



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #208 — AUG. 21, 2012

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The Truth Starts to Be Told

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Aug. 21, 2012)

Look out, Republicans. I think there may a little too much TRUTH coming down the pike for you to handle!

"Paul Krugman Bashes Niall Ferguson's *Newsweek* Cover Story as 'Unethical'" by Bonnie Kavoussi, Huffington Post

Aug. 20, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/20/paul-krugman-niall-ferguson-newsweek_n_1810136.html?utm_hp_ref=mostpopular)



Paul Krugman bashed Niall Ferguson's new cover story in *Newsweek* in a *New York Times* blog post on Sunday.

Paul Krugman says that *Newsweek* needs to issue a correction for columnist Niall Ferguson's new cover story on why President Obama does not deserve reelection.

Krugman, the Nobel Prize-winning Princeton economics professor, wrote in a *Sunday New York Times* blog post titled "Unethical Commentary" that Ferguson misrepresented the costs of health care reform. Krugman wrote:

There are multiple errors and misrepresentations in Niall Ferguson's cover story in *Newsweek* — I guess they don't do fact-checking — but this is the one that jumped out at me. Ferguson says:

The president pledged that health-care reform would not add a cent to the deficit. But the CBO and the Joint Committee on Taxation now estimate that the insurance-coverage provisions of the ACA will have a net cost of close to \$1.2 trillion over the 2012–22 period.

Readers are no doubt meant to interpret this as saying that CBO found that the Act will increase the deficit. But anyone who actually read, or even skimmed, the CBO report (pdf) knows that it found that the ACA would reduce, not increase, the deficit — because the insurance subsidies were fully paid for.

Krugman concluded: "We're not talking about ideology or even economic analysis here — just a plain misrepresentation of the facts, with an august publication letting itself be used to misinform readers. The *Times* would require an abject correction if something like that slipped through. Will *Newsweek*?"

Krugman and Ferguson have been bashing each other in public for years. Ferguson has been advocating austerity to prevent interest rates on government debt from rising. But Krugman has pointed out that interest rates on government debt are at historic lows.

Ferguson, a Harvard history professor and *Newsweek* columnist, wrote in the magazine's Aug. 27 cover story that Obama should lose the upcoming election because the president has broken his promises. Ferguson says Obama has not created enough jobs, fixed the financial system or controlled health care costs or the national debt.

He also wrote that in "Obama's America, nearly half the population is not represented on a taxable return. [...] half of us [are] paying the taxes, the other half receiving the benefits."

This is not exactly true. Although roughly half of Americans do not pay federal income taxes, most of them still pay some combination of payroll taxes, state taxes, local taxes and sales taxes, according to the *Washington Post*.

Ferguson's story also included a chart that seemed to blame Obama for letting the U.S. economy lose ground to China's. The chart shows China's GDP as projected to surpass U.S. GDP in 2017, a projection whose inclusion Business Insider's Joe Weisenthal and Slate's Matt Yglesias called unfair. Yglesias wrote: "Ferguson is implicitly making two points with this graphic and it's difficult to know which of them is more absurd -- the idea that Obama is responsible for rapid economic growth in China or the idea that if he were responsible that would be blameworthy."

UPDATE: 11:10 a.m. -- Ferguson fired back at Krugman in a *Newsweek* blog post on Monday. He took issue with Krugman for suggesting that he had not read the CBO report. Ferguson wrote that the CBO did say in its report that health care reform will cost the government money, which would be partially offset by taxes. "Thanks for trying, Paul," Ferguson wrote.

UPDATE: 11:48 a.m. -- Another noted economist has blasted Ferguson for his cover story, this time going further than Krugman by calling for Ferguson to get fired. Brad DeLong, economics professor at the University of California at Berkeley, wrote in a blog post on Monday:

Fire his a*s. Fire his a*s from *Newsweek*, and the Daily Beast. Convene a committee at Harvard to examine whether he has the moral character to teach at a university. There is a limit, somewhere. And Ferguson has just gone beyond it.

UPDATE: 12:56 p.m. -- *Newsweek* did not fact-check Ferguson's cover story, according to Dylan Byers, a media reporter at Politico. Byers wrote on Twitter that a Newsweek spokesman said the magazine does not have a fact-checking department, and that "we, like other news organisations today, rely on our writers to submit factually accurate material."

UPDATE: 1:25 p.m. -- Matt O'Brien, associate business editor at *The Atlantic*, wrote a stinging blog post fact-checking Ferguson's cover story, writing that "we got an exercise in Ferguson's specialty -- counterfactual history." Head over to *The Atlantic* for the full fact-check.

"Obama on Romney Welfare Accusations: 'You Can't Just Make Stuff Up'" by Arthur Delaney, Huffington Post

Aug. 20, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/20/obama-romney-welfare-reform_n_1812171.html?utm_hp_ref=politics)

(WASHINGTON) During a surprise appearance in the White House Briefing Room on Monday, President Barack Obama responded to Republican challenger Mitt Romney's claim that Obama has "gutted" work requirements for welfare recipients. Obama called the charge "absolutely wrong."

A reporter asked Obama if he was comfortable with the tone of his campaign, pointing to an ad by an Obama-supporting super PAC that implied Romney bore responsibility for a woman's cancer death after her husband lost his job following a buyout by Romney's former company.

"I don't think that Gov. Romney is somehow responsible for the death of the woman that was portrayed in that ad," Obama said. "But keep in mind this is an ad that I didn't approve, I did not produce, and as far as I can tell, has barely run."

The president then pointed out that Romney himself has endorsed attack ads rated false by a plethora of newspapers and fact-checkers. (The Romney camp released the latest such ad earlier on Monday.)

"Now, in contrast you've got Gov. Romney creating as a centerpiece of his campaign this notion that we're taking the work requirement out of welfare, which every single person here who's looked at it says is patently false," Obama said. "What he's arguing is somehow we have changed the welfare requirement, the work requirement in our welfare laws. And, in fact, what's happened was that my administration, responding to the requests of five governors, including two Republican governors, agreed to approve giving them, those states, some flexibility in how they manage their welfare rolls as long as it produced 20 percent increases in the number of people who are getting work."

Nevada and Utah were among the states interested in greater flexibility in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, better known as welfare. The Obama administration has not announced that any waivers have gone out.

"Everybody who's looked at this says what Gov. Romney's saying is absolutely wrong," Obama continued. "Not only are his super PACs running millions of dollars worth of ads making this claim, Gov. Romney himself is approving this and saying it on the stump. So the contrast, I think, is pretty stark. They can run the campaign that they want, but the truth of the matter is you can't just make stuff up."

"Todd Akin Piers Morgan Interview Fail: Embattled Senate Candidate Bails on CNN Host" by Peter Finocchiaro, Huffington Post

Aug. 20, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/20/todd-akin-piers-morgan-interview_n_1814683.html?utm_hp_ref=media)

(Missouri Congressman Todd Akin reportedly bailed on a planned interview with Piers Morgan on Monday evening.)

Todd Akin's bad week keeps getting worse.

The six-term Missouri GOP congressman, a candidate for U.S. Senate, apparently bailed on a planned interview with CNN's Piers Morgan, leaving the host to berate him as a "gutless little twerp" Monday evening.

Akin's troubles began Sunday when he suggested during a television interview that women who are victims of "legitimate rape" are biologically unlikely to become pregnant -- attributing the dubious science to "doctors." Numerous Republicans have called on the congressman to withdraw from his challenge against Democratic Sen. Claire McCaskill.

Akin has apologized for his remarks, and insisted he'll stay in the race. However, the media firestorm shows little sign of abating after two days.

Staring at the empty chair, a nonplussed Morgan issued this challenge to Akin: "Congressman, you have an open invitation to join me in that chair whenever you feel up to it, because if you don't keep your promise to be on the show, then you are what we would call in Britain a gutless little twerp."

MSNBC's "Last Word" with Lawrence O'Donnell faced similar circumstances earlier this year, when Craig Sonner, then-lawyer for Trayvon Martin shooter George Zimmerman, fled the scene of a planned interview moments before it was set to begin. O'Donnell proceeded to lambaste Sonner while sharing the screen with a live feed of the attorney's conspicuously empty chair.



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20120820-21	23:59	SteveB	Photo: Blackstock Stadium, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana

20120820-01	07:56	MarthaH	"States That Get the Most Federal Money"
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This looks amazingly a lot like the money schools get, not where needed, more where not needed. Hmmm ALASKA???

"States That Get the Most Federal Money" by Michael Sauter, Lisa Uible, Lisa Nelson, and Alexander E.M. Hess, 24/7 Wall St.

Aug. 3, 2012, (<http://247wallst.com/2012/08/03/states-that-get-the-most-federal-money/>)

In 2010, the federal government took the hundreds of billions of dollars it received in corporate, income and property taxes from each state and respend that money — and then some — on programs in each state. A review of federal data indicates that some states, considering their size and the taxes they paid, received a disproportionate amount of funding relative to the amount they put in each year.

The states that receive the most money from the federal government each year are, generally, the most populous ones. In 2010, eight of the 10 states with the highest population received the most. California, the most populous state in the country, receives the largest share — more than a third of a trillion dollars. However, when accounting for population and the amount states pay in federal taxes, the breakdown looks very different.

The states that received the most money from the federal government were identified using the most recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Consolidated Federal Funds report, which breaks out how much the federal government spent on various programs, grants and public employee salaries by state. We relied on data from the Internal Revenue Service to calculate the amount that states pay in income tax to the federal government. Based on these reports, 24/7 Wall St. identified the 10 states that received the most money from the federal government, relative to how much they paid in income tax.

Some states, including Alaska and Virginia, received more than \$15,000 per person from the federal government, even after subtracting the billions the state spent on income tax. This figure is nearly two-and-a-half times the amount received per person after taxes in states like Nevada, one of the poorest states in the country.

It would be expected that states that receive more money from the federal government are in greater need. However, most of the 10 states with the highest federal spending per capita had a higher median household income than the United States average. In fact, the first-, third-, fourth- and fifth-wealthiest by this measure all received the most money from the government. Because of their wealth, these states spent the most per capita in income tax, but it is negligible compared to the vast amounts they received.

A review of the data shows that some very large programs, including defense spending, Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security, and farm subsidies, had major effects on how much money each state received, to the extent that individuals get far more per person than in other states. In some cases, it was several programs that affected the total amount the government spent on the state per capita, but in others, it may have been just one program.

Often that program was defense spending. States like Virginia, Alaska, Maryland and New Mexico received the most money per capita in federal procurement spending, which includes things like Medicaid and NASA, but the majority of which goes to the Department of Defense. To give an idea of the amount of money the federal government poured into military bases and research centers in these states, the government spent approximately \$7,300 per person on all programs in Nevada. It also spent approximately \$5,000 per person on defense spending alone in Virginia.

Another program that requires a great deal of funding is the direct payments outside of retirement and disability. Within this category is Medicare. A couple of the states that received the most federal funds also received an extraordinarily large amount of money for medical prescription drug coverage under Medicare. More than 25% of all the funds that Connecticut received from the federal government were for drug benefits under Medicare.

Expenditures on Salaries and Wages is another category in which these states lead the country in spending per capita. This category includes the salaries and wages of defense workers and non-defense workers alike. All five of the top 10 states receiving the most in this category are represented on our list.

24/7 Wall St. identified the states that get the most money from the federal government by taking the figures for federal expenditures in each state from the 2010 Consolidated Federal Funds report and subtracting from it the income taxes retained, net of refunds, by the federal government for each state for the same year. The values obtained were then divided by state population figures for 2010 from the census bureau to arrive at a per capita figure for each state.

These are the states that get the most federal money:

10. North Dakota

- Federal spending per capita net of income taxes: \$10,438
- Total federal spending per capita: \$12,930
- Federal income taxes per capita: \$2,492

With the third-smallest population in the U.S., North Dakota's federal spending per capita was understandably larger than more populous states. North Dakota ranked third in the country for receiving Direct payments other than retirement and disability. What is unusual is the large amount of money that North Dakota farmers received from the federal government — the state ranked second in agricultural assistance in the nation, behind only Texas, which has a population more than 37 times that of North Dakota.

9. Connecticut

- Federal spending per capita net of income taxes: \$10,506
- Total federal spending per capita: \$15,662
- Federal income taxes per capita: \$5,156

Connecticut received almost 50% more government funding per capita than the national average. In 2010, Connecticut was awarded \$11.1 billion in military procurement contracts, giving the state the fourth-highest per capita federal defense expenditure — \$3,351.88. The Constitution State ranked first for the amount of spending for direct payments other than retirement and disability on a per capita basis. A significant chunk of this amount — almost 60% — was spent solely on medical prescription drug coverage. At \$14.1 billion, the amount of federal government expenditures on prescription drugs in Connecticut was more than any other state and over \$5 billion more than Florida, the state receiving the second-most federal funds in this category. Connecticut also ranked fifth in per capita federal funding from procurement spending.

8. West Virginia

- Federal spending per capita net of income taxes: \$10,568
- Total federal spending per capita: \$11,609
- Federal income taxes per capita: \$1,041

West Virginia is the only state in the top 10 where federal spending on defense was not a significant contributor to the total amount of money this state received. In fact, West Virginia ranked 48th for federal defense spending — \$609 per capita. A large portion of federal spending in West Virginia, almost 16%, was for Medicare benefits, slightly more than the national rate of 15.6%. West Virginia ranked first in the country for the percentage of people using this benefit at nearly 20%. West Virginians also received more federal spending per capita on retirement and disability benefits — which includes Social Security payments, federal retirement and disability benefits, and veterans benefits — than any other state.

7. Alabama

- Federal spending per capita net of income taxes: \$10,656
- Total federal spending per capita: \$11,820
- Federal income taxes per capita: \$1,164

Alabama comes in second for the amount of spending per capita — \$3,761 — on retirement and disability. The Cotton State also ranks seventh for procurement spending per capita, 78% of which was defense spending, and large parts of which also included the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture. Most of this procurement spending falls under the section of Department of Defense spending. Aside from Virginia and Kentucky, Alabama is the only state on this list that is in the bottom half of states for the amount of grant spending per capita. Grant spending encompasses a vast number of federal agencies and departments within each state.

6. Kentucky

- Federal spending per capita net of income taxes: \$12,129
- Total federal spending per capita: \$13,198
- Federal income taxes per capita: \$1,069

The federal government gave Kentucky more than \$7,000 per person on direct payments, which included retirement and disability benefits, unemployment benefits and student assistance — all large programs. Medicare benefits accounted for nearly 57% of such payments. This was partially due to the high amount of government money going toward prescription drug coverage in the state — \$5.46 billion in 2010. Kentucky received almost \$1.5 billion more for prescription drug coverage than California, a state with almost nine times its population.

5. New Mexico

- Federal spending per capita net of income taxes: \$12,399
- Total federal spending per capita: \$13,578
- Federal income taxes per capita: \$1,179

New Mexico received the third-highest procurement spending per capita in the U.S. at \$3,641.68. A significant component of this spending was under the category of non-defense agency spending for the Department of Energy. New Mexico received more federal funding from the Department of Energy than any other state, with an amount of \$4.8 billion. This is due to the three nuclear weapons facilities located within the state. New Mexico also ranks seventh for the grant expenditures it received per capita. More than 60% of these grants were from the Department of Health and Human Services. Some 22.53% of the population was on Medicaid — the fourth highest percentage in the nation — which is funded through this department.

4. Hawaii

- Federal spending per capita net of income taxes: \$13,709
- Total federal spending per capita: \$15,331
- Federal income taxes per capita: \$1,622

The Hawaiian Islands have 11 military bases, contributing to the country's highest per capita federal expenditure from the Department of Defense in 2010. Along with a large number of military personnel on the government payroll, Hawaii also had the highest federal salaries and wages. Some 77% of the salaries and wages paid are for active military personnel. The state had the 10th highest federal procurement spending per capita, at \$2,017.80. Since 2006, federal expenditure on salaries and wages in Hawaii has more than doubled.

3. Maryland

- Federal spending per capita net of income taxes: \$13,723
- Total federal spending per capita: \$16,673
- Federal income taxes per capita: \$2,950

Maryland had the fifth-highest federal spending per capita from the Defense Department — the state has 11 military bases. In addition, the state received more spending per capita in nonmilitary programs than any other. The state's proximity to the capital is likely a major factor in this. The state received more than 5% of the total U.S. procurement expenditure, and ranked second in per capita procurement spending — \$4,593.79 — nearly three times the national average. Of the 50 states, Maryland has the second-lowest percentage of people living below the poverty line.

2. Virginia

- Federal spending per capita net of income taxes: \$14,201
- Total federal spending per capita: \$17,008
- Federal income taxes per capita: \$2,807

Virginia received more than \$136 billion in federal funds in 2010. This state received more than 12% of the total Department of Defense procurement spending — the second-highest proportion in the country, behind California. The state received the highest per capita procurement funding and the third-highest per capita federal expenditures for salaries and wages. The state's proximity to the capital is a factor in the high government expenditures. Despite receiving the second-most federal funds per capita, Virginia was very low in terms of the grant funding it received.

1. Alaska

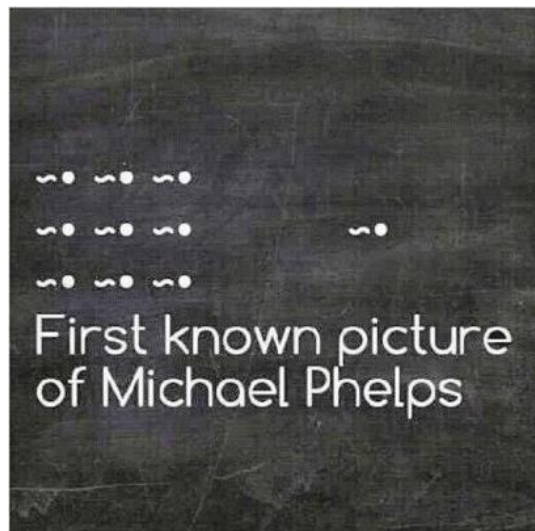
- Federal spending per capita net of income taxes: \$15,197
- Total federal spending per capita: \$17,762
- Federal income taxes per capita: \$2,565

No state in the U.S. received more money per person from the federal government than Alaska. One contributing factor is that the state had the second-highest figure for defense spending in 2010, at \$7,337.59 per capita. The federal government also allocated a great deal toward wages and salaries in Alaska — \$5,709.52 per capita. This was more than any state other than Hawaii, which spent \$5,805.78 per person, and twice the next-closest state within the contiguous U.S. — Virginia — at \$2,638.68.

[20120820-02](#) 11:29 Bill Graphic: Good Question!!!

**Remember when teachers,
public employees, Planned Par-
enthood, NPR and PBS crashed
the stock market, wiped out
half of our 401Ks, took trillions
in taxpayer funded bail outs,
spilled oil in the Gulf of Mexico,
gave themselves billions in
bonuses, and paid no taxes?
Yeah, me neither... Pass it on**

[20120820-03](#) 11:31 Bill Graphic: First Known Picture of Michael Phelps



[20120820-04](#)

12:50 Art

Re: NRA Video: "Borderless!" (reply to SteveB & SteveM, FotM Newsletter #207)

Thanks Steve, I watched the NRA piece trying to see if I am just missing something. I get there is an underground war going on among the Mexican drug cartels. We all know that. Although the op-ed piece tries to skirt the issue, the fact is almost all of the guns are coming from the USA. Putting that aside, what is the point of the rest of the piece? Yes, there are illegal immigrants coming across the border. For the most part they are looking for jobs. They've been doing that for close to a century now. What's the connection with all the drama about what is currently going on in Mexico? I suppose it could come here and practice mayhem, but we have our own home grown terrorists like the guy who murdered the Sikhs doing that already. So what's the point? The last I heard, there haven't been any massacres in Arizona or Texas of United States citizens by these guys.

The NRA could do a lot of good and I think it once was a decent organization. Somewhere along the way, the leadership got bought out by big money and they've been nothing but a shell for gun manufactures ever since. La Pierre, or whatever his name is, is a true scumbag. A .38 special is good for one thing—robbing 7-11s. I cannot see the slightest reason anyone needs a 100-round magazine for any rifle or pistol. Why do citizens need armor piercing bullets? Yet every time anyone tries to put some reason in the discussion, the NRA screams their old tired mantra, "They just want to steal all our guns". Truly pathetic.

Like you, I have guns and, what's more, I actually know how to use them—30 years of training. The first thing most of these idiots will do in a crisis is shoot themselves in the foot or, worse, some innocent bystander. Just dumb.

[20120820-09](#)

16:16 SteveM

Re: NRA Video: "Borderless!" (reply to Art, above)

Art, you are WRONG, only 20% of the guns come from the USA.. But 80 % of those are Unidentifiable as such. and that's the figure the liars like Hillary and Janet use to make believe that all the gun are from the US. I live on the border. I've heard the murders of illegals by the Cartel bandits from my back porch. And a smuggler pilot was murdered just blocks from my house by a punk I had confronted only hours earlier.

Welcome to the Wild West, If you're not shooting, you better be reloading

Political correctness is a doctrine, fostered by a delusional, illogical minority, and rabidly promoted by an unscrupulous mainstream media, which holds forth the proposition that it is entirely possible to pick up a turd by the clean end.

[20120820-15](#)

18:39 Art

Re: NRA Video: "Borderless!" (reply to SteveM, above)

SteveM, I'm sorry but these are just unsubstantiated statements. Where do you get your data on the gun source percentages? The facts are the NRA and southwestern gun dealers have done everything they can to block any attempt at gun accountability or gun control and we are the source of the guns, or so says the President of Mexico among many, many others.

I am sorry for your personal experiences, but they do not reflect that of others I know who live along the Arizona and California borders.

As for your last paragraph, it reminds me of the SDS students I used to have confront me at UC Davis between tours in Vietnam. Mindless memorized rhetoric that added nothing to the discussion. I was too busy fighting a war to pay much attention at the time and, frankly, now I just find it silly.

Glad to have a logical discussion. There are points to be made for many approaches, but they have to be presented in a logical manner.

20120820-18

21:20

SteveM

Re: NRA Video: "Borderless!" (reply to Art, above) & "Once Welcoming, Borderlands Now Forever Divided" & "Southwest Border Violence: Issues in Identifying and Measuring Spillover Violence" & "Killed in Smuggling Corridor Where Deputy Was Shot: Two Men" & "Tucson Sector Border Patrol Reports: \$2.3 Million in Dope and One Truck Seized"

Art, the gun stats are government stats Hillary, Janet, at el simply culled what the need to make they're cases to fire up the liberal base. I try not to use unsubstantiated facts. They are from the congressional record, which is probably why you don't hear the Dem choir singing that song any longer. Feel free to look it up, I sent the data to another one of SteveB's devotes about a year ago. Tried of doing the leg work for you all.

And Art, you're a little new to the border party, this cr*p has be going on for 40 plus years that I know of and everyone I know along the border has a story like mine. Why, last November, my pal Gil had 5 illegals walk up and "surrender" to him while he was deer hunting. Mind you they initiated the surrender.

If you live south of I-8 and I-10 in Cochise, Pima, Pinal or Yuma County, you have a story like mine. I'm betting your sources don't live in the geographic area I've described. Agent Terry Is not the only "cop" who's been shot. And it's not the first "armed" incursion in the Tucson sector. I don't know where your California and AZ friends live, but I've encountered problems in the deserts of both states. I know damn well when two Mexican nationals were gunned down in Tucson at the "tony" intersection of Swan and Skyline, It didn't make the national news. But two Mexican nationals (Sinaloa Cartel) were arrested for it, convicted, and deported to Mexican prison.

Bet you didn't hear about the two beheaded bodies found on Mile Wide Road (smuggling route) west of Tucson, last summer either.

When Gabby was shot everyone in my neighborhood thought Cartels. Even the two Cops. Because of her work to secure the border after Krentz's murder by Cartel scouts.

Finally, Art, Holder's DOJ and ATF have admitted to encouraging gun shops to allow the guns to walk. Statements of ATF agents obtained by Senator Grassley and CBS News show that the ATF Phoenix Field Division allowed and facilitated the sale of over 2,500 firearms (AK-47 rifles, FN 5.7mm pistols, AK-47 pistols, and .50 caliber rifles) in 'straw man purchases' destined for Mexico.

How in the hell can you state "NRA and southwestern gun dealers have done everything they can to block any attempt at gun accountability" In this instance, when they are asked not to cooperate by the Feds?

Arizona is also number one in Identity Theft, because of the Cartels: <http://identitytheftnetwork.org/network-of-coalitions/arizona-id-theft-coalition>.

Which presents a whole other problem to our sovereignty! Not to mention that 75% of the fires on the border are set by smugglers and illegals. Also found in the Congressional record.

PS — Don't ever equate me with the SDS. And don't bother to reply, because it's clear you know nothing of the border. It's not about gun control and everything about US sovereignty!

Unsubstantiated my a*s!

The AZ "red" *Star* is about as liberal as it gets, but even they have had enough.

"The Border Series: Life Then and Now" — Part 1: "Once Welcoming, Borderlands Now Forever Divided" by Brady McCombs, *Arizona Daily Star*

Dec. 11, 2011, (http://azstarnet.com/news/local/border/once-welcoming-borderlands-now-forever-divided/article_7370860b-a9bb-5a04-a176-3acf3d48f9a2.html)

A borderline that for generations was like a picket fence between neighbors is now a wedge between old friends.

At legal entry points along the U.S.-Mexico border, lines of cars often stretch for blocks as people wait to cross into and out of Mexico. Between the ports, most flimsy, barbed-wire cattle fences have been replaced by hulking steel walls or chest-high vehicle barriers made of railroad ties.

It's tougher than ever to cross, legally or illegally. And that has altered the borderlands for people who live, visit, ranch or own businesses there.

[Continue reading at Arizona Daily Star...](#)

"Southwest Border Violence: Issues in Identifying and Measuring Spillover Violence" by Kristin M. Finklea, William J. Krouse, and Marc R. Rosenblum, Congressional Research Service

Aug. 25, 2011, (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/R41075.pdf>)

There has been an increase in the level of drug trafficking-related violence within and between the drug trafficking organizations in Mexico. This violence has generated concern among U.S. policy makers that the violence in Mexico might spill over into the United States. U.S. federal officials have denied that the increase in drug trafficking-related violence in Mexico has resulted in a spillover into the United States, but they acknowledge that the prospect is a serious concern.

The most recent threat assessment indicates that the Mexican drug trafficking organizations pose the greatest drug trafficking threat to the United States, and this threat is driven partly by U.S. demand for drugs. Mexican drug trafficking organizations are the major suppliers and key producers of most illegal drugs smuggled into the United States across the Southwest border (SWB). The nature of the conflict between the Mexican drug trafficking organizations in Mexico has manifested itself, in part, as a struggle for control of these smuggling routes into the United States. Further, in an illegal marketplace—such as that of illicit drugs—where prices and profits are elevated due to the risks of operating outside the law, violence or the threat of violence becomes the primary means for settling disputes.

[Continue reading at Federation of American Scientists...](#)

"Killed in Smuggling Corridor Where Deputy Was Shot: Two Men" by Rynski, Dying to Death

June 14, 2010, (<http://deathisdeadly.com/2010/06/14/killed-in-smuggling-corridor-where-deputy-was-shot-two-men/>)

Two men were found slain June 6 in the same smuggling corridor where Pinal County sheriff Deputy Louie Puroll was shot and wounded April 30, according to a news release from the Pinal County Sheriff's Office.

An emergency 911 call came into the sheriff's office around 7:30 p.m. from a Spanish speaking man who said he and his "partner" had been shot.

[Continue reading at Dying to Death...](#)

Bet you didn't hear about this one either:

"Tucson Sector Border Patrol Reports: \$2.3 Million in Dope and One Truck Seized" by Hugh Holub, Tucson Citizen

Aug. 11, 2011, (<http://tucsoncitizen.com/view-from-baja-arizona/2011/08/11/tucson-sector-border-patrol-reports-2-3-million-in-dope-and-one-truck-seized/>)

(TUCSON) Border Patrol agents assigned to the Ajo Station seized nearly 3,000 pounds of marijuana Saturday worth about \$2.3 million.

Agents operating a mobile surveillance system near Lukeville observed suspicious activity involving a vehicle west of State Route 85 and directed other agents to the location. As agents approached the vehicle, unidentified subjects fled south; possibly into Mexico due to the close proximity of the international boundary.

[Continue reading at the Tucson Citizen...](#)

[I'm happy to see so much documentation from the Right, SteveM! We don't often get that. They usually take their marbles and run home before even starting to prove their side of the argument. –SteveB]

20120820-05	14:36	SteveB	"Todd Akin: It's Not a War on Women, It's a War on Critical Thinking & Democracy"
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Personally, I'm sick of the whole ignorant lot of them! Questions?

"Todd Akin: It's Not a War on Women, It's a War on Critical Thinking and Democracy" by Soraya Chemaly, Huffington Post

Aug. 20, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/todd-akin-rape_b_1810928.html?utm_hp_ref=politics)

In case you've been deep-sea diving in the Mariana Trench, yet another Republican Congressman unwittingly revealed his party's contempt for and distrust of women. And he did it by illustrating how the "war on women" is part of a larger issue. What Todd Akin said and believes doesn't just play into a media-catchy, election year "war on women" narrative. It's part of a reactionary, fundamentalist backlash to modernity. **It's a war on science. It's a war on facts. It's a war on critical thinking. But, really, consider it a war on democracy.** Statements like Akin's reflect the degree to which some men, steeped in all sorts of dangerous denialism, will go to protect their power and how they undermine equality and democracy to do it. Mitt Romney's smart, he gets how Akin made this obvious, which is why he's distancing himself so fast and furiously from this incident. But, Romney deep down inside agrees with the ideas that reside under the surface of such an obvious mistake. That's why he will not renounce his rights-stripping-for-women-personhood-for-fetuses happy running mate Paul Ryan, who shares the ideas expressed by Akin, even if he expresses himself less offensively.

When asked about exceptions for abortions of pregnancies resulting from rape Missouri Representative Todd Akin of the Primacy of the Father Cult (formerly known as the GOP) had this to say:

First of all, from what I understand from doctors, that's really rare. If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down. But let's assume that maybe that didn't work or something. I think there should be some punishment, but the punishment ought to be on the rapist and not attacking the child.

The amount that this man doesn't understand is staggering. He shouldn't even try putting the words "doctors" and "understand" in the same sentence. It just confuses him. But, the problem is, he's not an exception.

Although the six-term Congressman, who is running against Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill in the November 6 election, won't apologize, he has graciously come forward to join a long line of rape apologists who "misspoke." He did not "misspeak." Misspeaking is defined as "Expressing oneself imperfectly or inaccurately." He was very clear: "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down."

He wittingly regurgitated common misogynistic lies about women, their bodies, rape, pregnancy and abortion. Like Chloe Angel, at Feministing who wrote a thank you note to Akin earlier today, I am loathe to engage in uncivil discourse. I, too, believe that people who disagree should be able to do so with respect and without resorting to personal assault. However, these lies are so blatant and result in so much harm that they have to be named for what they are and challenged loudly and repeatedly and persistently.

His statements reveal several ideas about women, who bear the immediate and obvious brunt of this type of assault on reason:

1. That women lie about their rapes -- those would be, I assume, "illegitimate rapes." Either that, or he implied like other conservative Republican legislators, that women don't actually understand when they have been raped. Or better yet, that they are sluts and somehow "want it." OR, not to be ignored, that women who are raped by their husbands aren't "really" raped. OR... yes... there is another one... that women will claim they've been raped to gain the upper hand in divorce. These ideas are really important to Akin and others, like Paul Ryan, both of whom co-sponsored a bill to change the word "rape" to "forcible rape" in legislation about federal funding to abortion.
2. That even if women do get raped their bodies somehow "take care of it." Akin's comments reveal the shocking level of scientific illiteracy and denialism embraced by Republican legislators when they deal with "women's issues." Even if some benighted predatory rapist repeated "I have legitimately raped you" three times while waving their weaponized dicks in the air, women do not emit some mystical, magical hormone "to shut that whole thing down." Is it too much to ask that people suggesting, making and enforcing our laws know how to spell "biology"?
3. That women who are raped don't get pregnant much so we shouldn't worry our pretty heads about maybe getting pregnant and needing an abortion. It turns out that some women's bodies don't take care of it. The Washington Post cited a study that revealed that at least 5 percent of rape victims end up pregnant. Mr. Akin, who has explained that he is empathetic to their plights, might want to personally explain to one of the 32,000 women forced to be pregnant against their will that it is "rare."

Akin's "gaff" is not harmless. It is not just "out of touch." It's DANGEROUS AND CAUSES PAIN and OPPRESSION. And, it's not a "November" issue. It's a "just world" issue. It's a "think for yourself" issue. These people aren't pro-life. They're pro-pain. Pain central to redemption.

Which is why this is also a prime example of how religious privileging in education and public discourse overtakes reason and results in debilitating ignorance and real and tangible harm for children and women. And men. Ideas like Akin's are why rape tragedies like what happened at Penn State and the ongoing Catholic abuse nightmare happen. Ideas like Akin's and friends', grounded in misconceived ideas about sexuality and women's inherent sinfulness, their shame, their laboring for their wrongs, their sacrifice, their punishment, deny the reality of male victims of rape. These religiously vectored ideas are central to their political and legislative agendas as evidenced by these abortion and rape statements. Akin's statement and philosophy are consistent with conservative's deep mistrust of women and reflect the perverse contempt with which they simultaneously glorify sacrificial motherhood as the pinnacle of a woman's existence -- a long standing theme in Christian culture, while denigrating actual women through lies like these. Women, long portrayed as sub-human by culture, do not have to earn their abortions (or the contraception for that matter) through pain -- illness, incest, rape. Women, in theory, have the right to bodily autonomy, privacy and equal protection under the law. It is really interesting to consider his language: he refers to "the rapist" and "the child" but never to "the girl" or "the woman." Instead, the girl or woman -- the actual person who is raped and seeking to end her unwilling, non-consensual, insemination -- is "the female body" - like some kind of machine or useful tool. And, I know, it's not just men. But, the women who support these arguments will die knowing that they contributed to the infinite harm done to children and other women by their support of these policies.

Say what you will about men like Paul Ryan and Rick Santorum -- both good examples of how red hat-envy can bend bright men's minds towards incoherence and inhumanity -- at least they have the courage to take their convictions to their logical conclusions -- even if they result in sentences like "Rape is a gift from God" and in the consignment of 9 year old girls to eternal hell while their rapists get to pass through the pearly gates. But, many

people like Akin, rather than deal with the illogic of exceptions, find ways to downplay the instance, validity, painful reality, post-traumatic effects and pregnancy that result from rape.

As Garance Franke-Ruta pointed out yesterday in *The Atlantic*, these conservative rape memes have a long life. Take this doozy which she cites from 1995 when 71-year-old North Carolina state Rep. Henry Aldridge said: "The facts show that people who are raped -- who are truly raped -- the juices don't flow, the body functions don't work and they don't get pregnant. Medical authorities agree that this is a rarity, if ever." I highly recommend passing her piece along to anyone who doubts the long standing (at least in 20th century American political, versus loooong standing classical Greek and Christian thought terms) use of these confused and ignorant statements by people responsible for distributing rights and justice in the country.

[20120820-06](#)

14:56

Art

Re: "Todd Akin: It's Not a War on Women, It's a War on Critical Thinking & Democracy" (reply to SteveB, above)

She said no, but her eyes said yes.

[20120820-11](#)

16:55

SteveB

Re: "Todd Akin: It's Not a War on Women, It's a War on Critical Thinking & Democracy" (reply to Art, above)

Then she's in the right place!

[20120820-07](#)

15:21

SteveB

"Facts, Huh! What Are They Good For? Absolutely Nothing."

"Facts, Huh! What Are They Good For? Absolutely Nothing." by Paul Buchheit, [NationofChange](#)

Aug. 20, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/facts-huh-what-are-they-good-absolutely-nothing-1345468490>)

George Lakoff is right. Republicans are winning the language wars. As half of America is charmed into voting against their own interests, we progressives keep telling them the facts. Instead, we should be concerned about what Joe Romm calls "language intelligence," the ability to convince people of something by moving them both intellectually and emotionally. The Republicans do it so well. They've hijacked the big issues with inflammatory phrases like "class warfare" and "death tax." We have to learn to fight back.

For starters, we might pick some inflammatory phrases of our own. Like "class carnage," inflicted by the super-rich. And "ancestral theft," perpetrated by hustling modern-day entrepreneurs who take most of the profits from technological products developed through decades of public research.

Lakoff emphasizes the need to place words in conceptual frameworks, as Republicans do with "tax relief" to portray taxes as an undue burden that must be relieved. In this spirit, Mike Lofgren proposes that the negatively charged 'entitlements' be reframed as "earned benefits." After all, Americans pay for their retirement benefits.

Or how about the emotionally unstimulating "financial transaction tax"? Boring. In the framing world, the proposal for a tiny imposition on risky high-speed thousand-trillion-dollar trades should be called a "quadrillionaire's fee."

Romney and Ryan: R&R for the Rich

Walter Lippman, an early proponent of symbolic language, suggested that people are more likely to believe "the pictures in their heads" than actual facts. More recently, Drew Westen noted that voters are primarily influenced by their feelings toward the parties and their candidates.

So we progressives need to help Romney and Ryan come up with a good campaign buzzword. Perhaps "medikillers" or "billionaiders." Or, with apologies to Lewis Carroll, the Republican candidates could be called "jobbywhackers."

Wall Street: Once we loot, you're destitute

Language Intelligence is characterized by a few principles of usage, including brevity, repetition, repetition, and the use of metaphors and rhyme. That's good advice for fashioning a Wall Street slogan, like "Swindle or Dwindle."

And, with Wall Street on our minds, we can't overlook our beloved sayings and verses and adages, modernized for a new gilded age:

Nation in plight, banker's delight, slapped with a warning: nation in mourning.

As progressives, we find it hard to resist the facts, because they generally support our side. But if we're really smart, we have to learn how to make the facts more appealing to the people who need to hear them.

20120820-08	15:59	SteveG	"GOP Consultant: Koch Brothers Bought Ryan's Nomination with \$100 Million Promise"
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"GOP Consultant: Koch Brothers Bought Ryan's Nomination with \$100 Million Promise" by Joe Conason, *The National Memo*

Aug. 18, 2012, (<http://www.nationalmemo.com/gop-consultant-koch-brothers-bought-ryans-nomination-with-100-million-promise/>)

Veteran Republican political consultant, unrepentant dirty trickster, and recently reborn libertarian Roger Stone yesterday published a startling accusation against Paul Ryan and Mitt Romney on his personal website, The Stone Zone. According to Stone, the billionaire Koch brothers purchased the Republican vice presidential nomination for Ryan from Romney in late July by promising to fork over an additional \$100 million toward "independent expenditure" campaigning for the GOP ticket.

Any such transaction would represent a serious violation of federal election laws and perhaps other statutes, aside from the ethical and character implications for all concerned. Although Stone is not the most reputable figure, to put it mildly, he has been a Republican insider, with access to the party's top figures, over four decades. His credentials date back to Nixon's Committee to Reelect the President and continue through the Reagan White House, the hard-fought Bush campaigns, and the Florida fiasco in 2000, when he masterminded the "Brooks Brothers riot" that shut down the Bush-Gore recount in Miami-Dade. Peruse his site and you'll see his greatest hits and the attention he has drawn from major publications. (<http://www.stonezone.com>)

I've known Roger personally for years and always considered him intelligent and amusing; also extremely dangerous and even erratic. Sometimes I've been surprised by how much he knows about the inner-most workings of his party – even when he is clearly *persona non grata* among the current power elite.

Here is how Stone led his latest post, headlined "The Paul Ryan Selection," which also delivers an amusing swipe at a certain Fox News analyst:

I've waited a few days to lay out my analysis of the selection of Paul Ryan for the VP slot on the Romney ticket. Unlike politicians like Dick Morris who badmouths the selection privately and shills for it publicly, I'll tell you what I really think. My sources tell me David Koch played a key role in Ryan's selection and that Koch's wife Julia had been quietly lobbying for Ryan. The selection was cemented at the July 22nd fundraiser Koch held for Romney at the former's sumptuous Hamptons estate. Koch pledged \$100 million more to C-4 and Super PAC efforts for Romney [in exchange] for Ryan's selection.

When he mentions "C-4," of course, Stone is referring to the tax-exempt non-profit groups recognized by the IRS under section 501-C-4 of federal tax law – such as Americans for Prosperity, a group largely backed by the Koch brothers that has so far spent nearly \$20 million on this year's campaign. The C-4 groups, including another known as Crossroads GPS run by Karl Rove, need not disclose their rich donors, while Super PACs do. This year, the right-wing C-4s are outspending all the Super-PACS combined, as Pro Publica reported recently.

As a declared supporter of Libertarian Party presidential candidate Gary Johnson, the former governor of New Mexico, Stone is grinding a sizeable ax, as always. He goes on to denigrate the idea that Ryan is a libertarian, despite his declared idolatry of the late Ayn Rand. Not much more can be said about Stone's stark allegations, unless more evidence emerges to confirm them. But there is nevertheless a ring of candor in Stone's story, tying the plutocratic Kochs to the plutocratic ticket of Romney-Ryan.

What he has written amounts to a gleeful felony indictment of everyone involved. Will any of them demand a retraction or even issue a denial?

[20120820-10](#) 16:31 SteveM Video: "Hit the Road, Barack" & Laundry List of Obama's Failures

A laundry list of Obama failures:

- The net loss of private-sector jobs. [Don't forget the public sector too! –SteveB]
- The addition of 3.6 million Americans to Social Security's disability roles (a way of concealing unemployment realities).
- GDP growth that slowed to a 1.8% crawl in 2011. [Gee, at least it grew! –SteveB]
- Chronically high unemployment.
- A much-vaunted and equally despised health-care reform law.
- A \$5 trillion increase to the national debt.

[That's all you could come up with? –SteveB]

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

[20120820-12](#) 17:10 SteveB Re: Laundry List of Obama's Failures (reply to SteveM, above)

Your laundry list was all caused by Bush and his buddies, with solutions prevented by Republicans in Congress.

As much as Republicans might hope and pray, I haven't forgotten!

[20120820-13](#) 17:30 SteveM Re: Laundry List of Obama's Failures (reply to SteveB, above)

Wrong, dummy! Congress and the Senate were controlled by the Democrats from Jan 07 to Jan 11, 4 f*cking years, dummy!

BHO was a Senator, and Harry and Nancy ran the Show. Obama did more to reverse the fortunes of the Dem's from Jan 09 to Nov 10 than anyone before him. Man up, dummy!

"The arc of history is long, but it always bends towards justice." [Funny you don't give Dr. King credit for this quote. –SteveB]

[20120820-16](#) 19:35 SteveB Re: Laundry List of Obama's Failures (reply to SteveM, above)

Can you spell filibuster?

As for the rest, I simply do not agree. President Obama looks a lot like a Republican to me, just not quite as bad. :-)

[20120820-19](#) 21:29 SteveM Re: Laundry List of Obama's Failures (reply to SteveB, above)

They didn't have a problem forcing Obamacare down our throats, makes your filibuster argument pretty lame. Why do you even try?

[20120820-20](#) 22:17 SteveB Re: Laundry List of Obama's Failures (reply to SteveM, above)

Obamacare...the only thing they did and it's a good thing.

[20120820-14](#) 17:32 SteveM Fw: Obama's Daughters are 'Senior Staffers' & "Judicial Watch Obtains Documents Detailing the Cost to Taxpayers for Michelle Obama's Family Trip to Africa"

How do you like this bit of deception from the "most open administration in history"??

[Source of original email unknown. –SteveB]

Obama's Daughters are 'Senior Staffers'

Who says we don't have royalty?

I guess the *Boston Globe* and the *NY times* must have forgotten to print this. OBAMA'S DAUGHTERS ARE 'SENIOR STAFFERS'? By Judicial Watch this March. And the administration (the most open administration in history) had to be sued to get this through the Freedom Of Information act. Way to go Judicial Watch.

Michelle Obama Listed Daughters As "Senior Staffers" To Justify Expensive African Vacation and Safari

October 5, 2011 Judicial Watch said the U.S. Air Force provided a C-32 (a Boeing 757) modified by the military for the purpose of flying big-wigs around the world – to fly the First Lady and her entourage to and from Africa , at a cost of \$424,142. Another \$928.44 was listed as "bulk food" costs of providing 192 onboard meals for the 21 people who made the trip. The Obama daughters were listed on the manifest as "senior staff." "This junket wasted tax dollars and the resources of our overextended military. No wonder we had to sue to pry loose this information." The nation is suffering with the economy sputtering, the national debt soaring and Obama's economic rescue policies not only failing but actively making things worse. Meanwhile, the First Lady justifies an expensive trip to Africa to take a vacation and safari with her daughters by saying it's "official business" and even going so far as to list her children as "staffers." The level of arrogance and dishonesty on display here is nothing short of shocking. But, er, "hope for change" and "yes we can."

It's a true story. Check out this link:

["Judicial Watch Obtains Documents Detailing the Cost to Taxpayers for Michelle Obama's Family Trip to Africa" by Judicial Watch](#)

Oct. 4, 2011, (<http://www.judicialwatch.org/press-room/press-releases/judicial-watch-obtains-documents-detailing-the-cost-to-taxpayers-for-michelle-obama-s-family-trip-to-africa/>)

(Charges for the Aircraft and Crew Alone Amount to \$424,142.)

(WASHINGTON) Judicial Watch, the [RIGHT-WING! –SteveB] organization that investigates and fights government corruption, announced today that it has obtained mission expense records and passenger manifests from the United States Air Force related to the June 21-27, 2011, trip taken by First Lady Michelle Obama, her family and her staff to South Africa and Botswana. Judicial Watch obtained the documents pursuant to an August 19, 2011, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit (Judicial Watch v. U.S. Air Force (No. 11-1496)). Judicial Watch is investigating the purpose and itinerary of the trip as well as a breakdown of the costs to taxpayers.

On June 28, 2011, Judicial Watch filed a FOIA request seeking the mission taskings, transportation records, and passenger manifests for Michelle Obama's Africa trip. Documents were only provided after Judicial Watch filed suit:

- According to U.S. Department of Defense's published hourly rates for the C-32A aircraft used for the trip, Judicial Watch calculated the total cost to American taxpayers was \$424,142 for use of the aircraft (34.8 flight hours x \$12,188 per hour). (The C-32 is a specially configured military version of the Boeing 757.) Other expenses – meals (off the plane), transportation, security, various services, etc. – have yet to be disclosed.
- The passenger manifests confirm the presence of Obama's daughter's, Malia and Sasha on the trip. The two girls are listed as "Senior Staff." The manifests also list Mrs. Obama's mother, Marian Robinson, and niece and nephew, Leslie and Avery Robinson, as well Mrs. Obama's makeup and hairstylist (Carl Ray and Johnny Wright).
- The expense records also show \$928.44 was spent for "bulk food" purchases on flight. Overall, during the trip, 192 meals were served for the 21 passengers on board.

The professed purpose of Michelle Obama's trip to South Africa and Botswana was to encourage young people living in the two growing democracies to become involved in national affairs; and during her scheduled stops in Pretoria and Cape Town, South Africa and in Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, the First Lady used the opportunity to speak on education, health and wellness issues. The trip also included such tourist events as visits to historical landmarks and museums, plus a nonworking chance to spend time with Nelson Mandela, a meeting that Mrs. Obama described as "surreal." The trip ended with a private family safari at a South African game reserve before the group returned to Washington on June 27. "This trip was as much an opportunity for the Obama family to go on a safari as it was a trip to conduct government business," said Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton. "This junket wasted tax dollars and the resources of our overextended military. No wonder we had to sue to pry loose this information."

20120820-17	19:49	SteveB	Re: Obama's Daughters are 'Senior Staffers' (reply to SteveM, above)
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This is old BS and the original article pretty much indicates the whole thing is no big deal (even in a right-wing rag):

<http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/washington-whispers/2011/10/04/michelle-obamas-africa-vacation-cost-more-than-432142>.

Take a look at how much money Bush wasted invading Iraq and going on vacations to Walker Point in Kennebunkport, Maine. Why, the Secret Service alone must have cost...

The First Lady should be able to take her daughters on a good-will vacation to Africa. Period. More power to her.

Whatever happened to "American exceptionalism"?

<http://www.depauw.edu/athletics/facilities/blackstock-stadium/>



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

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