in this country has accelerated just last year.

What happened was the leading hedge fund owners got personal remunerations of three billion dollars each in one year! Now I thought it was obscene and insane a few years ago when they got two hundred and fifty million, but they're now hauling in three billion. Now that's not a world I want to live in and if you want to live in it be my guest. I don't see us debating and discussing this. I don't have the solutions. I think I know what the nature of the problem is, and unless we're prepared to have a very broad based discussion that gets away from the normal you get in the political campaign and everything's going to be okay here next year if you vote for me – it's crap. You should know it's crap and say it is. And we have a duty, it seems to me, those of us who are academics and seriously involved in the world, to actually change our mode of thinking.

[20120621-13](#) 15:52 Pam Re: "The Crisis of Capitalism" (reply to Dennis, above)

This is fabulous! I completely agree with this analysis, and I think Marx was a good diagnostician of capitalism. I don't think his solution worked (duh!), and I think we have to figure out something else, but unless we can discuss our global economy in a rational manner--which I have not seen to date--we are screwed indeed. I believe real dangers lie ahead, perhaps not totalitarianism but something equally oppressive. We see it happening already as we watch the wealth gap increase by the minute. Money is power, and it may be even more powerful than guns. Despots won't have to create gulags, they'll just starve you out, buy you out, and leave you to fend for yourself.

[20120621-14](#) 17:47 Art Re: "The Crisis of Capitalism" (reply to Pam & Dennis, above)

Ever study how feudalism came about? It wasn't because 90% of the people just said, OK we'll be peasants and you other 10% can be nobles and rule over us just because you're better. It also was not really a Roman tradition and certainly not a Germanic tribal tradition.

[20120621-12](#) 17:06 Dennis "The New Obama Doctrine, A Six-Point Plan for Global War"

It's worse than you thought—neocon Obama—the Obama doctrine of perpetual global war. So why don't neocon Republicans just love this guy?

"The New Obama Doctrine, A Six-Point Plan for Global War" by Nick Turse, AlterNet/TomDispatch

June 16, 2012, (http://www.alternet.org/story/155879/the_new_obamaDoctrine_a_six-point_plan_for_global_war?page=entire)

(The administration is now carefully developing and honing a new Obama doctrine, a six-point program for twenty-first-century war, American-style.)

It looked like a scene out of a Hollywood movie. In the inky darkness, men in full combat gear, armed with automatic weapons and wearing night-vision goggles, grabbed hold of a thick, woven cable hanging from a MH-47 Chinook helicopter. Then, in a flash, each "fast-roped" down onto a ship below. Afterward, "Mike," a Navy SEAL who would not give his last name, bragged to an Army public affairs sergeant that, when they were on their game, the SEALs could put 15 men on a ship this way in 30 seconds or less.

Once on the aft deck, the special ops troops broke into squads and methodically searched the ship as it bobbed in Jinhae Harbor, South Korea. Below deck and on the bridge, the commandos located several men and trained their weapons on them, but nobody fired a shot. It was, after all, a training exercise.

All of those ship-searchers were SEALs, but not all of them were American. Some were from Naval Special Warfare Group 1 out of Coronado, California; others hailed from South Korea's Naval Special Brigade. The drill was part of Foal Eagle 2012, a multinational, joint-service exercise. It was also a model for -- and one small part of -- a much publicized U.S. military "pivot" from the Greater Middle East to Asia, a move that includes sending an initial contingent of 250 Marines to Darwin, Australia, basing littoral combat ships in Singapore, strengthening military ties with Vietnam and India, staging war games in the Philippines (as well as a drone strike there), and shifting the majority of the Navy's ships to the Pacific by the end of the decade.

That modest training exercise also reflected another kind of pivot. The face of American-style war-fighting is once again changing. Forget full-scale invasions and large-footprint occupations on the Eurasian mainland; instead, think: special operations forces working on their own but also training or fighting beside allied militaries (if not outright proxy armies) in hot spots around the world. And along with those special ops advisors, trainers, and commandos expect ever more funds and efforts to flow into the militarization of spying and intelligence, the use of drone aircraft, the launching of cyber-attacks, and joint Pentagon operations with increasingly militarized "civilian" government agencies.

Much of this has been noted in the media, but how it all fits together into what could be called the new global face of empire has escaped attention. And yet this represents nothing short of a new Obama doctrine, a six-point program for twenty-first-century war, American-style, that the administration is now carefully developing and honing. Its global scope is already breathtaking, if little recognized, and like Donald Rumsfeld's military lite and David Petraeus's counterinsurgency operations, it is evidently going to have its day in the sun -- and like them, it will undoubtedly disappoint in ways that will surprise its creators.

The Blur-ness

For many years, the U.S. military has been talking up and promoting the concept of "jointness." An Army helicopter landing Navy SEALs on a Korean ship catches some of this ethos at the tactical level. But the future, it seems, has something else in store. Think of it as "blur-ness," a kind of organizational version of war-fighting in which a dominant Pentagon fuses its forces with other government agencies -- especially the CIA, the State Department, and the Drug Enforcement Administration -- in complex, overlapping missions around the globe.

In 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld began his "revolution in military affairs," steering the Pentagon toward a military-lite model of high-tech, agile forces. The concept came to a grim end in Iraq's embattled cities. A decade later, the last vestiges of its many failures continue to play out in a stalemated war in Afghanistan against a rag-tag minority insurgency that can't be beaten. In the years since, two secretaries of defense and a new president have presided over another transformation -- this one geared toward avoiding ruinous, large-scale land wars which the U.S. has consistently proven unable to win.

Under President Obama, the U.S. has expanded or launched numerous military campaigns -- most of them utilizing a mix of the six elements of twenty-first-century American war. Take the American war in Pakistan -- a poster-child for what might now be called the Obama formula, if not doctrine. Beginning as a highly-circumscribed drone assassination campaign backed by limited cross-border commando raids under the Bush administration, U.S. operations in Pakistan have expanded into something close to a full-scale robotic air war, complemented by cross-border helicopter attacks, CIA-funded "kill teams" of Afghan proxy forces, as well as boots-on-the-ground missions by elite special operations forces, including the SEAL raid that killed Osama bin Laden.

The CIA has conducted clandestine intelligence and surveillance missions in Pakistan, too, though its role may, in the future, be less important, thanks to Pentagon mission creep. In April, in fact, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced the creation of a new CIA-like espionage agency within the Pentagon called the Defense Clandestine Service. According to the Washington Post, its aim is to expand "the military's espionage efforts beyond war zones."

Over the last decade, the very notion of war zones has become remarkably muddled, mirroring the blurring of the missions and activities of the CIA and Pentagon. Analyzing the new agency and the "broader convergence trend" between Department of Defense and CIA missions, the Post noted that the "blurring is also evident in the

organizations' upper ranks. Panetta previously served as CIA director, and that post is currently held by retired four-star Army Gen. David H. Petraeus."

Not to be outdone, last year the State Department, once the seat of diplomacy, continued on its long march to militarization (and marginalization) when it agreed to pool some of its resources with the Pentagon to create the Global Security Contingency Fund. That program will allow the Defense Department even greater say in how aid from Washington will flow to proxy forces in places like Yemen and the Horn of Africa.

One thing is certain: American war-making (along with its spies and its diplomats) is heading ever deeper into "the shadows." Expect yet more clandestine operations in ever more places with, of course, ever more potential for blowback in the years ahead.

Shedding Light on "the Dark Continent"

One locale likely to see an influx of Pentagon spies in the coming years is Africa. Under President Obama, operations on the continent have accelerated far beyond the more limited interventions of the Bush years. Last year's war in Libya; a regional drone campaign with missions run out of airports and bases in Djibouti, Ethiopia, and the Indian Ocean archipelago nation of Seychelles; a flotilla of 30 ships in that ocean supporting regional operations; a multi-pronged military and CIA campaign against militants in Somalia, including intelligence operations, training for Somali agents, secret prisons, helicopter attacks, and U.S. commando raids; a massive influx of cash for counterterrorism operations across East Africa; a possible old-fashioned air war, carried out on the sly in the region using manned aircraft; tens of millions of dollars in arms for allied mercenaries and African troops; and a special ops expeditionary force (bolstered by State Department experts) dispatched to help capture or kill Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony and his senior commanders, operating in Uganda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic (where U.S. Special Forces now have a new base) only begins to scratch the surface of Washington's fast-expanding plans and activities in the region.

Even less well known are other U.S. military efforts designed to train African forces for operations now considered integral to American interests on the continent. These include, for example, a mission by elite Force Recon Marines from the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force 12 (SPMAGTF-12) to train soldiers from the Uganda People's Defense Force, which supplies the majority of troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Earlier this year, Marines from SPMAGTF-12 also trained soldiers from the Burundi National Defense Force, the second-largest contingent in Somalia; sent trainers into Djibouti (where the U.S. already maintains a major Horn of Africa base at Camp Lemonier); and traveled to Liberia where they focused on teaching riot-control techniques to Liberia's military as part of an otherwise State Department spearheaded effort to rebuild that force.

The U.S. is also conducting counterterrorism training and equipping militaries in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Niger, and Tunisia. In addition, U.S. Africa Command (Africom) has 14 major joint-training exercises planned for 2012, including operations in Morocco, Cameroon, Gabon, Botswana, South Africa, Lesotho, Senegal, and what may become the Pakistan of Africa, Nigeria.

Even this, however, doesn't encompass the full breadth of U.S. training and advising missions in Africa. To take an example not on Africom's list, this spring the U.S. brought together 11 nations, including Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Liberia, Mauritania, and Sierra Leone to take part in a maritime training exercise code-named Saharan Express 2012.

Back in the Backyard

Since its founding, the United States has often meddled close to home, treating the Caribbean as its private lake and intervening at will throughout Latin America. During the Bush years, with some notable exceptions, Washington's interest in America's "backyard" took a backseat to wars farther from home. Recently, however, the Obama administration has been ramping up operations south of the border using its new formula. This has meant Pentagon drone missions deep inside Mexico to aid that country's battle against the drug cartels, while CIA agents and civilian operatives from the Department of Defense were dispatched to Mexican military bases to take part in the country's drug war.

In 2012, the Pentagon has also ramped up its anti-drug operations in Honduras. Working out of Forward Operating Base Mocomon and other remote camps there, the U.S. military is supporting Honduran operations by way of the methods it honed in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, U.S. forces have taken part in joint operations with Honduran troops as part of a training mission dubbed Beyond the Horizon 2012; Green Berets have been assisting Honduran Special Operations forces in anti-smuggling operations; and a Drug Enforcement Administration Foreign-deployed Advisory Support Team, originally created to disrupt the poppy trade in Afghanistan, has joined forces with Honduras's Tactical Response Team, that country's most elite counternarcotics unit. A glimpse of these operations made the news recently when DEA agents, flying in an American helicopter, were involved in an aerial attack on civilians that killed two men and two pregnant women in the remote Mosquito Coast region.

Less visible have been U.S. efforts in Guyana, where Special Operation Forces have been training local troops in heliborne air assault techniques. "This is the first time we have had this type of exercise involving Special Operations Forces of the United States on such a grand scale," Colonel Bruce Lovell of the Guyana Defense Force told a U.S. public affairs official earlier this year. "It gives us a chance to validate ourselves and see where we are, what are our shortcomings."

The U.S. military has been similarly active elsewhere in Latin America, concluding training exercises in Guatemala, sponsoring "partnership-building" missions in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Peru, and Panama, and reaching an agreement to carry out 19 "activities" with the Colombian army over the next year, including joint military exercises.

Still in the Middle of the Middle East

Despite the end of the Iraq and Libyan wars, a coming drawdown of forces in Afghanistan, and copious public announcements about its national security pivot toward Asia, Washington is by no means withdrawing from the Greater Middle East. In addition to continuing operations in Afghanistan, the U.S. has consistently been at work training allied troops, building up military bases, and brokering weapons sales and arms transfers to despots in the region from Bahrain to Yemen.

In fact, Yemen, like its neighbor, Somalia, across the Gulf of Aden, has become a laboratory for Obama's wars. There, the U.S. is carrying out its signature new brand of warfare with "black ops" troops like the SEALs and the Army's Delta Force undoubtedly conducting kill/capture missions, while "white" forces like the Green Berets and Rangers are training indigenous troops, and robot planes hunt and kill members of al-Qaeda and its affiliates, possibly assisted by an even more secret contingent of manned aircraft.

The Middle East has also become the somewhat unlikely poster-region for another emerging facet of the Obama doctrine: cyberwar efforts. In a category-blurring speaking engagement, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton surfaced at the recent Special Operations Forces Industry Conference in Florida where she gave a speech talking up her department's eagerness to join in the new American way of war. "We need Special Operations Forces who are as comfortable drinking tea with tribal leaders as raiding a terrorist compound," she told the crowd. "We also need diplomats and development experts who are up to the job of being your partners."

Clinton then took the opportunity to tout her agency's online efforts, aimed at websites used by al-Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen. When al-Qaeda recruitment messages appeared on the latter, she said, "our team plastered the same sites with altered versions... that showed the toll al-Qaeda attacks have taken on the Yemeni people." She further noted that this information-warfare mission was carried out by experts at State's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications with assistance, not surprisingly, from the military and the U.S. Intelligence Community.

These modest on-line efforts join more potent methods of cyberwar being employed by the Pentagon and the CIA, including the recently revealed "Olympic Games," a program of sophisticated attacks on computers in Iran's nuclear enrichment facilities engineered and unleashed by the National Security Agency (NSA) and Unit 8200, Israeli's equivalent of the NSA. As with other facets of the new way of war, these efforts were begun under the Bush administration but significantly accelerated under the current president, who became the first American commander-in-chief to order sustained cyberattacks designed to cripple another country's infrastructure.

From Brushfires to Wildfires

Across the globe from Central and South America to Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, the Obama administration is working out its formula for a new American way of war. In its pursuit, the Pentagon and its increasingly militarized government partners are drawing on everything from classic precepts of colonial warfare to the latest technologies.

The United States is an imperial power chastened by more than 10 years of failed, heavy-footprint wars. It is hobbled by a hollowing-out economy, and inundated with hundreds of thousands of recent veterans -- a staggering 45% of the troops who fought in Afghanistan and Iraq -- suffering from service-related disabilities who will require ever more expensive care. No wonder the current combination of special ops, drones, spy games, civilian soldiers, cyberwarfare, and proxy fighters sounds like a safer, saner brand of war-fighting. At first blush, it may even look like a panacea for America's national security ills. In reality, it may be anything but.

The new light-footprint Obama doctrine actually seems to be making war an ever more attractive and seemingly easy option -- a point emphasized recently by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace. "I worry about speed making it too easy to employ force," said Pace when asked about recent efforts to make it simpler to deploy Special Operations Forces abroad. "I worry about speed making it too easy to take the easy answer -- let's go whack them with special operations -- as opposed to perhaps a more laborious answer for perhaps a better long-term solution."

As a result, the new American way of war holds great potential for unforeseen entanglements and serial blowback. Starting or fanning brushfire wars on several continents could lead to raging wildfires that spread unpredictably and prove difficult, if not impossible, to quench.

By their very nature, small military engagements tend to get larger, and wars tend to spread beyond borders. By definition, military action tends to have unforeseen consequences. Those who doubt this need only look back to 2001, when three low-tech attacks on a single day set in motion a decade-plus of war that has spread across the globe. The response to that one day began with a war in Afghanistan, that spread to Pakistan, detoured to Iraq, popped up in Somalia and Yemen, and so on. Today, veterans of those Ur-interventions find themselves trying to replicate their dubious successes in places like Mexico and Honduras, the Central Africa Republic and the Congo.

History demonstrates that the U.S. is not very good at winning wars, having gone without victory in any major conflict since 1945. Smaller interventions have been a mixed bag with modest victories in places like Panama and Grenada and ignominious outcomes in Lebanon (in the 1980s) and Somalia (in the 1990s), to name a few.

The trouble is, it's hard to tell what an intervention will grow up to be -- until it's too late. While they followed different paths, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq all began relatively small, before growing large and ruinous. Already, the outlook for the new Obama doctrine seems far from rosy, despite the good press it's getting inside Washington's Beltway.

What looks today like a formula for easy power projection that will further U.S. imperial interests on the cheap could soon prove to be an unmitigated disaster -- one that likely won't be apparent until it's too late.

(Nick Turse is the associate editor of TomDispatch.com. An award-winning journalist, his work has appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Nation*, and regularly at TomDispatch. He is the author/editor of several books, including the just published *Terminator Planet: The First History of Drone Warfare, 2001-2050* (with Tom Engelhardt). This piece is the latest article in his new series on the changing face of American empire, which is being underwritten by Lannan Foundation.)

[20120621-16](#)

18:06 Art

Re: "The New Obama Doctrine, A Six-Point Plan for Global War" (reply to Dennis, above)

I'll look over in more detail tomorrow, but maybe actually not a bad plan, in view of the times.

I did not have kids so have not had to pay a lot of attention to the public school system since my own High School days. What I remember is mostly pretty good teachers who I thought offered a pretty good range of education and overall helped me move ahead.

I sense that may have changed somewhat. What do we need to do? I sometimes think teachers may have become more babysitters than purveyors of education. Do we need to somehow segregate the schools into those who want to learn and those that don't seem to care? Do we need to run annual institutional knowledge quality tests for teachers?

FYI the Army went through some similar soul searching back in the late 70s when we realized we were not anywhere near all we could be. We shook up the whole system, got rid of the one year ticket punch command concept, developed the National Training Center, and finally got real about what being good really meant. By the time Desert Storm kicked off we had completely turned things around, so it can be done.

I send this to you who teach or have taught. If you were King or Queen of Education, what would you do?

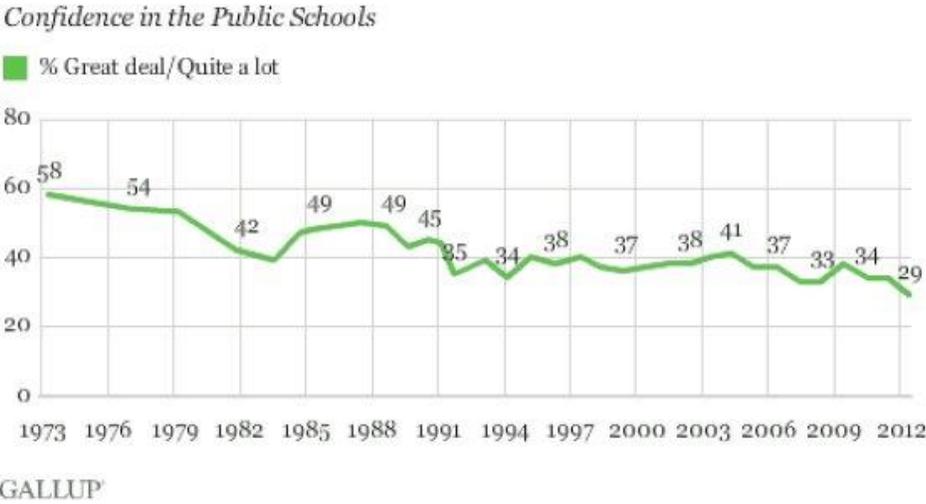
"Gallup Poll: Confidence in America's Public Schools Hits Record Low" by Huffington Post

June 20, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/20/confidence-in-americas-pu_n_1612943.html)

Confidence in America's public schools has hit a record low, with only 29 percent of respondents expressing "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in them, according to results from a recent Gallup poll.

The number is down 5 percentage points from last year, and represents a 4 percent decrease from the previous low of 33 percent in 2007 and 2008.

Public schools rank eighth -- tied with the criminal justice system -- among 16 confidence categories that Gallup studies. Its position is unchanged from last year, and once again follows the presidency and U.S. Supreme Court, and ranks ahead of newspapers.



Out of all the categories, the sharpest declines were for public schools, television news and organized religion. All three are at least 10 points lower than their historical average ratings, which are based on all measurements of each institution since 1973.

Confidence in public schools remained fairly consistent across gender and age group, according to Gallup's data. Twenty-six percent of white respondents indicated that they had a "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the institution, compared to 36 percent of non-whites.

Those surveyed who graduated college were as confident in the public school system as those with a high school diploma or less. Respondents who possessed some college education but did not earn a degree were about 10 points less optimistic.

Of those who self-identified as Democrats, 36 percent expressed confidence in America's school system, while only 21 percent of Republicans did so.

Gallup surveyed a random sample of 1,004 adults aged 18 and older representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

This faltering confidence in America's public school system follows a year of budget cuts across the country that have forced the elimination of jobs in the education sector, student transportation and after-school programs. Parents nationwide have also been vocal in expressing their frustration with excessive standardized testing and "teaching to the test."

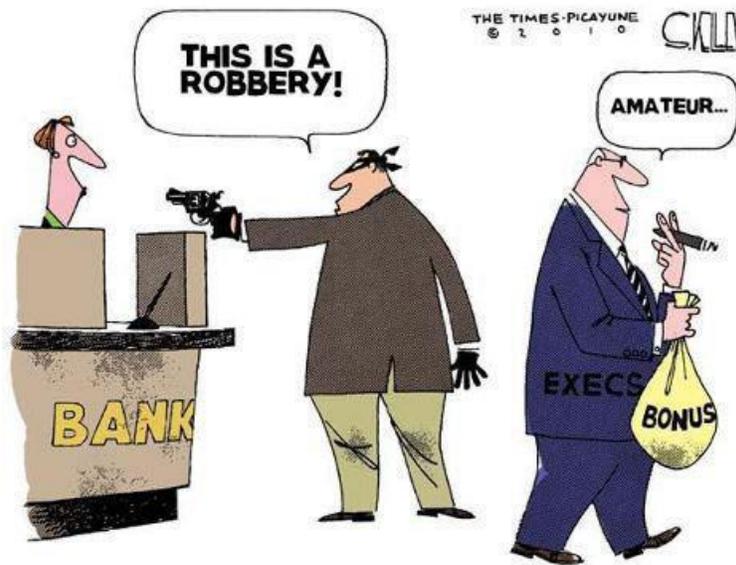
[Great graph! Art, isn't this part of the Republican plan—to destroy education so their politicians can have more uneducated voters to swallow their lies? And much easier than actual destroying is destroying the reputation of. Republicans have been doing that to public schools, teachers, curricula, and teachers organizations for many years now. Over time, the lies have their effect, teachers become demoralized, especially with little in the way of compensation, and schools go downhill. Lies work over time! But, believe me, there's nothing wrong with our schools that returning the money taken away and making public education a top priority wouldn't fix. Republicans lack the will to even contribute to public education, it seem to me, let alone properly fund it. F*ck the kids and their/our future! –SteveB]

[20120621-18](#) 20:45 Pam Re: "Gallup Poll: Confidence in America's Public Schools Hits Record Low" (reply to Art, above)

What a challenge! I shall do my best to rise to the occasion. More to follow....

[20120621-20](#) 23:57 Anne Signs of the Times, Part 8





<http://militarytimes.com/blogs/scoopdeck/category/ordnance/>



—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

original material ©2012 Steven W. Baker, all rights reserved