

December 17, 2013

Telegraph, UK column on the bad luck of U. S. friends when 2008 heralded changes in our foreign policy.

In his oration at Nelson Mandela's memorial service on Tuesday, Barack Obama asked himself "how well have I applied his lessons in my own life?", and invited all of us to ask the same question of ourselves.

In his own case, President Obama offered no answer. But it was the fairly clear implication of his words that he didn't think he was shaping up too badly. Madiba, he said, had been "the last great liberator of the 20th century". Guess who looks like being the first great liberator of the 21st.

Today's leaders needed to be filled, he went on, with the spirit of Ubuntu – a Nguni Bantu word meaning "the oneness of humanity" (Cameroon translation: "We're all in this together"). They needed to stand up for justice and peace. His performance reminded me slightly of Tom Lehrer's Folk Song Army: "We all hate poverty, war and injustice – unlike the rest of you squares."

Such rhetoric is consistent with the tone that Mr Obama has used from the beginning of his presidency, notably when he reached out to Islam in his speech in Cairo in June 2009. It is by now not too early – in some respects, it may even be too late – to ask whether Mr Obama's foreign policy has yet produced any great outbreak of global Ubuntu.

There is no doubt that billions of people – including your hard-bitten columnist – wanted to hear some such hopeful message when Mr Obama first came to global prominence in 2008. Even today, it is not only Left-wing Danish prime ministers and Mr Cameron who want to share a selfie with him: a large portion of humanity feels the same. The BBC News website still leads off each day with an elderly picture of Obama and Bill Clinton arm in arm. But what, in five years or so, has actually happened?

Broadly speaking, the governments and people which most closely identified with the United States have lost out. ...

... We in the non-American West are still a bit dazed by what is happening. We liked President Obama so much that we wanted to agree with whatever he wanted to do. But such agreement was based, of course, on the premise that he wielded power. Today, with Obamacare turning into his poll tax at home, and Russia, China and Iran all pushing forward into the spaces he has vacated, this has become harder to believe. Which leaves Barack Obama as little more than an eloquent, narcissistic global preacher, expounding Ubuntu to gradually dwindling congregations.

On the Great Seal of the United States is – to use the correct heraldic term – "A Bald Eagle proper displayed". It symbolises its country's soaring power. Time to modernise it, I fear, and replace it with a selfie.

Michael Barone has similar thoughts while reading the history of how the Western world stumbled into the first World War.

Watching the twists and turns of American foreign policy while reading Christopher Clark's [The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914](#) is an unnerving experience.

Clark's history, unlike many on the outbreak of World War I, starts not with the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in June 1914, but a dozen or so years earlier. He examines the muddled internal politics behind the foreign policies of major and minor powers — and how often they were incomprehensible to each other.

He also shows how different powers formed shifting and sometimes unlikely alliances, with fateful consequences. Britain ended her longtime enmity with France in the 1904 entente cordiale and broke with the Ottoman Empire to join her “Great Game” rival Russia.

Have we been watching something similar in our own time? Barack Obama brought to the presidency a different approach than the post-Cold War stances of his two predecessors. ...

... Sudden reversals of policy, shifting alliances, secret negotiations—these are reminiscent of Christopher Clark's statesmen who sleepwalked into World War I. Let's hope that clashes over Asian islets or Iranian centrifuges don't have the kind of consequences as that terrorist murder in Sarajevo did 99 years ago.

Michael Goodwin has more.

My bookshelves sag with encyclopedic volumes arguing that America and the West are in decline. But proving that a picture is worth a thousand books, the “selfie” seen 'round the world ends the argument.

It's official — the government of the United States of Obama consists of boobs and bores and is led by a narcissist. It is no consolation that Great Britain joins us in racing to the bottom.

President Obama's flirting with Denmark's prime minister would be shameful on any occasion. That it happened at the memorial for Nelson Mandela only adds to the embarrassment.

But the “selfie” episode also symbolizes the greater global calamity of Western decline. With British prime minister David Cameron playing the role of Obama's giggling wingman, the “look at me” moment confirms we have unserious leaders in a dangerously serious time. ...

Closing this section is a **NY Times** news report on a Saudi Prince trashing the president.

An influential Saudi prince blasted the Obama administration on Sunday for what he called indecision and a loss of credibility with allies in the Middle East, saying that American efforts to secure a peace deal between Israelis and Palestinians would founder without a clear commitment from President Obama.

"We've seen several red lines put forward by the president, which went along and became pinkish as time grew, and eventually ended up completely white," said Prince Turki al-Faisal, the former intelligence chief of Saudi Arabia. "When that kind of assurance comes from a leader of a country like the United States, we expect him to stand by it." He added, "There is an issue of confidence."

Mr. Obama has his problems, the prince said, but when a country has strong allies, "you should be able to give them the assurance that what you say is going to be what you do." The prince no longer has any official position but has lately been providing the public expression of internal Saudi views with clear approval from the Saudi government.

The Saudis have been particularly shaken by Mr. Obama's refusal to intervene forcefully in the Syrian civil war, especially his recent decision not to punish President Bashar al-Assad of Syria with military strikes even after evidence emerged that Mr. Assad's government used chemical weapons on its own citizens. ...

Turning to another subject, the [Daily Caller](#) notes a Swedish study that determined the world was much warmer during the height of Roman power and during the Medieval era. Pickerhead wants to know why that happened without his SUV and his boat that gets 1 mile to a gallon? All this effort to increase his carbon footprint, and for what?

... The [study](#), by scientist Leif Kullman, analyzed 455 "radiocarbon-dated mega-fossils" in the Scandes mountains and found that tree lines for different species of trees were higher during the Roman and Medieval times than they are today. Not only that, but the temperatures were higher as well.

"Historical tree line positions are viewed in relation to early 21st century equivalents, and indicate that tree line elevations attained during the past century and in association with modern climate warming are highly unusual, but not unique, phenomena from the perspective of the past 4,800 years," Kullman found. "Prior to that, the pine tree line (and summer temperatures) was consistently higher than present, as it was also during the Roman and Medieval periods."

Kullman also wrote that "summer temperatures during the early Holocene thermal optimum may have been 2.3°C higher than present." The "Holocene thermal optimum was a warm period that occurred between 9,000 and 5,000 years ago. This warm period was followed by a gradual cooling period."

According to Kullman, the temperature spikes were during the Roman and Medieval warming periods "were succeeded by a distinct tree line/temperature dip, broadly corresponding to the Little Ice Age."

For many years now, there was an alleged scientific consensus that the Earth was warming due to humans releasing greenhouse gases into the air — primarily through burning fossil fuels. However, temperatures stopped rising after 1998, leaving scientists scrambling to find an explanation to the hiatus in warming.

Increasingly, scientists are [looking away from human causes](#) and looking at solar activity and natural climate variability for explanations of why the planet warms and cools.

"All other things being equal, adding more greenhouse gases to the atmosphere will have a warming effect on the planet," Judith Curry, a climatologist at the Georgia Institute of Technology, told the Los Angeles Times. "However, all things are never equal, and what we are seeing is natural climate variability dominating over human impact." ...

And snow in Cairo Egypt according to the LA Times. How stupid is Al Gore?

CAIRO -- Snow coated domes and minarets Friday as a record Middle East storm compounded the suffering of Syrian refugees, sent the Israeli army scrambling to dig out stranded motorists and gave Egyptians a rare glimpse of snow in their capital.

Nearly three feet of snow closed roads in and out of Jerusalem, which is set in high hills, and thousands in and around the city were left without power. Israeli soldiers and police rescued hundreds trapped in their cars by snow and ice. In the West Bank, the branches of olive trees groaned under the weight of snow.

In Cairo, where local news reports said the last recorded snowfall was more than 100 years ago, children in outlying districts capered in white-covered streets, and adults marveled at the sight, tweeting pictures of snow-dusted parks and squares. In other parts of the city, rain and hail rocketed down. ...

Closing this section, we have a post from John Hinderaker on the corruption of the green movement.

We have written many times about the corruption of the global warming movement. Billions and billions of dollars are being poured into the pockets of global warming alarmists, because they perform such a valuable service: they help to persuade voters that governments should be given greater control over the world's economies. What's a few billion dollars when trillions are at stake?

We have written mostly about the corruption of Greens in America, where Al Gore has become a standing joke. But the Daily Mail has performed the valuable service of exposing the corruption that is rampant among British environmentalists; specifically, global warming alarmists:

"The Mail on Sunday today reveals the extraordinary web of political and financial interests creating dozens of eco-millionaires from green levies on household energy bills.

A three-month investigation shows that some of the most outspoken campaigners who demand that consumers pay the colossal price of shifting to renewable energy are also getting rich from their efforts."

One is tempted to ask why anyone should be surprised by this, but of course, many people had no idea that the environmental movement is a cesspool of corruption. ...

Telegraph, UK

America's friends are left behind in Barack Obama's new plans

The US president spoke of 'oneness' at Nelson Mandela's memorial service, but he has been reduced to little more than a global preacher with a shrinking flock

by Charles Moore

In his oration at Nelson Mandela's memorial service on Tuesday, Barack Obama asked himself "how well have I applied his lessons in my own life?", and invited all of us to ask the same question of ourselves.

In his own case, President Obama offered no answer. But it was the fairly clear implication of his words that he didn't think he was shaping up too badly. Madiba, he said, had been "the last great liberator of the 20th century". Guess who looks like being the first great liberator of the 21st.

Today's leaders needed to be filled, he went on, with the spirit of Ubuntu – a Nguni Bantu word meaning "the oneness of humanity" (Cameroon translation: "We're all in this together"). They needed to stand up for justice and peace. His performance reminded me slightly of Tom Lehrer's Folk Song Army: "We all hate poverty, war and injustice – unlike the rest of you squares."

Such rhetoric is consistent with the tone that Mr Obama has used from the beginning of his presidency, notably when he reached out to Islam in his speech in Cairo in June 2009. It is by now not too early – in some respects, it may even be too late – to ask whether Mr Obama's foreign policy has yet produced any great outbreak of global Ubuntu.

There is no doubt that billions of people – including your hard-bitten columnist – wanted to hear some such hopeful message when Mr Obama first came to global prominence in 2008. Even today, it is not only Left-wing Danish prime ministers and Mr Cameron who want to share a selfie with him: a large portion of humanity feels the same. The BBC News website still leads off each day with an elderly picture of Obama and Bill Clinton arm in arm. But what, in five years or so, has actually happened?

Broadly speaking, the governments and people which most closely identified with the United States have lost out. In the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Gulf States, Turkey and Israel are feeling sore. Regimes, like Mubarak's Egypt, which had put all their eggs in the American basket, then found them addled. Many fell. In the Far East, old US allies feel inadequately protected from the rising power of China, and in Africa that same rising power has been left free to buy the place up. The great Obama "pivot to Asia" seems to have pivoted away again. Even western Europe feels neglected.

As for Britain, the bust of Winston Churchill left the Oval Office as Mr Obama moved in, and we lost influence. Just now, we have been embarrassed by US security failures in the Edward

Snowden affair, and it seems quite likely that US changes proposed as a result of it will amputate some of the intimate intelligence cooperation that has helped us so much since 1946.

So the rewards for doing the right thing by the United States seem to have diminished sharply. I am not saying that all the countries just listed are notable practitioners of Ubuntu. Saudi Arabia's very name – referring as it does to one family – is a denial of the oneness of humanity. But the list looks pretty good compared with that of the anti-American countries on which Obama's America is now smiling.

At the Mandela do, the president shook hands with Raul Castro of Cuba. Other big beneficiaries include Assad's Syria (plus Hezbollah), Kim Jong-un's uncle-slaying North Korea and, above all, the government – though not the people – of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Its newish President Rouhani is treated by America as if he were his country's Gorbachev. But there is a difference: Gorbachev, Communist though he was, was actually trying to reverse the military and political aggression of his country. President Rouhani is trying to enhance that of his.

The least Ubuntu nations on earth are doing just fine in the Obama world order. Whenever, in response to international criticism, they have increased their arsenals, tested more missiles or set more nuclear centrifuges whirring (please forgive me if, in fact, centrifuges do not whirl), America has bent over backwards not to be unkind. By not applying the Mandela lessons in their own lives, they have survived, even prospered.

It is extraordinary that the recent interim agreement with Iran in Geneva has not been subjected to proper scrutiny here. All that the Obama-led West secured was a delay in the implementation of Iran's nuclear programme. In return, Iran won the unfreezing of its foreign assets, the freedom to keep roughly 19,000 nuclear centrifuges and the first effective recognition of its right to be a "threshold" nuclear power.

The previously agreed international position that Iran should not become a nuclear power, full stop, has now been smashed by the very country that established it. Last weekend, President Obama said that "the idea that Iran... would just continue to get more and more nervous about sanctions and military threats, and ultimately just say, OK, we give in – I think that does not reflect an honest understanding of the Iranian people and the Iranian regime." Thus are 35 years of an anti-Western world view rewarded by the "Great Satan". Supporting it all, William Hague, our Foreign Secretary, told the House of Commons that the agreement was the triumph of "sheer persistence". Hansard surely wrote that down wrong: he must have said "Shia persistence".

This American policy is not, of course, the result of mere inadvertence. The Obamists have a position. Their broad argument for what the president is doing is that, by taking the heat out of so many antagonisms, it creates the space for dialogue and reconciliation.

I doubt if it looks like that in the Muslim world. Far from working hard for democracy, human rights etc, Mr Obama has discouraged most local movements towards such things, including the serious possibility in 2009 that the Islamist regime in Iran could fall. When the Arab Spring came along, he dumped the old lot without knowing which of the new to embrace. Which Syrian liberal or Egyptian democrat or Western-leaning Afghan has much cause to thank him today?

At the same time, he has not abandoned organised violence. This great advocate of soft power often prefers the hard stuff. His main policy towards Pakistan is drone attacks. As a result, al-Qaeda has moved into politically vacant spaces, such as Syria, Yemen and bits of the Maghreb, its limbs becoming more powerful than its head. It is achieving new authenticity as a popular insurgency. Mr Obama told his Cairo audience more than four years ago that Guantanamo Bay would close in 2010. It is still open. A good deal of Muslim opinion sees the man with peace on his lips as even more of a stinking hypocrite than George W Bush.

We in the non-American West are still a bit dazed by what is happening. We liked President Obama so much that we wanted to agree with whatever he wanted to do. But such agreement was based, of course, on the premise that he wielded power. Today, with Obamacare turning into his poll tax at home, and Russia, China and Iran all pushing forward into the spaces he has vacated, this has become harder to believe. Which leaves Barack Obama as little more than an eloquent, narcissistic global preacher, expounding Ubuntu to gradually dwindling congregations.

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Examiner

[Obama abandons friends abroad in hopes of appeasing foes](#)

by Michael Barone

Watching the twists and turns of American foreign policy while reading Christopher Clark’s *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* is an unnerving experience.

Clark’s history, unlike many on the outbreak of World War I, starts not with the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in June 1914, but a dozen or so years earlier. He examines the muddled internal politics behind the foreign policies of major and minor powers — and how often they were incomprehensible to each other.

He also shows how different powers formed shifting and sometimes unlikely alliances, with fateful consequences. Britain ended her longtime enmity with France in the 1904 entente cordiale and broke with the Ottoman Empire to join her “Great Game” rival Russia.

Have we been watching something similar in our own time? Barack Obama brought to the presidency a different approach than the post-Cold War stances of his two predecessors.

Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, in different ways, maintained support for America’s longstanding allies while gingerly seeking rapprochement with former enemies Russia and China.

With China they established strong trade and financial ties, while discouraging Chinese military aggressiveness. When China shelled the waters off Taiwan in 1996, Clinton sent in the Sixth Fleet.

Clinton cooperated with Boris Yeltsin until he flamed out in 1999. Bush found that his initial faith in Vladimir Putin was ill-founded.

Barack Obama has put a radically different stamp on American foreign policy. Conservative critics perhaps exaggerate, but are on to something, when they characterize him as disrespecting America's traditional friends and truckling to longtime enemies.

The pattern has become more pronounced in Obama's second term. He is making good on his promise to Putin to have "more flexibility."

In his first term he blindsided allies by canceling missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic to appease Putin. In this term he didn't lift a finger when Putin's successfully blocked Ukraine from establishing closer economic ties with the European Union.

In his first term he one-upped the Palestinians by demanding that Israel stop building settlements (including additions on houses) in East Jerusalem. More recently he supported the Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt as a step toward democracy until it was toppled by the military.

In his first term he called for the ouster of Syria's Assad regime and said that its use of chemical weapons would be crossing a "red line." In his second term he let the red line be crossed and allowed Putin to stage-manage Syria's agreement to relinquish the weapons.

In the process the United States has abandoned attempts to depose Assad and now depends on his good faith to locate the weapons—a victory for Putin and Assad's allies in Iran.

Obama's sharp reversals on Syria have been echoed by contradictory responses to China's declaration of an expanded Air Defense Identification Zone in the East China Sea, covering the Senkaku Islands owned by Japan but claimed by China.

Obama promptly ordered B-52s to fly through the ADIZ without notifying China. But the Federal Aviation Administration also told U.S. airlines to inform China when flying through this airspace. Japan and South Korea took a contrary stance.

Vice President Joe Biden, visiting China last week, expressed deep concern about the ADIZ and warned against armed clashes that could result. But he did not demand it be scrapped.

The November agreement with Iran, concluded after months of undisclosed U.S.-Iran negotiations, suspended sanctions for six months but did not require the dismemberment of centrifuges demanded in previous United Nations resolutions.

America's traditional allies Israel and Saudi Arabia have made no secret of their opposition to this agreement. They fear a nuclear Iran dominating their region.

The American Interest's Walter Russell Mead sees the emergence of an unlikely Israeli-Saudi alliance against Iran, Russia and China, which he calls the "Central Powers"—the term used for Germany's allies in World War I.

Today's Central Powers, he writes, are seeking to diminish U.S. power in the Middle East and East Asia, with some success. The U.S. is abandoning friends in the hope of reducing hostility from enemies.

Sudden reversals of policy, shifting alliances, secret negotiations—these are reminiscent of Christopher Clark's statesmen who sleepwalked into World War I. Let's hope that clashes over Asian islets or Iranian centrifuges don't have the kind of consequences as that terrorist murder in Sarajevo did 99 years ago.

NY Post

[How the West was lost by the selfie president](#)

by Michael Goodwin

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But the "[selfie](#)" episode also symbolizes the greater global calamity of Western decline. With British prime minister David Cameron playing the role of Obama's giggling wingman, the "look at me" moment confirms we have unserious leaders in a dangerously serious time.

Iran marches toward nuclear weapons and already there is talk in military circles that a nuclear-armed Iran could mean mushroom clouds in the Mideast within five years.

China is flexing its muscles throughout Asia, its ships brazenly confronting ours on the high seas. Russia is expanding its writ in the Arab lands and in Eastern Europe while making casual threats about bombing America. Syria's Assad uses chemical weapons and Obama and Cameron rattle little sabers before meekly agreeing to become his partner.

The sign-language interpreter wasn't the only fake at the Mandela funeral. Obama and Cameron were posing as world leaders.

They will never be confused with FDR and Churchill. The fratboys stand in stark contrast to the days when the "special relationship" meant two great leaders uniting two great countries in the fight for freedom. Those leaders understood the consequences if evil prevailed and were committed to victory.

Churchill coined the term "special relationship" during World War II and used it again in his "Iron Curtain Speech" in 1946 that marked the unofficial start of the Cold War. Fearful the West would

disarm again, as it did after World War I, he wanted to combat communism by maintaining the “special relationship between the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States.”

To him it meant our “kindred systems of society” must grow ever closer to provide mutual security and a framework for global peace. That special bond later cemented the Ronald Reagan-Margaret Thatcher partnership that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Try to imagine any of those four embarrassing their nations by acting like indulgent teenagers while civilization hung in the balance. You can't because they wouldn't.

Hitler's greatest mistake was being born too soon. If he were on the march now, would there be will in Washington and London to stop him? Would there be an arsenal of democracy to save mankind from darkness?

In fact, while Obama and Cameron were yukking it up in South Africa, the White House was denouncing bipartisan efforts in Congress to pass more sanctions against Iran. Doing so, it said, would scuttle the feeble interim deal Obama and Cameron accepted. Incredibly, administration arguments echoed Iran's position.

Try to imagine FDR and Churchill siding with Hitler against their national legislatures. You can't because they were the antitheses of the appeasers of their times.

World War II proved that the international order collapses when there is no one to support and enforce it. Obama himself has said that, but apparently believes talk is sufficient.

Cameron also talks a good game, but hollowed out the British military to where it is no longer capable of sustained missions.

Words don't matter to tyrants and genocidal maniacs. They push until they are convinced there will be consequences if they go further.

Our weakness invites their aggression and makes war more likely, not less. That is the perilous state of the world, as the clown kings of the West party on.

NY Times

[Saudi Prince Criticizes Obama Administration, Citing Indecision in Mideast](#)

by Steven Erlanger

MONACO — An influential Saudi prince blasted the Obama administration on Sunday for what he called indecision and a loss of credibility with allies in the Middle East, saying that American efforts to secure a peace deal between Israelis and Palestinians would founder without a clear commitment from President Obama.

“We've seen several red lines put forward by the president, which went along and became pinkish as time grew, and eventually ended up completely white,” said Prince Turki al-Faisal, the former intelligence chief of Saudi Arabia. “When that kind of assurance comes from a leader of a

country like the United States, we expect him to stand by it.” He added, “There is an issue of confidence.”

Mr. Obama has his problems, the prince said, but when a country has strong allies, “you should be able to give them the assurance that what you say is going to be what you do.” The prince no longer has any official position but has lately been providing the public expression of internal Saudi views with clear approval from the Saudi government.

The Saudis have been particularly shaken by Mr. Obama’s refusal to intervene forcefully in the Syrian civil war, especially his recent decision not to punish President Bashar al-Assad of Syria with military strikes even after evidence emerged that Mr. Assad’s government used chemical weapons on its own citizens.

Instead, Mr. Obama chose to seek congressional authorization for a strike, and when that proved difficult to obtain, he cooperated with Russia to get Syria to agree to give up its chemical weapons. Prince Turki and Israeli officials have argued that the agreement merely legitimized Mr. Assad, and on Sunday, the prince called the world’s failure to stop the conflict in Syria “almost a criminal negligence.”

Syria, Iran, nuclear issues and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were the main focus for Prince Turki, who spoke at the World Policy Conference, a gathering of officials and intellectuals largely drawn from Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

Saudi unhappiness with Iran’s growing power in the region is no secret, and the Saudis, who themselves engage with Iran, have no problem with the United States trying to do the same, the prince said. But he complained that bilateral talks between Iranian and American officials had been kept secret from American allies, sowing further mistrust.

The prince said Iran must give up its ambitions for a nuclear weapons program — Iran says its nuclear program is only for civilian purposes — and stop using its own troops and those of Shiite allies like the Lebanese organization Hezbollah to fight in neighboring countries, like Syria and Iraq. “The game of hegemony toward the Arab countries is not acceptable,” the prince said. Just as Arabs will not dress as Westerners do, he said, “we won’t accept to wear Iranian clothes, either.”

A prevalent theme at the conference was the waning of American influence in the Middle East. Laurent Fabius, the French foreign minister, said: “Today we live in a zero-polar, or a-polar, world. No one power or group of powers can solve all the problems.”

The United States, Mr. Fabius said, was often criticized for being “overpresent, but now it is being criticized for not being present enough.” While “it is perfectly understandable” that Mr. Obama would refrain from new military engagements in the Middle East, he said, “it creates a certain vacuum” that has allowed Russia “to make a comeback on the world scene” and has encouraged France to intervene in the Central African Republic, Libya and Mali.

A former Israeli ambassador to the United States, Itamar Rabinovich, said that after Mr. Obama declined to strike Syria, neither Israel nor Iran believed any longer that he might use military force against Iran.

Prince Turki said the Israeli-Palestinian issue remained central to relations between the Muslim world and the West. He praised the negotiating efforts of Secretary of State John Kerry, but warned that Mr. Obama must be willing to force the parties to accept a lasting resolution. “Mr. Kerry is devoting a lot of time and energy,” he said, “but we’ll see how far he gets if the president doesn’t put his full support behind it.”

He compared the United States to a big bear that must push and frighten both Israeli and Palestinian leaders into an agreement, and give them each an excuse for making the necessary, difficult compromises on issues like Jerusalem, refugees, land swaps and security arrangements.

“Unfortunately, the big bear has not proven to be very bearish-like recently,” Prince Turki said. To get the job done, he said, the bear “has to not only bare his teeth, but also extend his claws” when talks reach the crucial point.

Conversely, Prince Turki warned, “if the president retreats from his position on compromise along the 1967 borders, as he did on his red line on use of chemical weapons by Assad, then the whole enterprise of peace between the Arabs and Israel will evaporate.”

In separate remarks here to the Reuters news agency, Prince Turki said that the United States and Britain had done too little to help the more moderate, more secular Syrian rebels, leaving them to fend for themselves against both “Al Assad’s killing machine” and the better-armed radical Islamist rebel groups.

“Why should he stop the killing?” he said of Mr. Assad.

“That to me is why the F.S.A. is not in as prominent position as it should be today,” he said, referring to the Free Syrian Army, “because of the lack of international support for it. The fighting is going to continue, and the killing is going to continue.”

Daily Caller

[Study: Earth was warmer in Roman, Medieval times](#)

by Michael Bastasch

If you think the Earth is hot now, try wearing plate armor in the Middle Ages.

A Swedish [study](#) found that the planet was warmer in ancient Roman times and the Middle Ages than today, challenging the mainstream idea that man-made greenhouse gas emissions are the main drivers of global warming.

The [study](#), by scientist Leif Kullman, analyzed 455 “radiocarbon-dated mega-fossils” in the Scandes mountains and found that tree lines for different species of trees were higher during the Roman and Medieval times than they are today. Not only that, but the temperatures were higher as well.

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The Kullman study points to mounting evidence that climate is largely out of human control, as humans were not burning large amounts fossil fuels during Roman and Medieval times.

Some scientists have pointed to solar activity as the predictor of where global temperatures are headed. Researchers have pointed to falling sunspot activity as evidence that the planet will cool off in the coming decades.

“By looking back at certain isotopes in ice cores, [Professor Mike Lockwood of Reading University] has been able to determine how active the sun has been over thousands of years,” [the BBC reports](#). “Following analysis of the data, Professor Lockwood believes solar activity is now falling more rapidly than at any time in the last 10,000 years.”

Others have looked to natural climate systems for explanations for answers to the 15-year pause in global warming.

A [study](#) by Dr. Roy Spencer from the University of Alabama, Huntsville found that about half the warming that occurred since the 1970s can be attributed to El Niño weather events, which had a warming effect on the planet.

The Pacific Ocean’s natural warming and cooling cycles last about 30 years, with La Niña cooling being dominant from the 1950s to the 1970s and El Niño warming events dominating late 1970s to the late 1990s. Spencer suggests that the world may be in a La Niña cooling period.

LA Times

[Snow closes roads in Israel, is a source of wonder in Egypt](#)

By Laura King and Batsheva Sobelman

CAIRO -- Snow coated domes and minarets Friday as a record Middle East storm compounded the suffering of Syrian refugees, sent the Israeli army scrambling to dig out stranded motorists and gave Egyptians a rare glimpse of snow in their capital.

Nearly three feet of snow closed roads in and out of Jerusalem, which is set in high hills, and thousands in and around the city were left without power. Israeli soldiers and police rescued hundreds trapped in their cars by snow and ice. In the West Bank, the branches of olive trees groaned under the weight of snow.

In Cairo, where local news reports said the last recorded snowfall was more than 100 years ago, children in outlying districts capered in white-covered streets, and adults marveled at the sight, tweeting pictures of snow-dusted parks and squares. In other parts of the city, rain and hail rocketed down.





On social media, some joked that the snowfall was the mystical work of Gen. Abdel Fattah Sisi, the military strongman who is the focus of something of a cult of personality among his followers. Sisi led the [coup](#) five months ago against the highly unpopular but democratically elected Islamist president, [Mohamed Morsi](#).

Storm-driven waves lashed Egypt's Mediterranean coast, and fishermen in the ancient port city of Alexandria were warned by authorities against putting out to sea. In the Sinai Peninsula, snow fell on Mt. Sinai and St. Catherine's monastery at its foot. Sleet washed the dusty fronds of desert palm trees.

The inclement weather worsened the situation for tens of thousands of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, where many live in makeshift camps, abandoned buildings and other temporary sites lacking heat and protection from the elements.

In Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, many refugees were digging out snow from their provisional shelters amid subfreezing conditions. The situation is likely worse for multitudes of displaced people inside rebel-held and contested areas of Syria, where clashes and blockades by both sides in the country's civil war have severely hampered delivery of aid.

In Israel, where the storm was described as the heaviest December snowfall since 1953, thick clouds temporarily closed Ben-Gurion International Airport, causing the diversion of two international flights to Cyprus. Jerusalem's mayor, Nir Barkat, likened the storm to a snow tsunami.

Power Line

[The Environmental Movement: How Corrupt Is It?](#)

by John Hinderaker

We have written many times about the corruption of the global warming movement. Billions and billions of dollars are being poured into the pockets of global warming alarmists, because they perform such a valuable service: they help to persuade voters that governments should be given greater control over the world's economies. What's a few billion dollars when trillions are at stake?

We have written mostly about the corruption of Greens in America, where Al Gore has become a standing joke. But the [Daily Mail](#) has performed the valuable service of exposing the corruption that is rampant among British environmentalists; specifically, global warming alarmists:

The Mail on Sunday today reveals the extraordinary web of political and financial interests creating dozens of eco-millionaires from green levies on household energy bills.

A three-month investigation shows that some of the most outspoken campaigners who demand that consumers pay the colossal price of shifting to renewable energy are also getting rich from their efforts.

One is tempted to ask why anyone should be surprised by this, but of course, many people had no idea that the environmental movement is a cesspool of corruption.

Enquiries by this newspaper have revealed:

* Four of the nine-person Climate Change Committee, the official watchdog that dictates green energy policy, are, or were until very recently, being paid by firms that benefit from committee decisions.

* A new breed of lucrative green investment funds, which were set up to expand windfarm energy, are in practice a means of taking green levies paid by hard-pressed consumers and handing them to City investors and financiers.

* £3.8 billion of taxpayers' money funds the new Green Investment Bank, set up by the Department of Business and Skills. One of its biggest deals involved energy giant SSE selling windfarms to one of the new green funds, Greencoat Wind. The Green Investment Bank's chairman, Lord Smith of Kelvin, is also chairman of SSE. The bank says it 'provided expertise' to enable BIS to take a £50 million stake in Greencoat, which helped fund the SSE sale.

* The same bank's chief executive, Shaun Kingsbury, is one of the UK's highest-paid public sector employees. His £325,000 salary is more than twice the Prime Minister's.

* Firms lobbying for renewables can virtually guarantee access to key Government policy-makers, because they are staffed by former very senior officials – a striking example of Whitehall's 'revolving door'.

* Among the most astonishing features exposed by our investigation is the way in which vehement advocates for radical policies designed to curb global warming are making huge sums of money from their work. Here are some of the key figures among the new breed of fat-cat Ecocrats...

The paper goes on to name names. It is all worth reading, but I want to highlight just one point:

[Ian Marchant] left to become chairman of Infinis – now the country's third-largest renewable generator, with 7.3 per cent of the market. He received a "signing-on fee" of £322,000 worth of shares. Last month, Infinis shares were floated, raising £780 million. **Its offer brochure claimed that it was an unusually safe investment – simply because of the levies on renewables paid by consumers and imposed by Government diktat.**

The brochure said that more than half of Infinis revenue is derived directly from renewable subsidies, describing the green levies added to customers' bills as "stable, inflation-linked revenue streams backed by legislation incentivising renewable power".

Of course cronyism is "unusually safe." If you have to actually compete by producing energy at the lowest price, all kinds of things can go wrong. But if you can get in with the government, so that legislation requires everyone to pay extra for your product whether they want to or not, your investment is "unusually safe." This is what cronyism—a polite word for corruption—is all about. It is the principal purpose of the modern environmental movement.

We gather here today to honor a remarkable man and **HISTORIC LEADER...**



The "SELFIE" President

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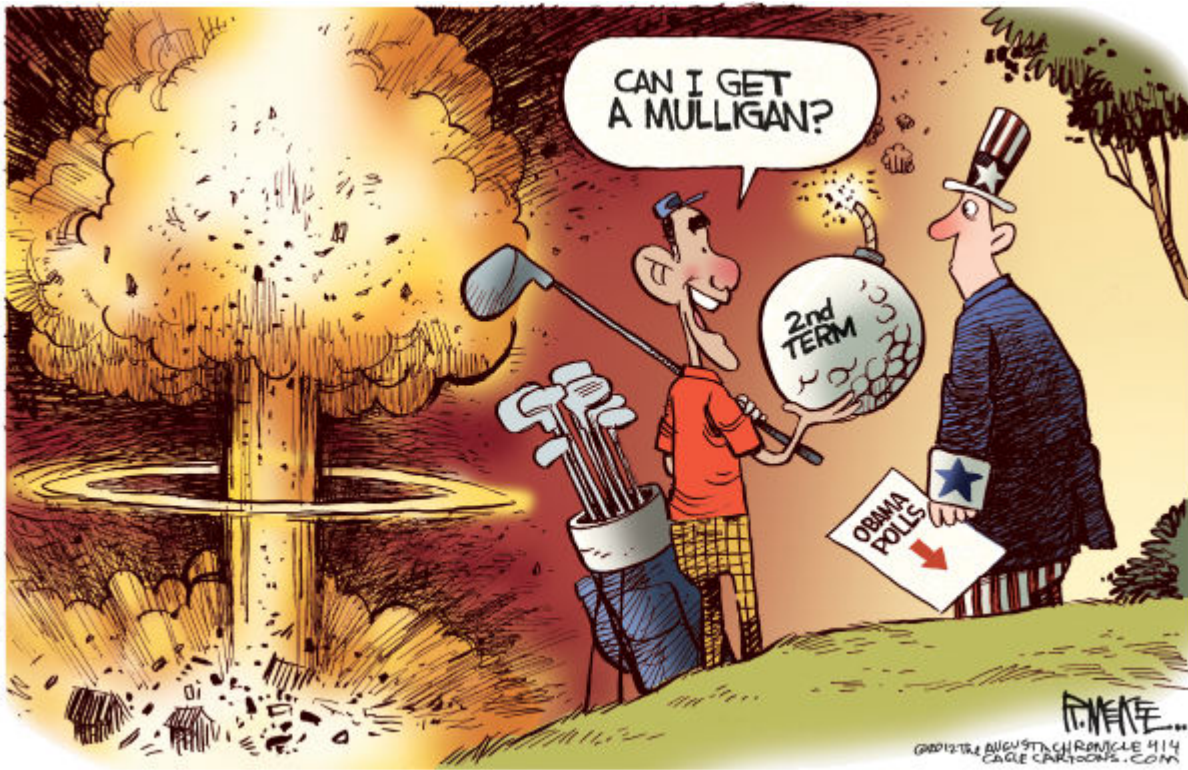
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LINES IN THE SAND

AL QAEDA IS ON THE RUN





MAPPING the BRAIN

