

April 1, 2014

Krauthammer starts us off as it is now the turn of our favorites to look at clueless, hapless, feckless, and hopeless.

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Putin's irredentist grievances go very deep. Obama seems unable to fathom them. Asked whether he'd misjudged Russia, whether it really is our greatest geopolitical foe, he disdainfully replied that Russia is nothing but "a regional power" acting "out of weakness."

Where does one begin? Hitler's Germany and Tojo's Japan were also regional powers, yet managed to leave behind at least 50 million dead. And yes, Russia should be no match for the American superpower. Yet under this president, Russia has run rings around America, from the attempted ingratiation of the "reset" to America's empty threats of "consequences" were Russia to annex Crimea. ...

Craig Pirrong of Streetwise Professor also asks the question of where to begin.

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The off-teleprompter remarks were delivered at a press conference. The statement that garnered the most attention, and rightly so, was Obama's assertion that Russia was a mere regional power that is not a threat to the US, and invaded Crimea out of weakness.

Where to begin?

Part of the problem is the man's preternatural pettiness. He denigrated Russia in part because he will not, cannot, concede that Romney might have been closer to the truth than he was when the Republican candidate named Russia as our number one national security threat, and Obama responded with a snarky "the 80s called and want their foreign policy back." A bigger man would have given Romney his due. But that would be a different man than Obama.

But the bigger problem is the substance. First, I would be the first to acknowledge that Russia's military is decrepit and its ability to project power beyond the Eurasian landmass is limited. But the

Eurasian landmass is pretty damned big, and Russia's region includes many areas of vital interest to the United States.

Second, Russia has many other sources of power that transcend those of a mere regional power (like Brazil, say). Most obviously: It has nukes. It has a UNSC veto. It has extremely effective asymmetric capabilities, notably cyberwarfare (conducted in large part through private and criminal elements that work for Russian intelligence out of a combination of patriotic and mercenary motives) and intelligence. (Snowden, anyone?) ...

... Russian troops are massing on Ukraine's borders. Russia's most capable formations, its paratroops (VDV) and Guards armored/mechanized units are assembled there. But don't worry! Russian defense minister Shoygu assures that these troops are only there for maneuvers. [And the drunk who is our SecDef believes him:](#)

At the Pentagon, there remains confidence in the assurances provided to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel from Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu that the Russian troops amassing on the border with Ukraine were there only for exercises.

"[Shoygu] told me that they had no intention of crossing the border into Ukraine," Hagel said at the Pentagon this week.

Can we really be this stupid? (Don't answer that. The question was totally, totally rhetorical.)

Just why, pray tell, need the Russians conduct maneuvers with 50K of their best troops on a sensitive border? And given that Putin repeatedly lied about his intentions in Crimea, why should we believe Shoygu-especially since there are serious doubts that Shoygu is in Putin's decision making clique? ...

Michael Godwin has more.

Today's quiz: What do Vladimir Putin's aggression and ObamaCare's troubles have in common? OK, that was too easy.

It is impossible to dismiss as mere coincidence the Russian Bear's invasion of Ukraine and the continuing mayhem of the Affordable Care Act. In their own ways, each reflects the full flowering of the policies of Barack Obama.

His chickens are coming home to roost, and what a mess they are making.

Obama's sixth year in the White House is shaping up as his worst, and that's saying something. He's been in the Oval Office so long that it is obscene to blame his problems on George W. Bush, the weather or racism. Obama owns the world he made, or more accurately, the world he tried to remake. ...

... A Caesar at home and a Chamberlain abroad, Obama manages to simultaneously provoke fury and ridicule. He bullies critics here while shrinking from adversaries there.

He divides the country and unites the world against us, diminishing the nation in both ways. His reign of error can't end soon enough, nor can it end well.

Howie Carr writes on the Dems getting indicted around the country.

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... Next, the mayor of Charlotte, Patrick Cannon, another Democrat. ...

... Then there's state Sen. Leland Yee of San Francisco. ...

... Two-gun Yee is the third Democrat state senator to be arrested in California this week. Earlier it was state Sen. Rod Wright (perjury) and then Ron Calderon (bribery).

What a crime wave, in less than one week. So guess what most of the networks led with on their newscasts last night? The 5-month-old story of Gov. Chris Christie's Bridgegate. Because it has one thing going for it that none of these other stories had, the only thing that matters to the corrupt American media.

Christie is a Republican.

Andrew Malcolm with late night humor.

Fallon: Obama has called for a united front with Europe against Russia. Obama promised that if Russia invades another country, America will stand behind Europe. Way, way, WAY behind Europe.

Seth Meyers: Jimmy Carter says he sends no emails because the NSA is reading them. Also because he can't find the "send" button on his typewriter.

Conan: Jimmy Carter says he's stopped using email because the NSA was spying on him. And also because he's 89 years old and what he thought was email was actually a thermostat.

Washington Post

[Obama vs. Putin: The mismatch](#)

by Charles Krauthammer

"The United States does not view Europe as a battleground between East and West, nor do we see the situation in Ukraine as a zero-sum game. That's the kind of thinking that should have ended with the Cold War."

— Barack Obama, March 24

Should. [Lovely sentiment](#). As lovely as what Obama said five years ago to the United Nations: "[No one nation can or should try to dominate another nation.](#)"

That's the kind of sentiment you expect from a Miss America contestant asked to name her fondest wish, not from the leader of the free world explaining his foreign policy.

The [East Europeans know](#) they inhabit the battleground between the West and a Russia that wants to return them to its sphere of influence. Ukrainians see tens of thousands of [Russian troops across their border](#) and know they are looking down the barrel of quite a zero-sum game.

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Where does one begin? Hitler's Germany and Tojo's Japan were also regional powers, yet managed to [leave behind at least 50 million dead](#). And yes, Russia should be no match for the American superpower. Yet under this president, Russia has run rings around America, from the [attempted ingratiation](#) of the "[reset](#)" to America's empty threats of "[consequences](#)" were Russia to annex Crimea.

Annex Crimea it did. For which [the "consequences" have been risible](#). Numberless 19th- and 20th-century European soldiers died for Crimea. Putin conquered it in a swift and [stealthy campaign that took three weeks](#) and cost his forces not a sprained ankle. That's "weakness"?

Indeed, Obama's dismissal of Russia as a regional power makes his own leadership of the one superpower all the more embarrassing. For seven decades since the Japanese surrender, our role under 11 presidents had been as offshore balancer protecting smaller allies from potential regional hegemons.

What are the allies thinking now? Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines and other Pacific Rim friends are wondering where this America will be as [China expands its reach and claims](#). The Gulf states are near panic as they see the United States [playacting nuclear negotiations with Iran](#) that, at best, will leave their mortal Shiite enemy just weeks away from the bomb.

America never sought the role that history gave it after World War II to bear unbidden burdens "[to assure the survival and the success of liberty](#)," as movingly described by John Kennedy. We have an appropriate aversion to the stark fact that the alternative to U.S. leadership is either global chaos or dominance by the likes of China, Russia and Iran.

But Obama doesn't even seem to recognize this truth. In his [major Brussels address Wednesday](#), the very day Russia seized the last Ukrainian naval vessel in Crimea, Obama made vague references to further measures should Russia march deeper into Ukraine, while still emphasizing

the centrality of international law, international norms and international institutions such as the United Nations.

Such fanciful thinking will leave our allies with two choices: bend a knee — or arm to the teeth. Either acquiesce to the regional bully or gird your loins, i.e., go nuclear. As surely will the Gulf states. As will, in time, Japan and South Korea.

Even [Ukrainians are expressing regret](#) at having given up their nukes in return for paper guarantees of territorial integrity. The [1994 Budapest Memorandum](#) was ahead of its time — the perfect example of the kind of advanced 21st-century thinking so cherished by our president. Perhaps the captain of that last Ukrainian vessel should have waved the document at the Russian fleet that took his ship.

Streetwise Professor

Obama Speaks. Putin Smiles.

by Craig Pirrong

Obama has given two major sets of remarks about Ukraine, one set on teleprompter, the other off. Like Tolstoy's unhappy families, each was appalling in its own way. It is hard to say which is worse.

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Where to begin?

Part of the problem is the man's preternatural pettiness. He denigrated Russia in part because he will not, cannot, concede that Romney might have been closer to the truth than he was when the Republican candidate named Russia as our number one national security threat, and Obama responded with a snarky "the 80s called and want their foreign policy back." A bigger man would have given Romney his due. But that would be a different man than Obama.

But the bigger problem is the substance. First, I would be the first to acknowledge that Russia's military is decrepit and its ability to project power beyond the Eurasian landmass is limited. But the Eurasian landmass is pretty damned big, and Russia's region includes many areas of vital interest to the United States.

Second, Russia has many other sources of power that transcend those of a mere regional power (like Brazil, say). Most obviously: It has nukes. It has a UNSC veto. It has extremely effective asymmetric capabilities, notably cyberwarfare (conducted in large part through private and criminal elements that work for Russian intelligence out of a combination of patriotic and mercenary motives) and intelligence. (Snowden, anyone?)

Moreover, Putin's *anschluss*, and the threatened moves beyond Crimea (not just Ukraine, but reasonably feared in any country with substantial Russian speaking minorities, which includes

countries formally allied with the US) upset the entire international order. Not just the post-World War II and post-Cold War settlements, but the principles of international order stretching back to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Turning a blind eye to revanchism and irredentism threatens to unleash similar forces on every continent. The chaos and disorder that would result would present a profound challenge to stability, and the interests of the United States.

Obama appears to believe that it is beneath a stronger power to confront weaker ones. But what is the point of strength and power, if they cannot be deployed against peer adversaries because that would be too costly, and they cannot be deployed against weaker ones because that's unsporting?

Indeed, if Obama's diagnosis is correct, and Russia is a weak power (put aside whether the weakness is the motivation for Putin's aggressiveness, as Obama claims), given the stakes there is a compelling case to deploy American power (mainly economic, financial, and political, rather than military) to squash the weak upstart. Because that would contribute to tranquility throughout Eurasia, and *pour encourager les autres*.

The formal speech in Belgium was a disaster in different ways. Obama gave a treacherous tribute to the bravery of Maidan, and then basically said: "sorry, people, you're on your own! Good luck! We wish you the best!" He laid out a rather compelling case that Putin's challenge to the international system threatened dire consequences far beyond Ukraine, but despite this he threatened no measures beyond the oft-repeated gradualism of escalating financial consequences: how many historical examples are required to demonstrate that such gradualism, so appealing in the faculty lounge and think tank, is actually an encouragement to hard men like Putin?

Disgustingly, Obama conceded many of Putin's arguments, most notably that Russia has special rights in Ukraine due to the longstanding historical relationship between the countries. This is to make modern Ukrainians subordinate to Russia because their forebears provided a patina of civilization to Muscovite thugs, and then suffered centuries of subjugation at the hands of these thugs which at times lapsed into genocide. Yes, the Holodomor was truly the epitome of a special relationship, no?

If anything, the historical relations between Ukraine and Russia provide a compelling case to defend Ukraine against further Muscovite predations, rather than an excuse to consign the country to Putin's tender mercies.

The speech put more emphasis on what the US won't do, than what it will. Obama repeated three times that the US will not engage in any military response to Russian aggression in Ukraine. I'm sure Putin got that message, and smiled.

Obama emphasized a desire for continued diplomacy, and de-escalation. Both of which Russia has already rejected, repeatedly. (Look at the picture of Lavrov meeting with the Ukrainian FM. I am sure The Tarantula would have preferred an appendectomy without anesthesia to that meeting.) This is political onanism of the most embarrassing sort.

But there's more! Not only did Obama conspicuously put Ukraine outside the American security perimeter, he also slammed the door on Georgia, saying that it was not on a path to membership in Nato. Given that Georgia is one of Putin's biggest *bêtes noires*, you may rest assured that Putin is going to take this as an invitation.

In sum, the speech signaled a supine attitude that will embolden Putin. Obama appears robust only in comparison to the Europeans, who would have to stiffen considerably in order to become mere boneless wonders (to quote Churchill's devastating critique of Stanley Baldwin).

Some have claimed that Obama's speech was tough, both on the Russians and the Europeans. The markets deemed otherwise. Gazprom was up. Sberbank was up. Rosneft was up. Micex was up. The Ruble was up.

And no wonder. Last week's encouraging expansion of sanctions have been followed by . . . nothing. Except empty threats to do more: that's all Obama's speech contained. It is clear that there is no appetite in western capitals for aggressive action against Russia, even though it would be possible to crush the Russian economy.

Need convincing? German firms are making pilgrimages to Moscow. German politicians are loud in their criticism of sanctions, and bend over backwards to rationalize Putin's conduct.

Just why did we defend these people for 60 plus years, anyways? They are obsessed with Snowden and the thought that the NSA might be perusing their Amazon purchases. Never mind that a thugocracy is on the march. It's so much easier for the Germans to criticize the US than Russia. The US doesn't fight back.

Speaking of NSA, one of the companies that paid homage to Putin in his court was Siemens, a notoriously corrupt firm. [Former CIA director James Woolsey said we spy on European companies precisely because of their corruption.](#) Perhaps some *kompromat* or prosecutions are in order.

Obama appears to be deferring to German wishes. Specifically, I smell Merkel's influence over the Georgia remarks. Why did Obama have to mention Georgia at all, let alone to throw it very publicly under the bus? Then recall that Merkel has been adamant over excluding Georgia from integration into Nato on any time frame.

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Just why, pray tell, need the Russians conduct maneuvers with 50K of their best troops on a sensitive border? And given that Putin repeatedly lied about his intentions in Crimea, why should we believe Shoygu-especially since there are serious doubts that Shoygu is in Putin's decision making clique?

In sum, in his various remarks, Obama has revealed that he has many, many cheeks, and is willing to turn them all. To Putin, anyways: not to Romney or other Republicans. Putin will take this as an invitation, and take all that he can. If he isn't stopped now-and rolled back, actually-he will continue to press. The necessity of confrontation will not be eliminated, just deferred.

New York Post

Chickens come home to roost for Obama

by Michael Goodwin

Today's quiz: What do Vladimir Putin's aggression and ObamaCare's troubles have in common? OK, that was too easy.

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His chickens are coming home to roost, and what a mess they are making.

Obama's sixth year in the White House is shaping up as his worst, and that's saying something. He's been in the Oval Office so long that it is obscene to blame his problems on George W. Bush, the weather or racism. Obama owns the world he made, or more accurately, the world he tried to remake.

Nothing important has worked as promised, and there is every reason to believe the worst is yet to come. The president's casual remark the other day that he worries about "a nuclear weapon going off in Manhattan" inadvertently reflected the fear millions of Americans have about his leadership. Not necessarily about a bomb, but about where he is taking the country.

We are racing downhill and he is stepping on the gas. Will he stop before the nation crashes?

Ideologues love to dream, and some do it eloquently. Robert Kennedy famously said: "There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why .□.□. I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

Mario Cuomo, no slouch at dreaming, nonetheless offered a caveat, saying, "You campaign in poetry, you govern in prose."

Obama hasn't figured out the difference. Even more alarming, he shows no signs of trying to learn. In the ways of the world, he remains a know-it-all rookie.

The view from his faculty lounge has no space for reality. Anything that doesn't fit the grand plan is dismissed as illegitimate. So while global hot spots multiply and the world grows dangerously unstable, the president still plans to slash the military.

His trip abroad last week further secured his reputation for historic ineptitude. It wasn't that the trip was a disaster — it never rose to that level. His presence and his promises simply made no difference.

He failed to move the European Union toward a firmer stance on Russia, created bizarre headlines by differing with the Vatican over what he and the pope discussed, and got not-so-veiled threats from the Saudis about Syria and Iran.

He could have stayed home and not done worse.

No president can win 'em all, but Obama's foreign-policy record is unblemished by success. From east to west and north to south, America's standing and influence have declined universally.

It is impossible for a US president to be irrelevant, but Obama is testing the proposition.

The frequent reports that Putin laughs when Obama warns of consequences can't be far from the truth. Otherwise, Putin would be cautious instead of carving up neighbors and massing his military. It was also noteworthy that, after their Friday phone talk, Putin copied the Vatican and put out his own version of the discussion. Two can play the spin game, he seemed to be saying.

ObamaCare is the domestic expression of the president's ineptitude. The law that was supposed to fix health care has become a problem for millions, and now enjoys mere 26 percent approval, a poll finds. It is proving so unworkable that the White House has given up defending it as written and instead simply changes key provisions when they prove impossible to implement or politically inconvenient.

Change No. 38 came when officials extended the March 31 deadline for signing up. Never mind that those same officials said recently there would be no extension, and that the law wouldn't allow it.

Presto — the limits on his power are moot because the president says so. Meanwhile, aides claim they don't know how many of the 6 million who enrolled actually paid for insurance.

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Boston Herald

[Democrats sinking in sea of charges](#)

by Howie Carr

Please, try not to let what I'm about to tell you destroy your faith in the integrity of the national Democratic Party.

Right now, a crime wave is sweeping the nation, and everyone in this out-of-control mob has a D after their names, even if most of the media are loath to report it.

If you are a low-information voter, a Globe subscriber, say, you have been told endlessly that the root of all evil in American politics is the Tea Party, better known in your moonbat media as “teabaggers.” Oddly, however, the hacks rounded up over the last few days, well, let’s put it this way. They voted for Obama 100 percent. They think Obamacare’s great. How could they possibly be guilty as charged?

Last Friday, it was the speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, Gordon Fox, who is (technically) black and who is definitely gay. Astonishingly, given the open racial-preference policies of the Obama regime, Fox’s Providence home and his State House offices were raided Friday by the FBI. He resigned Saturday. We still don’t know what the G-men have on him.

Next, the mayor of Charlotte, Patrick Cannon, another Democrat. He allegedly accepted \$48,000 in bribes, some of which he took at the same Capitol Grill where payoffs were earlier accepted by jailbird ex-Speaker Jim Black. Black is not to be confused with ex-Speaker Jimmy Green, who likewise went to prison, for torching his tobacco burns.

Then there’s state Sen. Leland Yee of San Francisco. He used to go on Piers Morgan’s now-canceled CNN moonbat-fest and denounce the Second Amendment. He sent out tweets on the first anniversary of the Newtown massacre saying, “I’m still shocked & prepared to take steps to stop gun violence.”

Well, up to a point ...

He, too, was arrested on Wednesday, for allegedly arranging deals to procure M16s and rocket launchers to be smuggled into California after being purchased from Muslim terrorists in the Philippines. Sen. Yee was working with a Chinese gangster named “Shrimp Boy.”

Apparently, Yee was much less concerned about the spread of weapons of mass destruction when he was talking to his fellow hoods than when he was pontificating on CNN: “People want to get whatever they want to get. Do I care? No, I don’t care. People need certain things.”

Like, rocket launchers.

Two-gun Yee is the third Democrat state senator to be arrested in California this week. Earlier it was state Sen. Rod Wright (perjury) and then Ron Calderon (bribery).

What a crime wave, in less than one week. So guess what most of the networks led with on their newscasts last night? The 5-month-old story of Gov. Chris Christie’s Bridgegate. Because it has one thing going for it that none of these other stories had, the only thing that matters to the corrupt American media.

Christie is a Republican.

IBD

Late Night Humor

by Andrew Malcolm

SethMeyers: An upstate New York town is giving birth control to deer to combat over-population. If you think hunting deer is a challenge, try putting a condom on one.

Fallon: Obama saw Putin's approval rating jump after attacking Crimea. So Obama is sending troops into Canada.

Fallon: China develops "smart tags" that change color when food goes bad. Plus another thing that changes color when food goes bad—food.

SethMeyers: Today was the first day of spring. And just in time, because yesterday was the 400th day of winter.

SethMeyers: A Virginia woman was arrested this week after showing up drunk and naked to visit her husband in jail. But in fairness, is there a *RIGHT* way to visit your husband in jail?

Fallon: In a speech on women's economic issues, Obama said government policies would be different if men were having babies. Joe Biden said, "How would that work?"

SethMeyers: March Madness has begun! And by March Madness I am, of course, referring to people wearing shorts when it's 55 degrees.

SethMeyers: Three circus elephants escaped in St. Louis the other day. Before they were re-captured, they had damaged two vehicles, injuring over 50 clowns.

Fallon: Russia's Putin didn't attend the recent nuclear conference in the Netherlands. He said he doesn't want to visit any country he can't keep.

SethMeyers: Jimmy Carter says he sends no emails because the NSA is reading them. Also because he can't find the "send" button on his typewriter.

Conan: Jimmy Carter says he's stopped using email because the NSA was spying on him. And also because he's 89 years old and what he thought was email was actually a thermostat.

Fallon: Russia's Putin ordered fireworks over Moscow to celebrate his Crimea takeover. Either that or one of Putin's opponents started his car.

Fallon: Actually, Putin explained the real reason behind those Moscow fireworks: He had Stanford beating Kansas in his March Madness pool.

Conan: The "Noah" movie gets Pope Francis' blessing. However, the Pope refused to bless the new Muppets Movie. He says, "It needed more Scooter."

Conan: Michelle Obama visited China with her daughters. It was the first time in China's long history that an American has *ARRIVED* with daughters.

Conan: While in China, First Lady Michelle Obama commented on Chinese censorship. Or as the Chinese news reported it, "Michelle Obama greatly admires Chinese censorship." □

Conan: Michelle Obama fed China's pandas during her visit. Like most people she feeds, the bears politely took the bamboo, then had a cheeseburger the minute she left.

Letterman: About March Madness. It starts at 64, then 32, 16 and down. It's like Obama's approval rating.

Letterman: President Obama met with the G-7 again. Can you name them? I tried. I always forget Bashful.

Letterman: President Obama has met with the G-7 leaders. It must be fun now to be able to put faces on all the voices he listens to on the NSA wiretaps.

Letterman: No one got Warren Buffett's \$1 billion prize for picking a perfect NCAA bracket. Now he's offering \$1 billion to any married man who can properly load a dishwasher.

Conan: Ukraine said it plans to take Russia to court to try to get the Crimea back. So, ladies and gentlemen— get ready next week for a very special Judge Judy.

Seth Meyers: The other day Russia flew an American astronaut to the International Space Station. And you thought driving someone home after a breakup was awkward.

Seth Meyers: Time Warner was voted America's worst company in an online poll by the blog Consumerist. I have to say, I'm kind of surprised that Time Warner customers were able to get online.

Fallon: The G-7 has moved its summer summit out of Russia to meet in Brussels. Putin said, "By summer, Brussels will be part of Russia."

Fallon: Officials in Europe seized a cocaine shipment addressed to the Vatican. That means Rob Ford just received a giant box of communion wafers.

Fallon: Ukraine withdraws its last troops from Crimea. So the split is now final. Well, they're not calling it a split. They're calling it a "conscious uncoupling."

Fallon: Obama has called for a united front with Europe against Russia. Obama promised that if Russia invades another country, America will stand behind Europe. Way, way, *WAY* behind Europe.

Fallon: Apparently with no cell or email Putin is unfamiliar with texting and the Internet. When he says "LOL," he actually means, "Look out, Latvia."

Conan: All North Korea men are now required to get Kim Jong Un's haircut. Or, as that style is known in the U.S., "The First Year Lesbian."

SethMeyers: After discovering a new dwarf planet orbiting the sun beyond Pluto, scientists have named it "2012 VP113" -- or "Biden" for short. Scientists say they chose the name because the planet, like Biden, is pretty far out there.

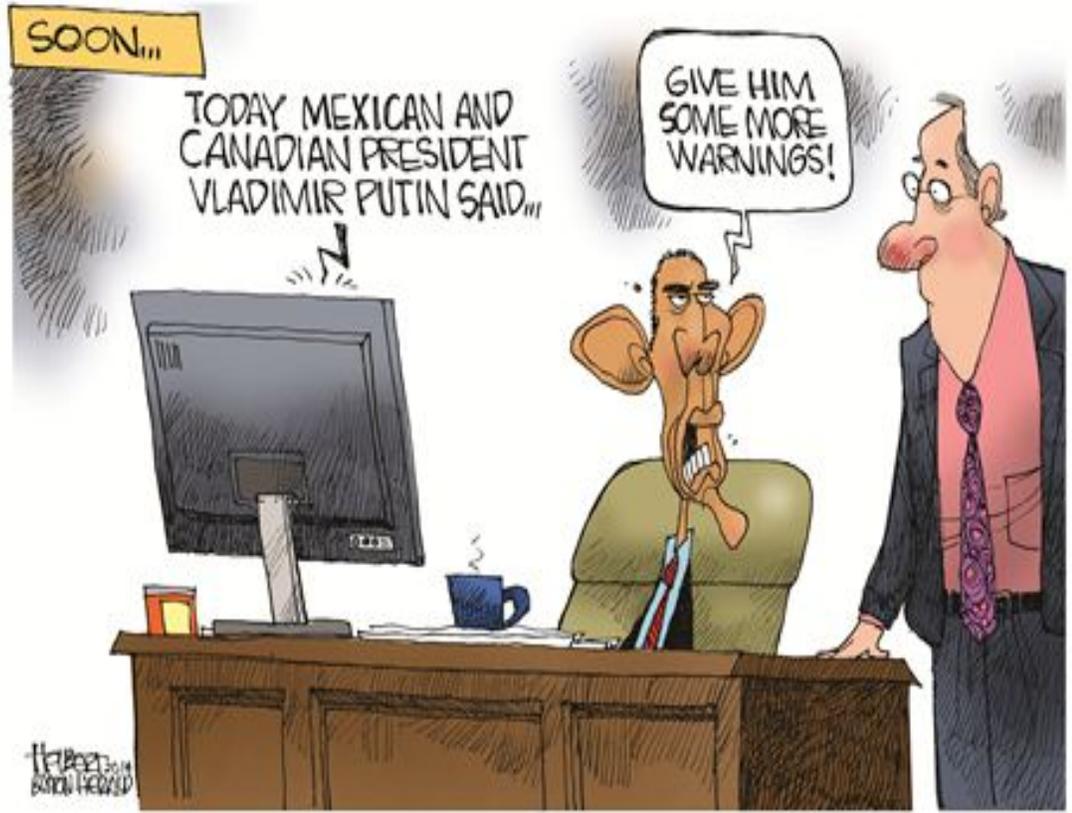
SethMeyers: A New Jersey man who was released last week after 15 years in prison for robbing a shoe store was arrested the next day for robbing the exact same store. He learned a valuable lesson though. Next time, steal both shoes at the same time.

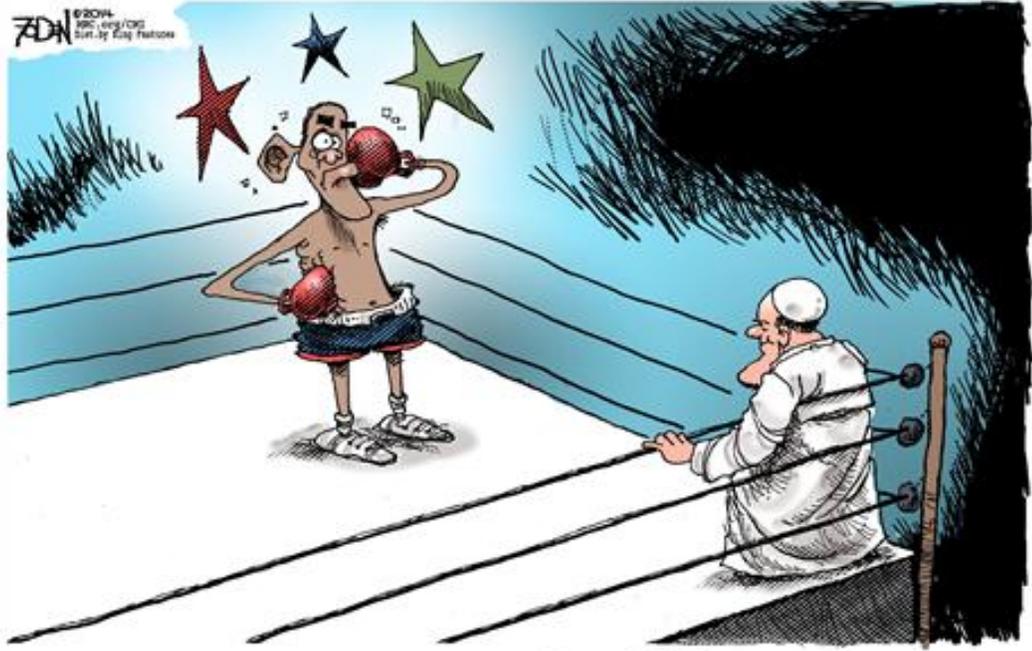
SethMeyers: A new study says the No.1 reason women fake orgasms is to avoid hurting their partner's feelings. The No. 2 reason is "Scandal" is on in five minutes."

Fallon: The Philadelphia 76ers tied the NBA record with 26 consecutive losses. The team has no cheerleaders anymore, just grief counselors.

Fallon: Obama was in Saudi Arabia meeting with King Abdullah. Joe Biden told him, "Be sure to give my best to King Abdullah and his wife, Paula."







THE POPE-A-DOPE

