



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE **NEWSLETTER #192 — JULY 30, 2012**

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Krauthammer: 'Unbelievable...Beyond Human Understanding...Incomprehensible'

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, July 30, 2012)

His campaign keeps telling us that all R0mney wants to talk about is the economy (though he doesn't seem to want to talk about actual, concrete economic proposals), but, instead, it turns-out R0mney wants to dip his big toe into foreign policy.

He seems a lot like 2008 to me. The closer it gets to the election, the more the Republican candidate, McCain or Romney, appears like he has decided he doesn't want to be President after all, so he starts sabotaging his own campaign, perhaps subconsciously. R0mney only seems to think that he deserves to be President. Like Sarah Palin, he's not about to lift a finger to actually study what you might have to know to be President of the most powerful nation on Earth.



Clueless arrogant elitist!

I believe President Obama has done that studying conscientiously. It's just about the minimum I expect of a Presidential candidate. Who in his right mind would want to face the world with a President who innately feels the rest of the world is sh*t and not worth knowing about? What a recipe for another disaster of the W type!

And Republicans claim foreign policy as a stong suit? "Unbelievable... beyond human understanding... incomprehensible."

"Romney's World" by Fred Kaplan, Slate

July 27, 2012,

(http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/war_stories/2012/07/mitt_romney_s_insults_and_mistakes_while_at_the_london_olympics_aren_t_gaffes_as_much_as_a_fair_representation_of_his_worldview_.html)

(Mitt's insults, mistakes, and blunders abroad aren't gaffes. They actually represent his true worldview.)

Mitt Romney's not-so-excellent adventure abroad ("Romneyshambles," the Brits are calling it) has been many things: shabby, hilarious, scandalous, an enlivening hoot to a dreary election season. One thing it shouldn't be, though, is surprising.

Charles Krauthammer, the right-wing commentator who usually finds every excuse to attack Barack Obama—he took Obama's blinking during a tête-à-tête with Vladimir Putin as a sign of appeasement—pronounced himself befuddled by the GOP candidate's flare of incompetence.

These sorts of trips, Krauthammer said on Fox News Thursday night, are easy. You express solidarity with the allies, listen, nod your head, and say nice things or nothing at all. Instead, Romney questioned his hosts' ability to run the Olympics, raised doubts about Londoners' community spirit, and violated protocol by publicly mentioning a meeting with the head of MI-6. "It's unbelievable, it's beyond human understanding, it's incomprehensible," Krauthammer, normally a paragon of self-confidence, sputtered. "I'm out of adjectives ... I don't get it."

The thing that Krauthammer doesn't get is that Romney is not the sort of businessman—that his brand of capitalism is not the sort of enterprise—that requires even the most elementary understanding of diplomacy, courtesy, or sensitivity to other people's values, lives, or perceptions.

[This is exactly why being a businessman is not much preparation for the White House, perhaps to the same degree as being a prisoner of war or the governor of Alaska. —SteveB]

The American capitalists-turned-statesmen of an earlier generation—Douglas Dillon, Averell Harriman, Robert Lovett, John McCloy, Dean Acheson, Paul Nitze—took risks, built institutions, helped rebuild postwar Europe, befriended their foreign counterparts: in short, they cultivated an internationalist sensibility at their core. Whatever you think of their politics or Cold War policies generally (and there is much to criticize), financiers formed an American political elite in that era because finance (through the Marshall Plan, the World Bank, the IMF, and so forth) was so often the vehicle of American expansionism.

By contrast, private-equity firms, such as Bain Capital, where Romney made his fortune, tend to view their client companies as cash cows, susceptible to cookie-cutter formulas from which the firms' partners reap lavish fees, almost regardless of the outcome. Their ends and means breed an insularity, a sense of entitlement, a disposition to view all the world's entities through a single prism and to appraise them along a single scale.

How Romney should have behaved in London may have been obvious to Charles Krauthammer, who studies politics; it would have been obvious to politically ambitious businessmen from more traditional lines of work or from an earlier era. But as we have been graced to see this week, it is not necessarily obvious to Romney himself.

Already, Romney's surrogates back home are spinning with frantic intensity. In the face of merrily savage media coverage of the candidate's remarks and British officials' rejoinders, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal said, with as

much nonchalance as he could muster, "The reality is, we're not worried about overseas headlines ... I think the focus needs to continue to be on what's happening here at home. That's what's important to voters."

This may be, but why then did Romney go abroad in the first place? It wasn't to watch his wife's horse trot and dance in the Olympics' dressage competition (as he scoffed in another head-shaking remark, certain to anger a large number of wives who feel their husbands don't take their interests seriously). The intent, obviously, was to demonstrate his comfort and capabilities on the world scene—a demonstration that, at least so far, has gone about as well as North Korea's last few missile tests. And London, his first stop, was supposed to be the easy part of the trip, the place where the white, patrician candidate could forge bonds through, as one of his spokesmen put it, their common "Anglo-Saxon heritage."

Not only did Romney fail at that no-brainer, he also put a foot through stateside customs. Before leaving on his overseas tour, he said that he would not criticize the current president on foreign soil, a long-standing, universally respected tradition in American politics. But then he spoke at an exclusive, closed-door fundraising dinner (tickets went for \$50,000 to \$70,000 apiece) sponsored by Barclays bank, which is currently in the middle of a whopping financial crisis. Eleven members of Parliament wrote a letter to the bank's board members, demanding that they stop swelling Romney's war chest and instead focus on repairing their own problems. Will Americans express outrage at this whiff of foreign influence? Obama catches hell when he raises money from Hollywood movie stars. What would happen if he flew to London or Paris and raised money from European movie stars (who don't have as much influence as, say, European bankers).

Had Romney's handlers dipped into their candidate's biography, they might have put the kibosh on this trip from the get-go. Joshua Keating, a blogger at *Foreign Policy*, dug up the following passage from Romney's 2010 book, *No Apology: The Case for American Greatness*:

England is just a small island. Its roads and houses are small. With few exceptions, it doesn't make things that people in the rest of the world want to buy. And if it hadn't been separated from the continent by water, it almost certainly would have been lost to Hitler's ambitions.

Nice. Anglo-Saxon heritage indeed. Presidential material? Get serious.

"Why Romney Is a Foreign Policy Lightweight" by Fred Kaplan, Slate

June 29, 2012,

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/war_stories/2012/06/mitt_romney_s_foreign_policy_ideas_can_t_be_taken_seriously_.html

(His ideas range from vague to ill-informed to downright dangerous.)

Conventional wisdom holds that U.S. presidential elections do not hinge on foreign policy. On this point, conventional wisdom is almost certainly correct. But it shouldn't be, for two reasons. First, foreign policy is the one realm in which presidents can do pretty much what they want. (Congress may rant at some action but rarely halts it.) Second, in this election in particular, Mitt Romney's statements on foreign policy range from vague to ill-informed to downright dangerous.

Does Romney believe the things that he's said about arms control, Russia, the Middle East, the defense budget, and the rest? Who can say? He has no experience on any of these issues. But his advisers do; they represent, mainly, the Dick Cheney wing of the Republican Party (some, notably John Bolton, veer well to the right of even that). While not all presidents wind up following their advisers, Romney has placed his byline atop some of his coterie's most egregious arguments—not least, several op-ed pieces against President Obama's New START with Russia, pieces that rank as the most ignorant I've read in nearly 40 years of following the nuclear debate.

But let's begin with an instance of Romney's own judgment—his remark, during a May 31 interview with CBS News, that Obama's foreign policy deserves a grade of F, "across the board."

He allowed that the raid on Osama Bin Laden's compound was commendable (one would think that even the most demanding teacher would, on that action alone, give the president a passing mark) but added:

I'd look at the fact that [Obama] was looking to have a force of American troops staying in Iraq, securing what had been so hard won there, and with the Status of Forces Agreement. He failed to achieve it. ... In the Middle East, the Arab Spring has become the Arab Winter. That's hardly a success. As I look around the world, I have to believe his positions in foreign policy have not communicated American strength and resolve.

Let's take these examples one by one.

On Iraq, several Republicans have accused Obama of muffing negotiations with Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki, claiming that they were on the verge of striking a deal that allowed the United States to keep a few thousand—some say, several thousand—troops in the country even after the withdrawal of U.S. combat brigades. This is nonsense. It's worth recalling that it was President George W. Bush's administration that negotiated the 2008 Status of Forces Agreement, which required the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces by the end of 2011. As the date drew near, and as Obama's own officials (among them, a few Bush holdovers) negotiated the final details, there were discussions about leaving some American troops behind; Obama was fine with the idea if the Iraqi government wanted them. The obstacle was that the Iraqi government didn't want them. End of story. Romney does not explain how he would have rammed the troops down the Iraqis' throats, or whether that's something we should do with a sovereign ally.

As for the "Arab spring" devolving into an "Arab winter," the jury, as they say, is still out. But a few facts are paramount. First, "Arab spring" was always a misnomer. Marc Lynch, the scholar who coined the phrase, has expressed regrets, and now refers to it, in the title of his very good book, as, more neutrally, *The Arab Uprising*. By the same token, "Arab winter" goes too far in the opposite direction. Tunisia, where it all began, shows signs of promise. The Egyptian elections may not have gone ideally, by the measure of U.S. or Israeli interests, but they were free and fair elections; a democracy of sorts is coalescing, even though the military council still exercises great power (no surprise, since the revolution's first success, the ouster of Hosni Mubarak, was in fact brought about through a military coup).

In any case, Romney does not explain what he would have done differently in Obama's place. Would he have stood shoulder to shoulder with our old ally, Mubarak? (That would have served America's image very badly and wouldn't have saved Mubarak's hide in the end.) Would he have poured billions of dollars in aid and investment into Egypt at the first sign of Mubarak's fall? (Extremely doubtful.) Would he have demanded that the military turn over power more completely to the parliament? (If so, how?)

This gets to the main point: Romney doesn't seem to understand—nor do some of his advisers—the extent to which the world has changed since the end of the Cold War. International politics were never as cut and dried as that era's image suggested—two superpowers, each dominating its sphere of the globe and competing for influence at the margins of the other's domain.

Still, the superpowers did tend to view the politics of "strategic regions" in that broader framework, and the leaders within those regions often acceded to the interests of one superpower, in order to stave off the other, or tried to play the two off each other.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, and with it the demise of the Cold War system, this wedge of entry is no longer open. This is not to say that the United States is a "declining power." By every *traditional measure* of national power, the United States still dominates the rest of the world. But because the world has changed, those measures no longer translate so directly into influence. Or, to put it another way, the rules of the game, the dimensions of the playing field, have changed. The tokens of strength in the old game don't have the same potency in the new one.

Obama seems to understand this (though, for obvious political reasons, he can't say so directly); Romney and his people seem not to. In April, one of Romney's top surrogates, former Navy Secretary John Lehman, told reporters

that Obama was “withdrawing in leading the free world,” leaving us open to “huge new vulnerabilities.” Asked to cite an example, Lehman said, “We are seeing the Soviets pushing into the Arctic with no response from us.”

In one sense, the “mis-speak” (“Soviets” instead of “Russians”) can be forgiven; those of us who came of age during the Cold War have lingering attachments to its vocabulary. (In recent years, I have blithely referred to “West Germany” a few times in conversation, once in print.) But in this case, the anachronism reflects a mentality. Lehman and those of his ilk continue to view not just Russia but world politics as if the Soviet Union still existed. (What is he talking about, for instance, with this business of Russians or Soviets “pushing into the Arctic with no response from us”—how are they “pushing,” and what “response” is warranted?) World politics is no longer bipolar; the game of moves and countermoves is no longer zero-sum. Abrogating a particular playing field doesn’t necessarily mean a defeat for us or a victory for ... whomever the “other” might be.

Which leads to Romney’s final complaint: that Obama’s foreign policies “have not communicated American strength and resolve.” It’s not clear what Romney means by this; he cites no examples. The one case in which he had to concede Obama did well—ordering the killing of Bin Laden—certainly communicates more strength and resolve than anything Bush did on that front. To the extent America’s image has been tarnished under Obama’s presidency, the main reason has to do with what some see as an excess of “strength and resolve”—the quintupling of drone attacks launched against targets in Pakistan, Sudan, and Somalia under Bush.

Which leads to some questions: What is Romney’s position on drone strikes? What’s his position on Afghanistan? During the Republican debates, he once said that his position was not to negotiate with the Taliban but to defeat them. What does that mean? Does he want to keep tens of thousands of U.S. troops there after NATO’s 2014 deadline? To what end? Doing what? He also once said that military spending should consume at least 4 percent of gross domestic product. Obama’s most recent military budget (\$525 billion, not counting the cost of the war in Afghanistan) amounts to 3 percent. So Romney intends to raise the budget by one-third, or by about \$175 billion a year—by more than \$1 trillion in the next six years. Where is he going to get the money? What’s he going to spend it on? No details. None.

Is Romney an extremist? Or, in keeping with the GOP approach to politics in general these days, has he simply calculated that it’s best not to agree with Obama on *anything*? Either way, one thing is clear: He is not a serious man.



The Romney family misspells their own name. Freudian slip? (Thanks, SteveG!)

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20120727-01	09:40	SteveG	Fw: CREDO Action Petition: Tell Trader Joe's to Take a Stand for Safe Food
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[Note: Truly safe food would mandate irradiating it. The left seeks half-way measures which are better than none, but it's interesting that science is ignored so conveniently by the Right and the Left. And the price of beef will rise, hurting, especially, the poorest among us. The conundrum of caring. –SteveB]

from CREDO Action:

Earlier this month, medical researchers at the University of Montreal linked a difficult-to-treat bladder infection that affects millions of women a year with a form of antibiotic-resistant E. coli commonly found in chicken.¹

This is just one of a growing number of stories about the rise of antibiotic resistant superbugs making humans sick, which researchers are increasingly connecting with the rampant overuse of antibiotics in meat production.

This is an emergency situation. But federal regulators appear incapable of overcoming pressure from the Big Meat and pharmaceutical lobbies.

Trader Joe's has the power to help get antibiotics out of our food. It's time for major retailers like Trader Joe's to step up and help get antibiotics out of our food. Tell Trader Joe's: Stop selling meat raised with antibiotics! Click here to sign the petition:

http://act.credoaction.com/campaign/tjs_meat/.

CREDO is joining with Consumers Union² and other groups to call on Trader Joe's to sell only antibiotic-free meat because the company has shown a commitment to safe food in the past — including sourcing only non-GMO ingredients, and meat free of pink slime.

And because the company sells most of its products under its own label, Trader Joe's has direct control of its supply chain.

The company already sells some meat that does not contain antibiotics, but going all the way would create a powerful incentive for other retailers to follow suit, by meeting the strong consumer demand for meat raised without antibiotics.³

Tell Trader Joe's: Stop selling meat raised with antibiotics! Click here to automatically sign the petition.

Antibiotics are a crucial tool to cure illness for all of us. And whether or not you eat meat, we're all endangered by the antibiotic-resistant bacteria that continue emerging as a result of antibiotic overuse on factory farms. 80% of all antibiotics are currently fed to livestock — primarily as a growth stimulant and to compensate for filthy, cruel living conditions. That needs to stop.

More than 100,000 CREDO members submitted a public comment to the FDA earlier this month urging the agency to strengthen its voluntary and inadequate antibiotics standards.

While we wait for FDA's response, Trader Joe's can show its commitment to food safety, and start moving meat producers away from their dangerous use of antibiotics.

Click below to automatically sign the petition to Trader Joe's now:

http://act.credoaction.com/r/?r=6919616&p=tjs_meat&id=44073-3891339-q0JQqDx&t=10

Thank you for fighting for save and healthy food.

Elijah Zarlin, Campaign Manager

CREDO Action from Working Assets

¹"REPORT: Superbug Dangers in Chicken Linked to 8 Million At-Risk Women," ABC News, 7/11/12

²"Meat without drugs," Consumers Union

³"Poll: Americans Don't Want Antibiotics in Their Meat" Mother Jones, 6/21/12

[20120727-02](#)

10:13

SteveB

Fw: CREDO Action Action: Call Upon the Candidates to Ban Assault Weapons Now!

President Barack Obama — 202-456-1111

Governor Mitt Romney — 857-288-3500

Cool!

from CREDO Action:

Call President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney: Tell them to issue a joint call asking Congress to reinstate the expired federal assault weapons ban today.

Thank you for taking action in recent days to join the fight to ban assault weapons now. The response to our campaign so far has been amazing, as over 170,000 CREDO Action members have signed a petition calling on President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney to ask Congress to reinstate the expired federal assault weapons ban as soon as possible.

The pressure is working. After a White House spokesman suggested the president wouldn't press for new gun laws, the president is now hinting that he may lobby for reinstating the ban.¹ Let's keep this momentum going. We need to make sure the pressure on both President Obama and Governor Romney to lead on this issue does not go away. Call President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney: Tell them to issue a joint call asking Congress to reinstate the expired federal assault weapons ban today. Click here for a simple script and the number to call.

It's long past time for senseless gun violence to stop. Around 270 people are shot every day in America and nearly 100,000 each year.² Massacres on the scale of the tragedy in Aurora happen in part because our federal gun laws make it easy for civilians to obtain military-level firepower. We need to pass and enforce sensible federal gun laws restricting ready access to assault weapons by civilians. Reinstating a strong version of the federal ban on assault weapons known as the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act is where we should start.

We understand many things need to change in American culture to stop the next Aurora-like massacre. But we do know one thing we should put at the top of the list — keeping military-level assault weapons like the AR-15 with a high-capacity clips out of the hands of civilians. Let's keep the pressure to lead on both President Obama and Governor Romney.

Call President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney: Tell them to issue a joint call asking Congress to reinstate the expired federal assault weapons ban today. Click here for a simple script and the number to call:

http://www.credoaction.com/campaign/obama_romney_guns/?rc=homepage.

Thank you for speaking out. Becky Bond, Political Director, CREDO Action from Working Assets

¹Connor Simpson, "Obama Hints Towards Bringing Back Assault Weapons Ban," TheAtlanticWire.com, July 26, 2012.

²"Facts: Gun Violence," BradyCampaign.org.

20120727-03	10:39	SteveG	Video: Lewis Black on Campaign Lies
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Spend a few minutes listening to Lewis Black !!!!!!!

<http://front.moveon.org/hilarious-lewis-black-cuts-presidential-campaign-lies-up-and-spits-them-back-out/?rc=daily.share>

20120729-01	08:59	SteveB	Re: Video: Lewis Black on Campaign Lies (reply to SteveG, above)
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Lewis Black reminds me of me! Minus the funny part. That's scary!

20120729-02	09:56	Art	Re: Video: Lewis Black on Campaign Lies (reply to SteveB, above)
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Very much spot on though.

20120729-03	10:43	SteveG	Re: Video: Lewis Black on Campaign Lies (reply to Art & SteveB, above)
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As long as he doesn't have a stroke, Lewis is worth a listen.

20120729-04	11:29	SteveB	Re: Video: Lewis Black on Campaign Lies (reply to SteveG & Art, above)
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Ya, you always worry a little with Lewis that he's going to have a heart attack or his head explode.

Have always loved him ever since I first saw him on the old Daily Show with...the guy I thought (for a while) Jon Stewart would never be able to replace.

Lewis' theme song is also hard to beat! AC/DC!



There's really no hope, is there? As with everything else, money rules. I'm so naive I thought the NRA cared about the 2nd amendment. I should have realized it's the profits from massive gun sales that are their real passion. Why is this issue such a difficult one to get a handle on? We got the Civil Rights Act, an end to the prohibition against abortion, and one day soon gay marriage will be no big deal. I'd even bet we'll legalize marijuana eventually, but maybe the folks who make money from the drug trade don't want legalization. They make more money the way things are now. It's always about money; that's the real dangerous drug. (Not that I'm against money, just the extremes to which people will go to get it.)

Several good articles today in the *WP* on guns. Here's one of the best:

"Why Killing Is a Profitable Enterprise" by Michael F. McNulty, *The Washington Post*

July 27, 2012, (http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-killing-is-a-profitable-enterprise/2012/07/27/gJQAA3RnEX_story.html)

(Michael McNulty is an attorney in Tucson. He was chairman of the Giffords for Congress campaign in 2006, 2008 and 2010.)

It is easy to ignore the issue of gun control, given the perfect leaderlessness it enjoys in Congress. Then again, it becomes harder to ignore when your relatives or friends are murdered in the company of someone you idolize, which describes thousands of us in Tucson.

I have owned guns, continuously, since I was 6. I still own my grandfather's pump-action Winchester, carried for decades in a scabbard behind his saddle as he rode the range where he ranched, in Wikieup, Ariz. All the guns I've owned have been what are quaintly called long guns. I began my brief assault on local fauna at age 12, and I had "taken" four white-tailed deer, a couple of javelina and innumerable quail and dove by the time I got my driver's license at 16. A driver's license is a far greater liberator than a hunting license, and thereafter, trekking around in the wilderness killing things lost its luster. It has been decades since I engaged in those adventures.

There are, today, few who hunt with handguns or assault rifles equipped with 100-clip magazines. There are even fewer reasons to do so. But the National Rifle Association's principal focus has evolved mostly to those. It is news to no one that the NRA has abandoned the sportsman in every practical sense; if the group were honest, it would change its name. Speaking as a rifleman, I think it's an embarrassment.

The NRA not only dependably opposes limits on assault-rifle sales but even opposes reporting bulk sales of assault rifles. Last year, the NRA went to the mat to prevent anyone from cross-checking the names of those on the terrorist watch list against the names of those buying guns. These two actions clarify beyond argument that the safety and welfare of you and yours have simply dropped from the NRA's list of priorities. The NRA represents gun manufacturers, end of story.

Now, handguns excel at certain things. They are unequaled at killing people at close range: quite useful for law enforcement officers and drug dealers. They're genuine security in a drawer for those who have received unambiguous threats, like my friend Gabby Giffords. They're even a useful, if dubious, tool to defend yourself from murderers and rapists breaking in at 2 a.m. That hasn't happened to me in the past 60 years, but maybe your experience is different. NRA President Wayne LaPierre thinks it may happen to you tonight: If you search YouTube for "The NRA's Circus of Fear," you'll find a collection of LaPierre's reasons why he lives in fear, and his arguments as to why you should, too. Personally, I think that "living in fear" is inconsistent with being an American, and I'm not going to play.

But how else are the gun manufacturers going to "grow the market," to sell more than the 3 million handguns they already do per year? Fear is a great motivator; mass murder is great for the gun business.

Just days ago a dozen citizens were murdered and about five dozen plugged with slugs from a trinity of firearms. Setting aside the shotgun, it bears mentioning that the Glock and assault rifle James Holmes is suspected of firing in an Aurora, Colo., movie theater were being used for the purpose for which they were designed, manufactured and sold. But the gun makers have no product-liability litigation to worry about, because in 2005 Congress approved and President George W. Bush signed into law legislation providing immunity for gun manufacturers from the foreseeable consequence of building instruments of murder. Every year three times as many people are murdered with guns in the United States as were murdered on Sept. 11, 2001. But blessed be the gun makers, for they are pardoned in advance.

It strikes me that the NRA is pretty comfortable when debates over mass murder devolve into intellectual discussions relating to civility vs. demagoguery, insanity vs. impressionability, and freedom vs. the tyranny of gun zealots. The more abstract, the better. In the end, however, it's simple: The NRA shills for gun makers who profit from the murder of American citizens. If you think the country's policies are shaped by Judeo-Christian values, you're not paying attention.

20120729-09	13:05 SteveB	Re: "Why Killing Is a Profitable Enterprise" (reply to Art, above)
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I think it's great this is finally being talked about more openly...though few politicians would dare cross the NRA.

Citizens have a written right to guns. Citizens have a written right to life.

Where the two conflict, I say the lives of citizens trump the bullets of other citizens.

Shove it, NRA! Bang!

[20120729-11](#) 13:30 SteveG Re: "Why Killing Is a Profitable Enterprise" (reply to SteveB, above)

When the Constitution was written, were not "arms" basically muskets (pistols and rifles – each single shot) and cannons? I am not certain many families or people owned cannons, but there was a law for a while that everyone or every man should own a musket. How does the intent of the 2nd amendment written in the late 1700's get interpreted into 2012?

[20120729-12](#) 15:06 Pam Re: "Why Killing Is a Profitable Enterprise" (reply to Art, above)

Great article. Politicians are afraid of the NRA the way they used to fear J. Edgar Hoover. Just read an article on him in the NYRB about the stranglehold he had on American politics and politicians for decades. He wanted a national security state, and he pretty much had one. I didn't realize the extent to which he manipulated events and violated people's civil rights. He was a one-man national enforcer. I knew he was bad, but I hadn't realized just how bad. If that sort of thing can happen in America, anything can happen. Hoover had the goods on politicians, and they knew it, so they left him alone. What does the NRA have going for it? Money? Is that all? Some brave investigative journalist ought to dig into their finances and secrets. There's got to be something there.

[20120729-13](#) 17:30 Art Re: "Why Killing Is a Profitable Enterprise" (reply to Pam, above)

The issue is of course the NRA has manufactured this 2nd Amendment crap issue and gotten a large following of not very bright gun owners to buy into it. They further have adopted a clever position that any proposal to regulate some of the more ridiculous aspects of an armed citizenry such as 100 rd magazines for military type assault rifles represents the first step "TO TAKE AWAY ALL OUR GUNS!!!!!!" Any political leader who proposes even the most normally logical approach to some of this excess is threatened with political defeat by an almost zombie like gun owning electorate. These are the same type people who support Norquest and his tax pledge. Both positions are completely idiotic and do not speak well for the intelligence of the electorate but there you have it. Stupidity rules and we keep killing around 10,000 a year with guns. We deserve what we get.

[20120729-15](#) 17:36 Beth Re: "Why Killing Is a Profitable Enterprise" (reply to Pam, above)

I googled NRA and found an article in the *SF Chronicle* that details the hard right turn the organization took about the time Reagan was elected.

[20120729-16](#) 17:43 Art "Scalia Suggests 'Hand-Held Rocket Launchers' Are Protected Under Second Amendment"

Just when we thought it couldn't get worse. Remember this is a Supreme Court Justice.

"Scalia Suggests 'Hand-Held Rocket Launchers' Are Protected Under Second Amendment" by Zack Ford, ThinkProgress

July 29, 2012, (<http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2012/07/29/602491/scalia-rocket-launcher/?mobile=nc>)

This morning on Fox News Sunday, Justice Antonin Scalia reiterated just how extremely his Constitutional originalism can be applied. Referring to the recent shooting in Aurora, CO, host Chris Wallace asked the Supreme Court Justice about gun control, and whether the Second Amendment allows for any limitations to gun rights. Scalia admitted there could be, such as "frighting" (carrying a big ax just to scare people), but they would still have to be determined with an 18th-Century perspective in mind. According to his originalism, if a weapon can be hand-held, though, it probably still falls under the right o "bear arms":

WALLACE: What about... a weapon that can fire a hundred shots in a minute?

SCALIA: We'll see. Obviously the Amendment does not apply to arms that cannot be hand-carried — it's to keep and "bear," so it doesn't apply to cannons — but I suppose here are hand-held rocket launchers that can bring down airplanes, that will have to be decided.

WALLACE: How do you decide that if you're a textualist?

SCALIA: Very carefully.

Scalia's across-the-board defense of weapon-carrying laws is not new, having been at the heart of his majority opinion in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, which protected an individual's right to possess firearms. However, his nonchalant suggestion that private citizens could legally carry rocket launchers so long as they're "hand-held" suggests just how willing he is to protect an armed nation.

Such originalism is a dangerous distortion of 21st-Century reality. There is no conceivable way to apply the Founding Fathers' understanding of a "well-regulated militia" armed with slow-to-load, hard-to-aim muskets to today's weapon technology. Arguably, the full extent of alleged gunman James Holmes' munitions could have easily decimated an entire brigade of musketeers before they'd even loaded their first ball.

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2tQjaK0HfU&feature=player_embedded.

[I'd have to say that, based on my reading of the Constitution and why we have the Second Amendment (so citizens can revolt, essentially), I'd say Scalia is probably correct. Our Constitution badly needs amending. —SteveB]

20120729-20	19:18 Pam	Re: "Scalia Suggests 'Hand-Held Rocket Launchers' Are Protected Under Second Amendment" (reply to Art, above)
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Scalia and Thomas. One is stupid (!), the other evil (!!). What I still don't understand is WHY?!!! When folks put ideas above people, I get very, very nervous. Absolutism is a death grip, and rigid adherence to principle, despite obvious mitigating circumstances, is contemptible. Stalin was crazy. What's the SC's excuse?

20120727-06	13:50 Pam	No 'College Democrats' at DePauw
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I just got a message from DePauw announcing their new presence on Facebook. I looked at the site and noticed that listed under campus organizations they have College Republicans, but no College Democrats. Some things never change.

20120727-09	15:30 SteveG	Re: No 'College Democrats' at DePauw (reply to Pam, above)
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I did send them a message through Facebook asking if they had a Young democrat group on campus. Will be interesting to see what they say.

20120729-05	11:53 SteveB	Re: No 'College Democrats' at DePauw (reply to Pam & SteveG, above)
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Wouldn't the Young Socialist Club count?

Or maybe they have a Young Communist Club?

Maybe the Obama Wannabees of DePauw University?

Perhaps an organization with another name? I thought the university system existed solely to indoctrinate the future intelligencia in Karl Marx, especially at the liberal bastions like DePauw and Wabash? Where are the commies?

20120729-06 12:02 Pam Re: No 'College Democrats' at DePauw (reply to SteveG & SteveB, above)

Admittedly, it's been a while (quite a while), but when I was at DePauw it was pretty conservative. The 'sixties arrived after I graduated in '67. It was still 1955 when I was a student. All my sorority sisters were Goldwater fans, and the troubled California campuses seemed a world away, as did Viet Nam war protests. I felt like a duck amongst swans.

Speaking of the liberal professoriate, I read an article yesterday that referred to universities as bastions of liberalism, as opposed to the rest of society. Maybe. Here in the South, not so much. As a bona fide liberal, I feel outnumbered sometimes and heave a sigh of relief when I encounter a fellow progressive. Mostly, I keep my mouth shut, unless I'm writing to you guys. I think it's pretty funny, actually, that professors are depicted as pointy-headed liberals. Maybe in New England and California, but not where I live. IMHO.

I do think most would support equal marriage rights--most, but not all.

20120729-07 12:23 Art Re: No 'College Democrats' at DePauw (reply to Pam, above)

Commie pinkos.

20120729-10 13:25 SteveG Re: No 'College Democrats' at DePauw (reply to Pam, above)

Out here it depends on the professor's expertise. I know a philosophy, English, and math that are progressive in nature. A geologist and dean that seem to be right in their thinking, at least they think they are right.

20120727-07 14:22 SteveB "Overturn *Citizens United*" (incl. Video)

"Overturn *Citizens United*" by Sen. Bernie Sanders, NationofChange

July 27, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/overturn-citizens-united-1343408181>)

Sen. Bernie Sanders told a Senate panel on Tuesday that a constitutional amendment is needed to undo the Supreme Court ruling that let corporations and wealthy individuals spend unlimited sums to sway American elections. Vermont and five other states have adopted resolutions asking Congress for a constitutional amendment to overturn the *Citizens United* decision. More than 200 local governments, including about 60 towns in Vermont, have passed similar measures.

Sanders revealed for the first time that at least 23 billionaire families have contributed a minimum of \$250,000 each so far in this year's campaigns. "My guess is that number is really much greater because many of these contributions are made in secret. In other words, **not content to own our economy, the 1 percent want to own our government as well**," he said his appearance before the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights.

Sanders said a handful of billionaires own a significant part of the wealth of America and have enormous control over our economy. The wealthiest 400 individuals own more wealth than the bottom 150 million Americans - half the country. One family, the Walton family of Wal-Mart fame, is worth \$89 billion, more than the bottom 40 percent of America.

"What the Supreme Court did in *Citizens United* is to say to these same billionaires and the corporations they control: 'You own and control the economy, you own Wall Street, you own the coal companies, you own the oil companies. Now, for a very small percentage of your wealth, we're going to give you the opportunity to own the United States government.'

"That is the essence of what *Citizens United* is all about - and that's why it must be overturned," said Sanders, the sponsor of the Saving American Democracy Amendment. A companion measure in the House is sponsored by Florida Rep. Ted Deutch.

The amendment would say that for-profit corporations are not people, that they are not entitled to any rights under the Constitution, that they are subject to regulation by state legislatures consistent with free press protections, and that they are prohibited from making contributions or expenditures in political campaigns. The amendment also would declare that Congress and the states have the right to regulate and limit all political expenditures and contributions.

"I'm proud to say the American people are making their voices heard on this issue-they are telling us loud and clear it is time to reverse the trend," Sanders said.

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=fKV2iJj9Quc.

20120727-08	15:10	Art	"Hospitals Limit Medical Bills for Aurora Theater Shooting Victims"
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Here's an interesting little test. Apparently, many of the recipients of the Colorado version of the "stand your ground" right of every red blooded American, do not have any health insurance. Surprise, surprise! So, who is going to pay for treatment? The below captures some of the reality of the situation. So for all who feel the ACA is the worst communist plot ever, how do we handle this? I think at tea party rally recently, the cheering was for the "Let'm die" solution. I suspect, once the spotlight dims slightly, these hospitals will be reassessing their current generosity.

I also understand in the aftermath of Mr. Holmes' "expression of his 2nd Amendment rights" (trying to put a positive NRA spin on all this) 3000 more Colorado citizens applied for gun permits. More to follow, quite literally I suspect.

"Hospitals Limit Medical Bills for Aurora Theater Shooting Victims" by Annie-Rose Strasser, ThinkProgress

July 26, 2012, (<http://thinkprogress.org/health/2012/07/26/588831/hospitals-medical-bills-shooting-victims/?mobile=nc>)

Days before the birth of their first child, Caleb and Kate Medley went to a midnight showing of *The Dark Knight Rises* in Aurora, Colorado, that turned into the horrible massacre. Katie made it out without any serious injury, but Caleb wasn't so lucky. He took a bullet to the eye and is in a medically induced coma, expected to take years to recover. Neither have insurance.

On Tuesday, their son Hugo was born, adding some joy to the tragedy but also more expenses.

While Caleb's family is still raising money for his care, uninsured victims of the shooting at other hospitals are seeing some relief. Three of the five hospitals where victims are being treated announced Thursday that they will be limiting or eliminating their hospital costs:

- Children's Hospital Colorado announced it would use donations and its charity care fund to cover the medical expenses of the uninsured. For those who do have insurance, the hospital says it will waive all co-pays. [...]

- HealthOne, which owns the Medical Center of Aurora and Swedish Medical Center, also says it will limit or eliminate charges based on the individual circumstances of the patients. Those hospitals have treated 22 shooting victims. However, the company cautioned its policy may not apply to all doctors working in its hospitals.
- Denver Health Medical Center and University of Colorado Hospital, where Caleb and other victims are being treated, haven't said what they'll do, but the hospitals are Colorado's top safety net hospitals in a state where 14 percent of residents are uninsured.

"We're going to do everything that we can for these patients on a case by case basis," said a representative of the Colorado hospital where Caleb is being treated. "The University Colorado Hospital provides \$300 million in uncompensated care every year."

Money donated from concerned citizens and the studio that released the movie The Dark Knight Rises has already totaled \$2 million, the AP reported today. But that's a drop in the bucket for victims who will leave the hospital with lifelong injuries and special needs.

Indeed, Caleb's medical bills alone could add up to \$2 million. So far, the family has raised one-quarter of the amount.

20120727-10	16:21	MarthaH	Photo: Cleavage Is Cleavage?
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A German plumber finds remedy for a common occupational problem. I am just sure he was at the fair!

[Hilarious! Martha, is this what a Hoosierland County Fair looks like there days? –SteveB]



[20120727-11](#) 16:23 Art Re: Photo: Cleavage Is Cleavage? (reply to MarthaH, above)

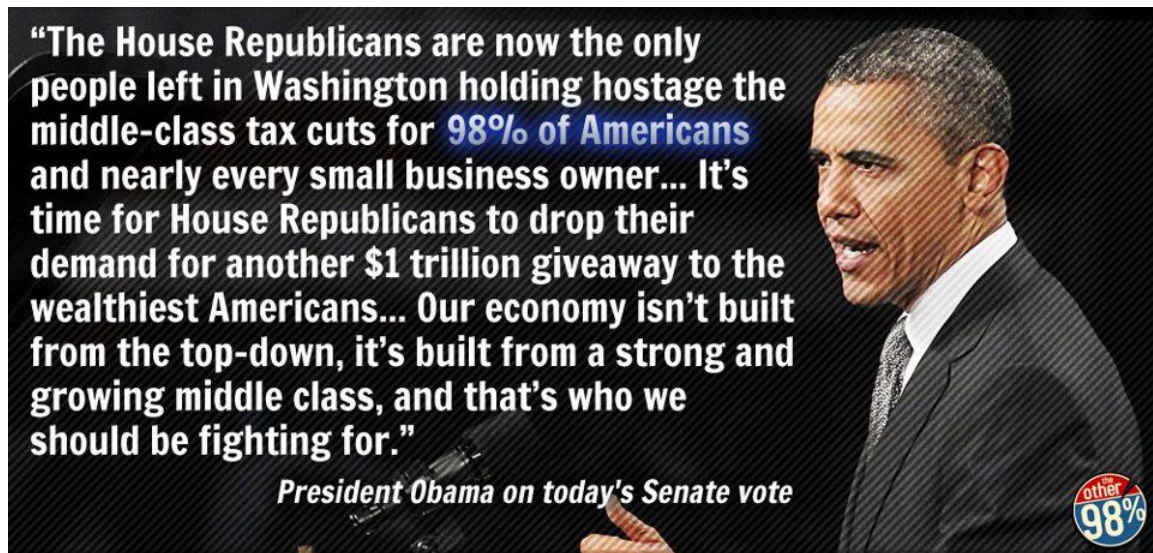
How thoughtful.

[20120727-12](#)

17:24

SteveG

Quote: President Obama on Middle-Class Tax Cuts



[20120727-13](#)

18:46

SteveM

Re: Quote: President Obama on Middle-Class Tax Cuts (reply to SteveB's forward of SteveG's email, above)

Really, Dummy?

You, like a majority of Americans, don't know what happened to more than 2,000 dealers that closed and 100,000 main street jobs that were lost, when the Obama administration squeezed General Motors and Chrysler to shutter those privately owned auto dealerships, without considering jobs that would be forfeited.

Where was the lying mofo when his socialist policies let them down, and on a more personal note, the loss of those dealer cost me 4 years of contract work.

F*ck him

[20120727-14](#)

19:33

SteveB

Re: Quote: President Obama on Middle-Class Tax Cuts (reply to SteveM, above)

The Republicans and R0mney wanted to let the whole thing die. And you're crying about a few dealers?

You're right though, that would have been much better than saving an entire industry and having a black President look good.

Please name one "socialist" policy? Even your conservative Supreme Court has decided that Obamacare is not socialistic.

If Obamacare is not, then what is? Sucking up to the big banks, military-industrial complex, and big bucks? Killing Osama bin Laden, etc., etc.?

Those sound like very Republican activities to me!

What is the source of your statistics and alleged evidence tying the Obama Administration to lost auto dealerships? Maybe the same source as R0mney had for his erroneous and embarrassingly stupid information that the bust of Winston Churchill had been removed from the White House by President Obama? Believe me, the whole world is laughing at the fool!

But, I guess if R0mney can't get his facts straight, I shouldn't expect you to either, my friend. And sorry about the lost work, but can the President do anything right, as far as you're concerned?

Did President Obama do the right thing this morning by having pancakes for breakfast? Or do you think he was all wrong and should have had waffles instead?

That dude just can't do anything right! He's such a socialist! *Response: But why 'a socialist'?* Because Rush says he is!

20120727-15

23:13

SteveM

Re: Quote: President Obama on Middle-Class Tax Cuts (reply to SteveB, above)

Hey, Dummy, all you had to do is read *Automotive News*, the *Detroit Free Press* or any of the books by the former Auto Czars. Or even Google.

- Video: "Layoff Artist in Chief hits Romney on Bain" (<http://hotair.com/archives/2012/05/14/video-layoff-artist-in-chief-hits-romney-on-bain/>)
- TARP audit claims Obama admin destroyed "tens of thousands" of jobs in dealer closures (<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/tarp-audit-claims-obama-admin-destroyed-tens-of-thousands-of-jobs-in-dealer-closures/>)
- Obama auto task force warns against dealer plan (<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/story?id=8139627&page=1>)
- Fact Checking Obama's Auto Bailout (<http://gop.com/news/gop-blog/fact-checking-obamas-auto-bailout/>)
- Obama Fact Check: Bush Responsible for Bailouts and is 'GM really No. 1? (<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/obama-fact-check-bush-responsible-for-bailouts-and-gm-is-number-one/>)
- President Obama, the Auto Dealer Layoff King (<http://www.nationalreview.com/campaign-spot/299841/president-obama-auto-dealer-layoff-king>)
- Interesting time for Obama's closing of auto dealerships to come back into the news (<http://granitegrok.com/blog/2012/03/interesting-time-for-obamas-closing-of-auto-dealerships-to-come-back-into-the-news>)

If you knew half of what you think you know you...

20120728-03

06:20

SteveB

Re: Quote: President Obama on Middle-Class Tax Cuts (reply to SteveM, above)

No wonder the "mainstream" news media barely picked this 2010 story up...it's almost pure radical right-wing BS.

<http://www.factcheck.org/2009/09/playing-favorites-with-chrysler-dealers/>

<http://politicsorpoppycock.com/2012/05/20/100000-auto-jobs-lost-under-obama/>

20120729-22

20:19

SteveG

"Camry Edges Out F-150 for 'Most American'"

As far as cars/trucks go, it is interesting as to what we think is American made and what is actually made here. It seems that we also are close to considering Canada and the US as one country.

"Camry Edges Out F-150 for 'Most American'" by Kelsey Mays, Cars.com/Yahoo! News

July 26, 2012, (<http://autos.yahoo.com/news/camry-edges-out-f-150-for--most-american-.html>)

In today's global economy, there's no easy way to determine just how American a car is. Many cars built in the U.S., for example, are assembled using parts that come from elsewhere. Some cars assembled in the U.S. from largely American-made parts don't sell well, meaning fewer Americans are employed to build them. Cars.com's American-Made Index recognizes cars that are built here, have a high percentage of domestic parts and are bought in large numbers by American consumers.

F-150 is back; Toyota, Honda and GM still lead

The Toyota Camry topped this year's American-Made Index, extending its No. 1 status to four years running. Ford's F-150 landed by a photo-finish at No. 2, falling behind the Camry by fewer than two days of sales. The F-150 was once a common AMI leader, topping the index from 2006 to 2008, but lower domestic parts content had dropped the best-selling pickup off the list. With its domestic parts content back to 75 percent — up from 60 percent last year — the F-150 returns to the AMI for 2012.

Toyota, Honda and GM combined for eight of the AMI's 10 vehicles. Honda fielded two vehicles, the Ohio-built Accord and Alabama-built Pilot, while GM's related three-row crossovers — the Chevrolet Traverse, GMC Acadia and Buick Enclave, all assembled in Michigan — landed at sixth, ninth and 10th, respectively. Besides the Camry, Toyota's Tundra pickup and Sienna minivan also made the list. The Jeep Wrangler's domestic parts content fell below 75 percent this year, but Chrysler fielded another entrant in the Jeep Liberty. Like the Wrangler, the Liberty is assembled in Ohio.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>U.S. Assembly Location(s)</u>	<u>Rank in July 2011</u>
1	Toyota Camry	Georgetown, Ky.; Lafayette, Ind.	1
2	Ford F-150	Dearborn, Mich.; Claycomo, Mo.	-
3	Honda Accord	Marysville, Ohio	2
4	Toyota Sienna	Princeton, Ind.	6
5	Honda Pilot	Lincoln, Ala.	-
6	Chevrolet Traverse	Lansing, Mich.	8
7	Toyota Tundra	San Antonio, Tex.	9
8	Jeep Liberty	Toledo, Ohio	-
9	GMC Acadia	Lansing, Mich.	10
10	Buick Enclave	Lansing, Mich.	-

The Chevrolet Malibu, Ford Explorer and Honda Odyssey fell off the AMI, as all three cars' domestic parts content fell. Of the models that made the index, the Accord and Sienna had the highest domestic parts content, at 80 percent each. In last year's AMI, four cars had 80 percent domestic parts content or higher, reflecting a dwindling number of cars with high domestic content. For the 2012 model year, 21 models assembled in the U.S. have a domestic parts content rating of 75 percent or higher, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. That's down from 32 cars a year ago.

Homegrown by label

Domestic parts content labels, required on all new cars since 1994 as a result of the American Automobile Labeling Act, denote the percentage, by cost, of U.S. and Canadian parts in a given model, as well as the final assembly location and country of origin for the model's engines and transmissions. If you're looking for a car with high domestic parts content, U.S. assembly and U.S. sourcing for the engines and transmissions, you'd get a different list:

1. Toyota Avalon: 85 percent DPC, built in Georgetown, Ky.
2. Honda Crosstour: 80 percent DPC, built in East Liberty, Ohio
3. Ford Expedition/Lincoln Navigator: 80 percent DPC, built in Louisville, Ky.

4. Buick Enclave/Chevrolet Traverse/GMC Acadia: 76 percent DPC, built in Lansing, Mich.
5. Jeep Liberty: 76 percent DPC, built in Toledo, Ohio
6. Chevrolet Corvette: 75 percent DPC, built in Bowling Green, Ky.
7. Toyota Sequoia: 75 percent DPC, built in Princeton, Ind.
8. Honda Pilot: 75 percent DPC, built in Lincoln, Ala.

Source: Automaker data, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Of course, the above list underrepresents the overall impact of a car. The Corvette is directly responsible for 514 autoworkers at GM's Bowling Green, Ky., assembly plant. By contrast, GM's plant in Lansing, Mich., employs nearly 4,000 to assemble the Enclave, Traverse and Acadia.

It shows the auto industry's global nature. Even the AMI's top cars — the Camry, F-150 and Accord — have some international sourcing. NHTSA says the F-150's 5.0-liter V-8 comes from Canada, while Toyota sources certain Camry drivetrains from Canada. The Accord's transmissions come from the U.S., Japan and the Philippines.

A globalized industry may mean fewer cars that hail mostly from the U.S., but it works for many companies' bottom lines. Ford's global One Ford strategy coincides with falling domestic parts content in its vehicles. Five years ago, Ford had 20 models with 75 percent or higher domestic parts content. For the 2012 model year, that figure fell to three. Yet the same strategy has helped to bring Ford into the black with 11 straight quarterly profits.

"They have one of the highest content vehicles, the old Escape, and one of the lowest content vehicles, the Transit," said Kristin Dziczek, who directs the Labor and Industry group at Michigan's Center for Automotive Research. "There's a global supply chain for most things, and that ebbs and flows with currency, with trade and free-trade agreements. It ebbs and flows with union agreements with capturing outsourced work."

Ford isn't alone. Cars.com surveyed domestic parts content for the top 113 models on the market, which make up 89 percent of all the cars sold through May. More than 80 percent of those cars — the vast majority of what shoppers are buying — have domestic parts content below 75 percent or are assembled in Canada, Mexico or abroad.

Many consumers still say they would only consider cars built by the Detroit Three. Cars.com conducted a survey in June 2012, asking consumers if they had a preference between a domestic- or foreign-made car. Of the 1,004 respondents, 23 percent said they would only consider an American manufacturer. Their top reasons, unsurprisingly, were brand loyalty and supporting the local economy. But nearly half of that group said that a car from a foreign automaker would be more appealing if they knew the car was built in the U.S.

Romney's Free Market vs. Obama's Socialism

Romney's Bain Capital invested private money in;	Obama's Invested taxpayer money in;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ AMC Entertainment ⦿ Burger King ⦿ Burlington Coat Factory ⦿ Clear Channel Communications ⦿ Dominos Pizza ⦿ Dunkin' Donuts ⦿ Guitar Center ⦿ The Sports Authority ⦿ Staples ⦿ Toys "R" Us ⦿ Warner Music Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Solyndra – Bankrupt ⦿ Ener 1 – Bankrupt ⦿ Beacon Power – Bankrupt ⦿ Abound Solar – Bankrupt ⦿ Amonix Solar – Bankrupt ⦿ Spectra Watt – Bankrupt ⦿ Eastern Energy – Bankrupt ⦿ All of these companies were Obama Campaign contributors.

CHOICE IS CLEAR... DO YOU WANT
A BUSINESSMAN WHO GENERATED **BILLIONS**
OR
A PRESIDENT WHO WASTED **TRILLIONS**

www.facebook.com/obamapuke



[See? The Big Guy just can't do anything right? What about his great family values? –SteveB]

[If this actually happens, and they kick-out Pepsi too, I'm moving back to the U.S. Some misguided souls may conjecture that President Obama is a socialist, but this is the kind of thing a true socialist does, though in both countries, it's really just all about the money. –SteveB]

"Coca Cola Booted from Bolivia" by Kochie's Business Builders, Yahoo! Finance

July 23, 2012, (<http://au.smallbusiness.yahoo.com/article/-/14344893/coca-cola-booted-from-bolivia/>)

To tie in with the end of the Mayan calendar, the Bolivian Government has announced that as of December 21 Coca Cola will be banned in their country in a move towards "community spirit"

There has been much speculation surrounding the end of the Mayan calendar this December. But rather than Armageddon style prophesies it may be the end-of-the-capitalist-world changes that make the most significant mark.

On December 21, 2012 Coca Cola will be officially banned in Bolivia. The announcement comes from Foreign Minister David Choquehuanaca, who stated that his Government is supporting the beginning of a new era free of capitalism and embracing "the culture of life" and "community spirit".

With the support of President Evo Morales by his side, Choquehuanaca said December 21 is "the end of egoism, of division. December 21 has to be the end of Coca Cola, and the beginning of mocoichinchi (a traditional Bolivian soda)".



Coca Cola is one of the world's most recognised brands and can be found in just about every corner of the earth. Currently only three countries continue to be coke-free: Cuba, North Korea and Myanmar. But even the latter of those is about to see waves of the drink return to shelves and fridges after 60 years of US investment sanctions.

The Foreign Minister announced that the move will be part of the celebrations taking place at the Island Of The Sun in Lake Titicaca, high in the Bolivian Andes.

[I have a feeling this is going to be one helluva end-of-the-world party! Wouldn't miss it for the...world! (Unless there's no Coke or Pepsi.) –SteveB]

From SteveG:

Soda vs Marijuana

		
Active Ingredient	Sugar/High fructose corn syrup, caffeine	THC
Health Risks Associated	Obesity, slower immune system, dissolving bone and teeth, leading cause of childhood diabetes and obesity	Short term impairment, long term effects have been debated but never proven, no fatal health risks
Addictive	High fructose corn syrup and caffeine are extremely addictive chemicals	No addictive chemicals, though psychological addiction is possible
Carcinogens	Coloring, flavor additives, artificial sweeteners	None
Medical use	Doctors recommend zero soda consumption	Used to treat cancer patients, glaucoma, AIDS patients, etc.
Availability	Sold in public schools	Illegal (Also sold in public schools)

20120728-02 03:52 Tom "Strategy for an Unthinkable Conflict"

"Strategy for an Unthinkable Conflict" by T.X. Hammes, *The Diplomat*

July 27, 2012, (<http://thediplomat.com/flashpoints-blog/2012/07/27/military-strategy-for-an-unthinkable-conflict/>)

The Obama administration's "rebalancing to Asia" has generated a great deal of discussion about how it impacts the defense acquisition budget but little about the military strategy necessary to support the shift. Although conflict in the Asia-Pacific is unlikely and extremely undesirable, the United States still needs a strategy. The primary strategic goal is to deter such a conflict. An effective military strategy can reduce the probability of conflict by achieving four objectives:

1. Assuring Asian nations that the United States is both willing and capable of remaining engaged in Asia.
2. Deterring China from using military action to resolve disputes.
3. Achieving victory with minimal risk of nuclear escalation in the event of conflict.

4. Credibility in peacetime. A strategy should consist of critical assumptions, ends-ways-means coherence, and a theory of victory.

Assumptions

Assumptions are suppositions about current or future conditions that are inherently unknowable but are necessary for planning. Essentially, they are a planner's best guess. One military strategy that could be utilized, **offshore control**, includes the following five key assumptions.

- China starts the conflict.
- It will be a long war.
- It will result in massive damage to the global economy.
- The United States does not understand China's nuclear decision-making process.
- In space or cyber domains, a first strike provides major advantages. Thus any operational approach that requires the robust use of space and cyber capabilities is inherently destabilizing in a crisis.

Ends, ways and means coherence

The combination of decreasing defense spending and rapid increases in the cost of new weapons suggests that a strategy for conflict with China should assume limited means, at least initially. In addition to limited means, the United States must accept that China's nuclear arsenal imposes restrictions on the ways in which American forces may attack Chinese assets. The United States must select ways that minimize the probability of nuclear escalation simply because no one can win a major nuclear exchange. With limited means and restricted rules of engagement, the ends should therefore also be modest. They must attain U.S. strategic goals but not risk a major nuclear exchange.

This logic leads to the concept of Offshore Control. Operationally, Offshore Control uses current forces and restricted ways to cripple China's maritime trade and thus its economy. It establishes a set of concentric rings that *denies* China the use of the sea inside the first island chain, *defends* the sea and air space of the first island chain, and *dominates* the air and maritime space outside the first island chain. To reduce the possibility of nuclear escalation and make war termination easier, no operations will penetrate Chinese airspace.

Denial as an element of the campaign plays to U.S. strengths by employing primarily attack submarines, mines, and a limited number of air assets inside the first island chain. This area will be declared a maritime exclusion zone with the warning that ships in the zone will be sunk. While the United States cannot initially stop all sea traffic in this zone, it can prevent the passage of large cargo ships and tankers. In doing so, it will cripple China's export trade.

The *defensive* component will bring the full range of U.S. assets to defend allies. It takes advantage of geography to force China to fight at longer ranges while allowing U.S. and allied forces to fight as part of an integrated air-sea defense over their own territories. Essentially, Offshore Control makes use of anti-access/area denial capabilities to keep Chinese forces away from allied territory. U.S. assistance will include convoy operations to maintain the flow of essential imports and exports in the face of Chinese interdiction attempts.

The dominate phase of the campaign will be fought outside the range of most Chinese assets and will use a combination of air, naval, ground, and rented commercial platforms to intercept and divert the post-Panamax container ships that are essential to China's economy. China relies on these large container ships for competitive cost advantage. These ships are the easiest to track and divert. While such a concentric campaign will require a layered effort from the straits to China's coast, it will largely be fought at a great distance from China—effectively out of range of most of China's military power.

That leads us to modest ends. Rather than seeking a decisive victory against the Chinese, Offshore Control seeks to use a war of economic attrition to bring about a stalemate and cessation of conflict with a return to a modified version of the status quo.

Theory of Victory

Offshore Control seeks termination of the conflict on U.S. terms through China's economic exhaustion. It seeks to allow the Chinese Communist Party to end the conflict in the same way it ended its conflicts with India, the United Nations in Korea, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam. It allows Chinese leaders to declare they "taught the enemy a lesson" and thus end the conflict. By forgoing strikes that destroy Chinese facilities or economic infrastructure on the mainland, Offshore Control reduces the probability of escalation and makes it easier for Chinese leaders to terminate the war while saving face at home. Offshore Control does not seek decisive victory in the traditional military sense but secures U.S. objectives effectively. It recognizes the fact that the concept of decisive victory against a nation with a major nuclear arsenal is fraught with risks if not entirely unattainable.

Does it deter?

A key factor in deciding which approach to pursue is the impact each has on deterrence. Genuine deterrence is based on the opponent's belief that he cannot attain his strategic goals in a conflict, at least at an acceptable cost. In short, the deterrent strategy must be able to defeat the potential enemy in a conflict. A strategy based on investments in Air-Sea Battle capabilities seems to believe that attacking unspecified Chinese assets can force China to quit fighting through punishment. In contrast, Offshore Control is based on the idea that an indirect attack on China's economy is the most effective available approach.

However, the most important aspect of deterrence is how the enemy sees the potential conflict. A strategy that deters through attack requires that Chinese leaders believe they cannot overcome American technological superiority. Given China's rapid strides in space and cyber and the stated U.S. reliance on these domains to successfully execute an Air-Sea Battle campaign, this is a dubious belief. A Chinese technological breakthrough, real or perceived, can quickly render deterrence obsolete.

In contrast, Offshore Control directly attacks China's inability to protect the shipping lanes that are vital to its economy -- what Hu Jintao has called the "Malacca Dilemma." To defeat Offshore Control, China will have to build a sea control navy capable of protecting its global trade network. The Chinese understand developing such a navy will take decades and be extremely expensive. In short, the question is "Will China find it easier to overcome U.S. technology or geographic distance?"

Does Offshore Control reduce the pressure for rapid escalation?

A second major consideration in a conflict with a nuclear power is whether a strategy encourages or discourages rapid escalation. U.S. space and cyber systems remain a vulnerable and high payoff target. And both domains are currently dominated by offensive weapons. The nation that strikes first will gain a major advantage. Thus, any operational approach that depends heavily on these capabilities creates the unintended consequence of raising the value of a first strike.

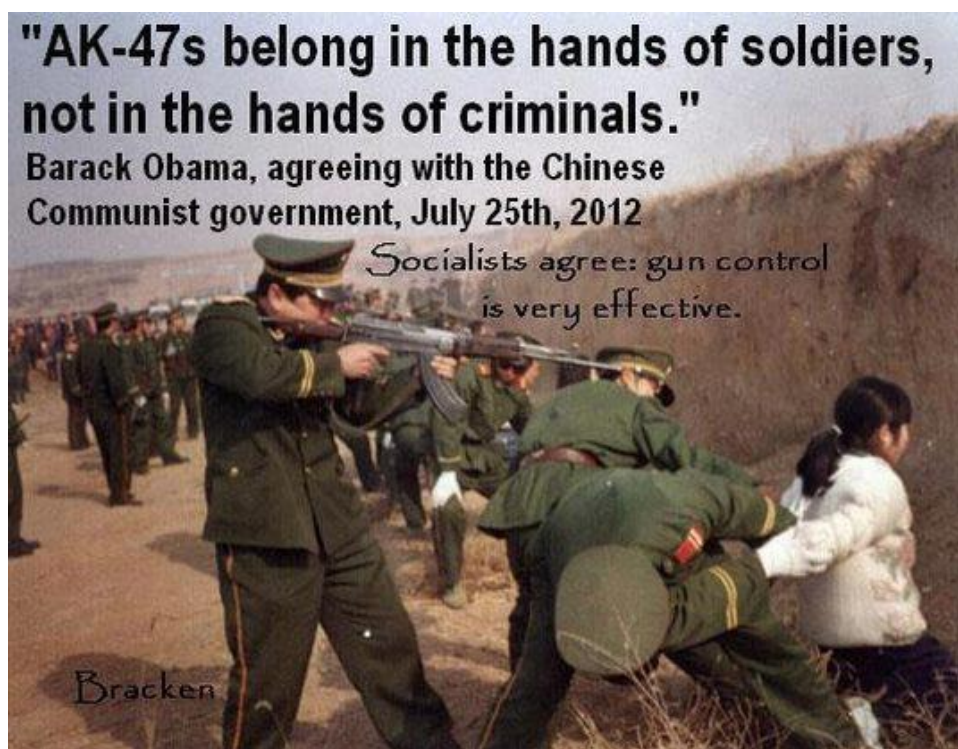
Offshore Control proposes a different approach. It does not require extensive use of space or cyber systems. Offshore Control can be executed even if China conducts a highly successful first strike in space and/or cyber domains. Further, this capability can be demonstrated in peacetime exercises. This is particularly important in a crisis because it devalues a first strike. While a distant blockade is an escalation, its execution and impact will take a few weeks to be felt. This gives diplomats time to seek a solution free from the demand for sudden escalation in space or cyber.

Summary

It is essential to understand that there is no "good" strategy for a conflict between the United States and China. Any major conflict will cause massive damage to the global economy and risk nuclear escalation. Thus the United States must seek a "least bad" strategy. Offshore Control presents China with the generational challenge of

establishing sea control at great ranges from its shoreline. By moving the conflict away from Chinese territory, it reverses the cost imposition. Developing penetration and sea control capabilities will cost China more than maintaining America's defensive and sea denial capabilities. Finally, it minimizes the potential for escalation by providing time for China's leaders to decide if escalation is a good strategic solution.

(Dr. T. X. Hammes is a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Strategic Research at National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies INSS. He is the author of *Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* and, most recently, *Offshore Control: A Proposed Strategy for an Unlikely Conflict*. The views expressed are his own and do not reflect the official policy or position of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.)



20120729-14	17:33	SteveB	Re: "Strategy for an Unthinkable Conflict" (reply to Tom, above)
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Bad photo, but really good article. Thanks! ;-)

20120728-04	12:28	SteveB	Fw: Daily Kos Petition: Tell the U.K. We Too Think R0mney Is an Idiot!
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from Daily Kos:

Please sign our letter to the people of the United Kingdom, letting them know Mitt Romney's oafish comments do not represent the views of most Americans toward one of our oldest and strongest allies. Click here to add your name—we will send the letter and the signatures to the British press.

During his recent trip to the United Kingdom, Mitt Romney questioned London's Olympic preparedness, forgot the name of the leader of the Labour Party, and said it would be terrible if the United States were to become like Europe. The people of the United Kingdom are so outraged over Romney's behavior that even two leading members of the Conservative Party, Prime Minister David Cameron and London Mayor Boris Johnson, went out of their way to issue harsh rebukes.

In just two days, Mitt Romney has put a real dent in an alliance that took two world wars and forty years of the Cold War to build. That's why we're putting together a letter to the people of the United Kingdom, letting them know Mitt Romney does not speak for most Americans. We'll send the signatures to the British press, and hopefully mend some of the wounds which Romney has so ineptly managed to inflict.

An open letter to the people of the United Kingdom:

We are writing to express our concern over Mitt Romney's recent comments, and to let you know that he does not represent how most Americans view your great country.

First, we do not believe, as Mitt Romney implied in 2007, that you have become a second-tier nation. Rather, we are impressed at how the United Kingdom has consistently been able to punch above its weight on the world stage.

Additionally, we do not share the opinion which Romney expressed in his 2010 book, *No Apologies*, that "England [sic] is just a small island," and that "with few exceptions, it doesn't make things that people in the rest of the world want to buy." Please continue sending us your many wonderful products, especially the upcoming third season of "Downton Abbey". [And Halls! –SteveB]

We look forward not only to the London Olympics, but also to many years of continuing the special relationship between our two nations. Rest assured we will do our level best to prevent Mitt Romney from becoming our next president.

Cheers

Please sign our letter to the people of the United Kingdom letting them know that Mitt Romney does not speak for us:

http://campaigns.dailykos.com/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=184.

Keep fighting, Chris Bowers, Campaign Director, Daily Kos

20120728-05	13:24	SteveB	Fw: MoveOn Petition: Request the Justice Dept. Investigate Mitt Romney's Apparently Fraudulent Bain Capital SEC Filings!
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from MoveOn.org:

Numerous sources—from *The Boston Globe* and Mother Jones to ABC News—have produced detailed documentation, including SEC filings, which appears to indicate that Mitt Romney has lied to the SEC regarding his roll at Bain Capital between 1999 and 2002. I would like the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate if criminal laws have been broken regarding these matters!

That's why I created a petition on SignOn.org to Eric Holder, the Attorney General of the United States, which says:

We the people would like the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate whether W. Mitt Romney violated U.S. criminal laws as a result of his documented lies and misrepresentations in SEC filings regarding his roll at Bain Capital between 1999 and 2002.

Click here to add your name to this petition, and then pass it along to your friends:

<http://www.signon.org/sign/request-the-justice-dept?source=homepage>.

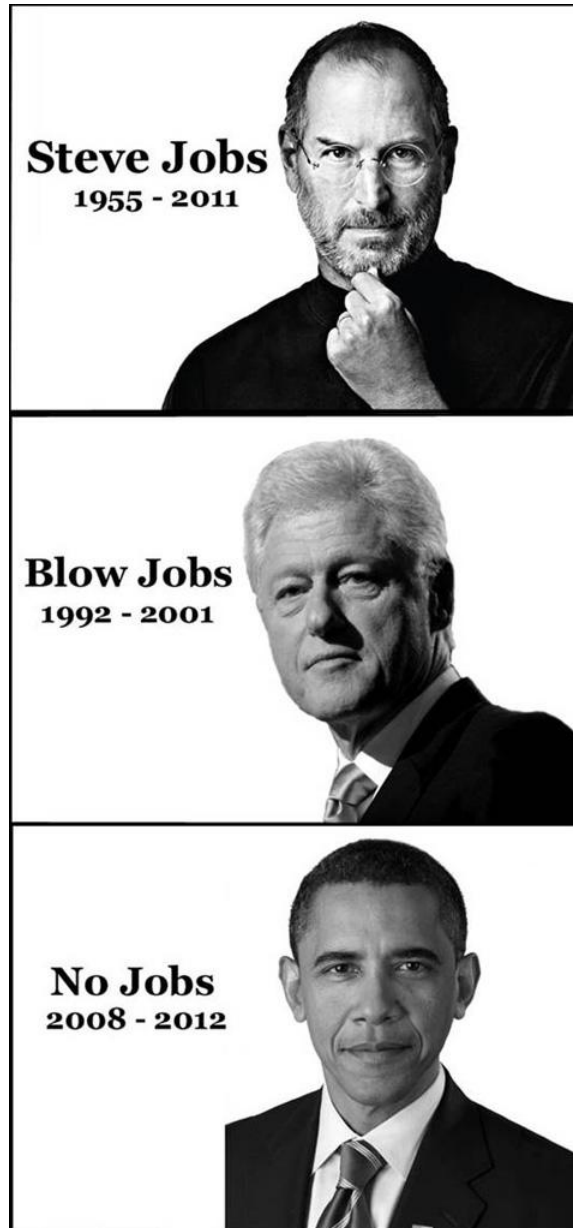
Thanks! –Jeffrey L. Etter

This petition was created on SignOn.org, the progressive, nonprofit petition site. SignOn.org is sponsored by MoveOn Civic Action.

20120728-06 17:03 Tom Graphic: Three Legendary Americans

<http://www.pigazette.com/pigprattle.html>

Maybe something to this!? Every man wants to leave a legacy, something he will be remembered for. These three certainly left their mark:



20120728-07 17:19 Tom Fw: People Said It Didn't Matter [Thank Goodness! -SteveB]

[Source of original email unknown. -SteveB]

WHEN - he refused to disclose who donated money to his election campaign, as other candidates had done, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he received endorsements from people like Louis Farrakhan, Muramar Qaddafi and Hugo Chavez, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - it was pointed out that he was a total newcomer and had absolutely no experience at anything except community organizing, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he chose friends and acquaintances such as Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn who were revolutionary radicals, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - his voting record in the Illinois Senate and in the U.S. Senate came into question, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he refused to wear a flag lapel pin and did so only after a public outcry, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - people started treating him as a Messiah and children in schools were taught to sing his praises, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he stood with his hands over his groin area for the playing of the National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he surrounded himself in the White House with advisors who were pro-gun control, pro-abortion, pro-homosexual marriage and wanting to curtail freedom of speech to silence the opposition, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he said he favors sex education in kindergarten, including homosexual indoctrination, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - his personal background was either scrubbed or hidden and nothing could be found about him, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - the place of his birth was called into question, and he refused to produce a birth certificate, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he had an association in Chicago with Tony Rezco - a man of questionable character and who is now in prison and had helped Obama to a sweet deal on the purchase of his home - people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - it became known that George Soros, a multi-billionaire Marxist, spent a ton of money to get him elected, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he started appointing White House Czars that were radicals, revolutionaries, and even avowed Marxist /Communists, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he stood before the Nation and told us that his intentions were to "fundamentally transform this Nation" into something else, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - it became known that he had trained ACORN workers in Chicago and served as an attorney for ACORN, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he appointed cabinet members and several advisors who were tax cheats and socialists, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he appointed a Science Czar, John Holdren, who believes in forced abortions, mass sterilizations and seizing babies from teen mothers, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he appointed Cass Sunstein as Regulatory Czar who believes in "Explicit Consent," harvesting human organs without family consent and allowing animals to be represented in court, while banning all hunting, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he appointed Kevin Jennings, a homosexual and organizer of a group called Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Education Network as Safe School Czar and it became known that he had a history of bad advice to teenagers, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he appointed Mark Lloyd as Diversity Czar who believes in curtailing free speech, taking from one and giving to another to spread the wealth, who supports Hugo Chavez, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - Valerie Jarrett, an avowed Socialist, was selected as Obama's Senior White House Advisor, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - Anita Dunn, White House Communications Director, said Mao Tse Tung was her favorite philosopher and the person she turned to most for inspiration, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he appointed Carol Browner, a well known socialist as Global Warming Czar working on Cap and Trade as the nation's largest tax, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he appointed Van Jones, an ex-con and avowed Communist as Green Energy Czar, who since had to resign when this was made known, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - Tom Daschle, Obama's pick for Health and Human Services Secretary could not be confirmed because he was a tax cheat, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - as President of the United States, he bowed to the King of Saudi Arabia, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he traveled around the world criticizing America and never once talking of her greatness, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - his actions concerning the Middle East seemed to support the Palestinians over Israel, our long time ally, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he took American tax dollars to resettle thousands of Palestinians from Gaza to the United States , people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he upset the Europeans by removing plans for a missile defense system against the Russians, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he played politics in Afghanistan by not sending troops early-on when the Field Commanders said they were necessary to win, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he started spending us into a debt that was so big we could not pay it off, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he took a huge spending bill under the guise of stimulus and used it to pay off organizations, unions, and individuals that got him elected, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he took over insurance companies, car companies, banks, etc., people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he took away student loans from the banks and put it through the government, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he designed plans to take over the health care system and put it under government control, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he claimed he was a Christian during the election and tapes were later made public that showed Obama speaking to a Muslim group and 'stating' that he was raised a Muslim, was educated as a Muslim, and is still a Muslim, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he set into motion a plan to take over the control of all energy in the United States through Cap and Trade, people said it didn't matter.

WHEN - he finally completed his transformation of America into a Socialist State, people woke up--- but it was too late. Add these up one by one and you get a phenomenal score that points to the fact that Barrack Hussein Obama is determined to turn America into a Marxist-Socialist society.

All of the items in the preceding paragraphs have been put into place. All can be documented very easily. Before you disavow this do an Internet search. The last paragraph alone is not yet cast in stone. You and I will write that paragraph.

Will it read as above or will it be a more happy ending for most of America?

Don't just belittle the opposition. Search for the truth. We all need to pull together or watch the demise of a free democratic society. Pray for Americans to seek the truth and take action for it will keep us FREE. Our biggest enemy is not China , Russia, North Korea or Iran. Our biggest enemy is a contingent of politicians in Washington, DC. The government will not help, so we need to do it ourselves.

It's your decision. I believe it does matter. How about you?

"When you see that in order to produce, you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing; when you see that money is flowing to those who deal not in goods, but in favors; when you see that men get rich more easily by graft than by work, and your laws no longer protect you against them, but protect them against you, you may know that your society is doomed." —Ayn Rand

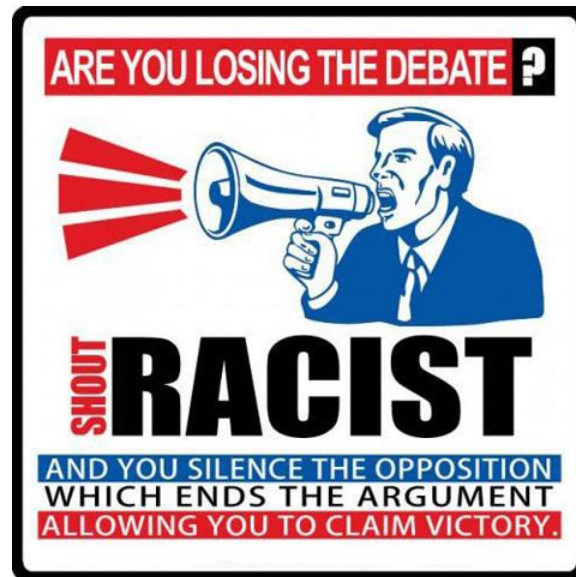
20120729-17	17:51 SteveB	Re: People Said It Didn't Matter (reply to Tom, above)
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This is old, revised a little. Debunked here:

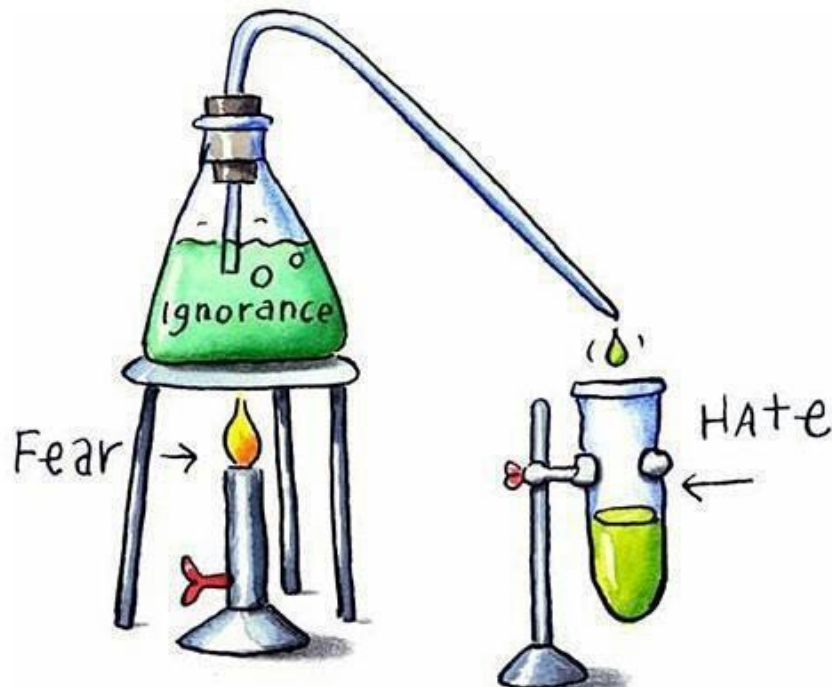
<http://crazyemailsandbackstories.wordpress.com/2011/09/08/they-said-it-didnt-matter-a-giant-mess-of-propaganda-and-lies/>.

It looks like the Right has quite an "education" and indoctrination program for the cadre. Maybe this is where all the strategies come from: name calling, avoiding direct answers, ignoring logic, spreading the blatant lies, shouting racist!

<http://www.pigazette.com/pigprattle.html>



Related to many subjects, including Religion, freedom to disagree with a "Politically Correct" subject, and Constitutional Rights!



20120729-21 19:29 SteveB Re: Graphic: Where Hate Comes From (reply to Tom, above)

I like it. My Dad always used to tell me, "Fear is the great enemy."

And this certainly explains where the hatred the Right exhibits comes from: Fear + Ignorance.

20120729-23 21:42 Tom Re: Graphic: Where Hate Comes From (reply to SteveB, above)

How 'bout the "Liberal Progressives" getting some 'fear' credit? :-)

20120729-24 22:41 SteveB Re: Graphic: Where Hate Comes From (reply to Tom, above)

Fear, OK. But where's the hatred???

20120729-25 23:59 SteveB Photo: Weeki Wachee Springs, Florida

<http://floridamemory.com/items/show/80947>



—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.

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

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