

April 15, 2014

It's Eric Holder Day as we examine another appointment, which like Kerry and Hagel, is a perfect compliment to the president. John Fund and Hans Von Spakovsky are first up.

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Now in his sixth year as attorney general, Holder has increasingly tilted the department in an ideological direction. It's one thing to emphasize President Obama's legal priorities. It's quite another to decide not to enforce certain federal laws — such as the ban on marijuana — or urge state attorney generals to refuse to defend local laws on same-sex marriage. Legal changes are achieved through legislation, not through a sudden whim not to enforce them. No other attorney general has acted in this manner. ...

Victor Davis Hanson posts on the divisive attorney general.

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And wasn't Holder making his allegations of unprofessionalism while speaking before the demagogic Mr. Sharpton's group? This is the same Al Sharpton who is on record inflaming the Crown Heights riots, provoking violence at the fatal Freddie Fashion Mart riot, helping to invent the Tawana Brawley caper, defaming and attempting to destroy the career of Duchess County prosecutor Steven Pagonis, and with a long history of racist outbursts and threats ("white interloper," "white folks was in caves . . .", "If the Jews want to get it on, tell them to pin their yarmulkes back and come over to my house"), homophobic outbursts ("We taught philosophy and astrology and mathematics before Socrates and them Greek homos ever got around to it"), ...

Peter Wehner says Holder can, "Man up."

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"Forget about me [specifically]. Look at the way the attorney general of the United States was treated yesterday by a House committee," Holder said. "What attorney general has ever had to deal with that kind of treatment? What president has ever had to deal with that kind of treatment?"

Let's take these topics in reverse order. What president has been on the receiving end of such ugly and divisive attacks? Try George W. Bush and Ronald Reagan, just for openers. For example, Senator Ted Kennedy declared, from the well of the United States Senate, that "before the [Iraq] war, week after week after week after week, we were told lie after lie after lie after lie." He also accused President Bush of hatching a phony war, "a fraud ... made up in Texas" to boost his political career. Prominent Democrats made these kind of charges all the time against Bush. ...

Corner post with more.

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In 2007, seven Democratic representatives, including some still in Congress, urged the House Judiciary Committee to investigate fully whether sufficient grounds existed for the House of Representatives to impeach Gonzales for "high crimes and misdemeanors."

Additionally, Reagan-era attorney general Edwin Meese hardly escaped criticism while in office. Taking issue with his handling of the Iran-Contra investigation, among other issues, critics of Meese and the administration printed posters and t-shirts with the phrase "Meese is a Pig" in an effort to remove him.

NY Post Editors too.

... if General Holder checked the record, he'd see the chief reason he's the first sitting Cabinet member held in contempt of Congress is that — unlike previous cabinet members who faced this sanction — he obstinately refused any accommodation.

Naomi Schaefer Riley says it's not just athletes who get screwed by colleges.

In its recent ruling that athletes at Northwestern University have the right to unionize, the National Labor Relations Board cited the case of senior quarterback Kain Colter, who naively thought that he could pursue a pre-med degree while also playing on the school's football team.

When he attempted to enroll in a required chemistry class during his sophomore year, "Colter testified that his coaches and advisors discouraged him from taking the class because it conflicted with morning football practices. Colter consequently had to take this class in the summer session, which caused him to fall behind his classmates who were pursuing the same pre-med major. Ultimately he decided to switch his major to psychology which he believed to be less demanding."

In other words, despite the fact that Division I athletes are making oodles of money for their schools, their interests are not being served by coaches or administrators. Athletes' academics and future career prospects are being sacrificed for a few more points on the field.

But athletes are not alone. Regular students are also contributing to the university's bottom line through tuition payments and the spigot of federal financial aid — yet their interests are not being served, either.

In exchange for their eye-popping tuition checks, students are getting a dizzying array of pointless classes that don't prepare them for the real world. Colleges have gotten more and more esoteric in what they teach, more specialized to the point of being useless to anything but . . . academia. ...

NY Post

[For Attorney General Eric Holder, Justice is for Democrats only](#)

by John Fund and Hans Von Spakovsky

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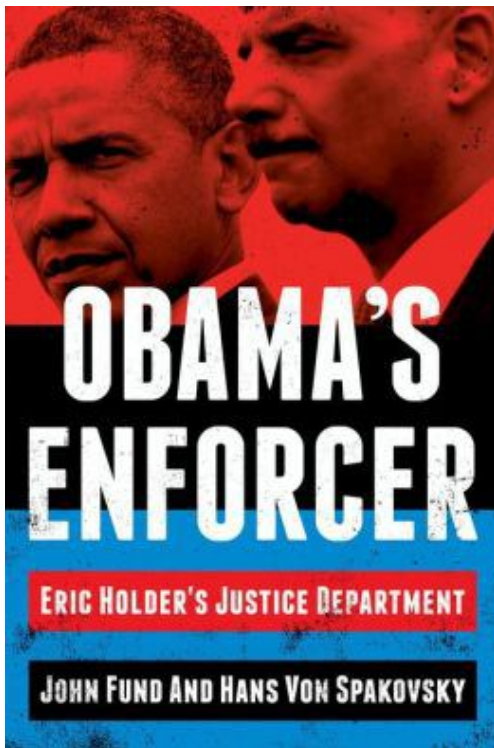
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Holder clearly believes he has the inherent power to politicize his department. When House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte asked him last week whether he believed there were any limits to the administration's prosecutorial discretion. "There is a vast amount of discretion that a president has — and more specifically that an attorney general has," Holder responded.

But courts have frequently disagreed with Holder's interpretations of the law. Just last week, a US District Court judge issued an order denying Justice's request for veto power over school-choice scholarships awarded to students by the state of Louisiana. Justice had sued Louisiana last August seeking an injunction to stop it from distributing school vouchers to kids seeking to escape failing schools using the pretext of decades-old desegregation orders. Justice's action is pure politics, driven by the fact that Democrats are beholden to teachers unions.

Justice's ideological zealotry is on display across a host of other issues.

It stopped asking states that accepted federal funds for election machine upgrades to comply with provisions requiring them to clean up their voter rolls. It used a radical interpretation of civil-rights laws to sue school districts over dress codes. It launched an unprecedented crusade against government leaks by targeting The Associated Press and Fox News' James Rosen while at the same time it refused to pursue any leaks of classified material that likely came from the White House and were clearly intended to burnish the president's image.



Last week, Congress recommended that Holder's office pursue a criminal investigation against Lois Lerner, the IRS official who admitted that conservative groups were targeted for added scrutiny. Lerner has repeatedly taken the Fifth even as she proclaims her innocence.

But does anyone believe the attorney general will seriously investigate this?

Of course, when you call Holder out on his biases and selective enforcement, he cries racism.

Last Tuesday, Holder appeared before the House Judiciary Committee for an oversight hearing. He got into a stormy exchange with Rep. Louie Gohmert, a Texas Republican and a former chief justice of the Texas Court of Appeals. Gohmert had read a Fifth Circuit court opinion noting how Justice had made available 9,600 summaries of transcripts of sensitive conversations to "attorneys for the terrorists."

Gohmert could not understand why Holder would provide documents to terrorists' lawyers but not provide information sought by Congress. Gohmert added that he realized that "contempt is not a big deal to our attorney general," referring to the fact that the House has voted to hold Holder in contempt for not turning over documents sought by Congress in its probe of Operation Fast and Furious, probably the most reckless law-enforcement operation Justice has ever instigated. As Gohmert noted, it led to the death of a US Border Patrol agent and dozens of Mexicans.

Holder responded in anger by warning Gohmert that "You don't want to go there, buddy . . . you should not assume that that is not a big deal to me. I think that it was inappropriate." As Gohmert calmly pointed out, however, the Justice Department has refused to turn over the documents sought by Congress and Holder has been in court making virtually the same arguments that Richard Nixon made during Watergate to avoid disclosure. Holder replied he didn't need any lectures from a congressman.

On Wednesday, Holder used Al Sharpton's National Action Network platform to complain how he had been "treated" by the House committee, claiming it was evidence of the "unprecedented, unwarranted, ugly and divisive adversity" faced by him and President Obama. Holder obviously believes he has been treated with disrespect because of his race. After all, he asked "what attorney general has ever had to deal with that kind of treatment? What president has ever had to deal with that kind of treatment?"

In truth, Holder would only have to look back at how congressional Democrats questioned George W. Bush's competence and used hearings to bully Alberto Gonzalez, his attorney general, for an answer. Hardball doesn't even begin to describe it.

Congress is angry at Holder not because of race, but because justice is only reserved for his Democratic allies.

His only respect for the law is his belief that he and President Obama are above it.

John Fund and Hans von Spakovsky are co-authors of the forthcoming "Obama's Enforcer: Eric Holder's Justice Department" (Broadway Books), out in June.

The Corner

A Divisive Attorney General

by Victor Davis Hanson

Attorney General Eric Holder must be suffering from a sort of amnesia. He is upset at supposed divisiveness and rudeness directed at him when testifying before Congress, and suggests not too subtly that he and President Obama have been accorded inordinately harsh treatment (fill in the blanks why). Aside from the fact that he seemed to have relished the combat with Representative Gohmert in quite unprofessional tones ("you don't want to go there, buddy, alright?"/ "good luck with your asparagus"), he seems to forget what former attorney general Alberto Gonzales once endured both in the liberal media and before Democrats in Congress, not to mention the films, comic routines, novels, and op-eds that focused on the idea of assassinating President George W. Bush, a shameful chapter in our history, which I think Eric Holder was largely mum about at the time.

But, more to the point, is this not the same Attorney General Holder who once called the nation collectively "cowards" and referred to African Americans as "my people" — not to mention a president who has called for some "to punish our enemies"? All that sounds pretty divisive and ugly.

And wasn't Holder making his allegations of unprofessionalism while speaking before the demagogic Mr. Sharpton's group? This is the same Al Sharpton who is on record inflaming the Crown Heights riots, provoking violence at the fatal Freddie Fashion Mart riot, helping to invent the Tawana Brawley caper, defaming and attempting to destroy the career of Duchess County prosecutor Steven Pagones, and with a long history of racist outbursts and threats ("white interloper," "white folks was in caves . . .", "If the Jews want to get it on, tell them to pin their yarmulkes back and come over to my house"), homophobic outbursts ("We taught philosophy and astrology and mathematics before Socrates and them Greek homos ever got around to it"), and

religious bigotry (“As for the one Mormon running for office, those who really believe in God will defeat him anyways, so don’t worry about that; that’s a temporary situation”).

That Holder made these allegations at Sharpton’s invitation and at a time when Sharpton is back in the news as a former FBI informant offering information about Mafia criminals, and whose relationship with both the Mafia and the FBI is still unclear, is, well, again divisive and, to quote Holder yet again, ugly.

Contentions

Man Up, Mr. Holder

by Peter Wehner

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Let’s take these topics in reverse order. What president has been on the receiving end of such ugly and divisive attacks? Try George W. Bush and Ronald Reagan, just for openers. For example, Senator Ted Kennedy declared, from the well of the United States Senate, that “before the [Iraq] war, week after week after week after week, we were told lie after lie after lie after lie.” He also accused President Bush of hatching a phony war, “a fraud ... made up in Texas” to boost his political career. Prominent Democrats made these kind of charges all the time against Bush. President Reagan was attacked as a warmonger, a racist, a man who celebrated in the misery of others. The personal, *ad hominem* nature of the attacks against our current president are less, I would say, than was the case with Bush and Reagan. What’s happening certainly isn’t “unprecedented.”

As for Holder’s Woe Is Me portrayal of his tenure as attorney general, I’d point him (for starters) to Alberto Gonzales and Edwin Meese. Both were treated viciously by Democrats and (unlike Holder) by many in the press.

While I’m at it, let me add this point: Mr. Holder is part of an administration notable for its partisanship, divisive rhetoric, ugliness, and polarization. As I’ve [pointed out before](#), Mr. Obama has accused Republicans of being social Darwinists and members of the “flat earth society,” of putting their party ahead of their country, and of wanting dirty air and dirty water. He says Republicans want autistic and Down syndrome children to “fend for themselves.” He accuses his opponents of not simply being wrong but of being his “enemies.” During the 2012 election, Obama’s vice president said Republicans want to put African-Americans “back in chains” while Obama’s top aides and allies implied Governor Romney was a felon and flat-out stated that he was responsible for the cancer-death of a steelworker’s wife. The list goes on and on. Mr. Obama is [the most polarizing president in the history of polling](#).

It’s bad enough that Eric Holder is incompetent, that he’s [misled Congress on multiple occasions](#), that he considers America to be a [“nation of cowards” on race](#), and that he’s engaged in covering

up for the administration (including the current IRS scandal). But can the Attorney General of the United States please quit feeling so sorry for himself? So put upon?

Man up, Mr. Holder.

The Corner

[Actually, Eric Holder, Other AGs Have Faced 'That Kind of Treatment'](#)

by Andrew Johnson

Speaking at Al Sharpton's National Action Network conference on Wednesday, Eric Holder took exception to criticism of his tenure as attorney general. He even hinted that the "unprecedented, unwarranted ugly and divisive adversity" was motivated by racism.

"It had nothing to do with me, forget about that," Holder said. "What attorney general has ever had to deal with that kind of treatment? What president has ever had to deal with that kind of treatment?"

Holder's notion that past attorneys general have escaped widespread criticism, or that criticism directed toward him is solely race-based, overlooks incidents of those before him, including one of his most recent predecessors. As *Mediaite's* Noah Rothman points out, Bush-era attorney general Alberto Gonzales faced calls for his impeachment during his time in the office.

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It's not just athletes — college screws everyone

by Naomi Schaefer Riley

In its recent ruling that athletes at Northwestern University have the right to unionize, the National Labor Relations Board cited the case of senior quarterback Kain Colter, who naively thought that he could pursue a pre-med degree while also playing on the school's football team.

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But athletes are not alone. Regular students are also contributing to the university's bottom line through tuition payments and the spigot of federal financial aid — yet their interests are not being served, either.

In exchange for their eye-popping tuition checks, students are getting a dizzying array of pointless classes that don't prepare them for the real world. Colleges have gotten more and more esoteric in what they teach, more specialized to the point of being useless to anything but . . . academia.

As parents and students open those fat admissions envelopes from the colleges of their dreams this month, it is worth thinking about how far the reality of college life is from the ideal of a protective environment, run by people who want nothing more than to gently mold their children's intellect and give them the best possible prospects for the future.

Let's start, then, with the college catalog. When was the last time you opened one? These several-hundred-page doorstops, students are told, make up a veritable intellectual adventure. A little French Literature of the 19th Century here, a little Animal Behavior there. Throw in a statistics class and an introduction to gender studies and you have . . . well, what do you have? No one quite knows, because most college curricula today are completely incoherent.

Once colleges did away with any kind of real general-education requirements, students were left on their own to figure out what they thought was important. It sounds so exciting, until you realize that 18-year-olds don't know what they don't know. And they don't know what's going to be important to them later on. And they don't even know which classes should go before other classes.

The catalogs only provided the illusion of choice anyway. Some of the thousands of listed classes will provide them with the critical thinking skills and real knowledge they need to succeed afterward, but most of them will not. Just think of it as high-stakes gambling with a few hundred thousand dollars worth of tuition.

How did this intellectually incoherent curriculum take hold?

Well, for one thing, it is the result of faculty's focus on research. It's not just the hard sciences in which a professor has to say something new in order to achieve tenure or promotion. It is also the social sciences and even the humanities. You can only imagine how obscure the findings must be for a professor in the year 2014 to say something new about Shakespeare or Chaucer. Or they just have to find an (often justifiably) obscure author to write about in the first place. Once faculty have devoted all their time to writing, say, a treatise on the costumes of ladies in the court of Louis XVI, they might as well teach a class on it to willing undergrads. Whether or not that's a class that's useful for those students.

Students are not getting a broad liberal-arts education — nor are they being prepared for careers. A February Gallup poll found that 14 percent of Americans — and only 11 percent of our business leaders — strongly agree that graduates have the necessary skills and competencies to succeed in the workplace.

But administrators and faculty seem more interested in quantity than quality. The vastly increased number of different courses and majors — in 2012 there were more than 1,500 academic programs that students could choose for a major, up by more than a quarter from a decade earlier — makes it impossible for employers to distinguish among candidates.

For that matter, so does grade inflation. A recent study of 200 colleges and universities in the Teachers College Record found that more than 40 percent of all grades awarded were in the A range. Administrators may be making their customers happy in the short term, but grade inflation makes students ill prepared for the real world.

The best of the college athletes may go on to well-paying careers in the pros. And the best students (or the ones who have parents who can guide them) may end up with well-paying jobs that will allow them to repay their student loans.

But the message to every other student is clear: You're on your own.

Naomi Schaefer Riley is the author of "The Faculty Lounges: And Other Reasons Why You Won't Get the College Education You Pay For."

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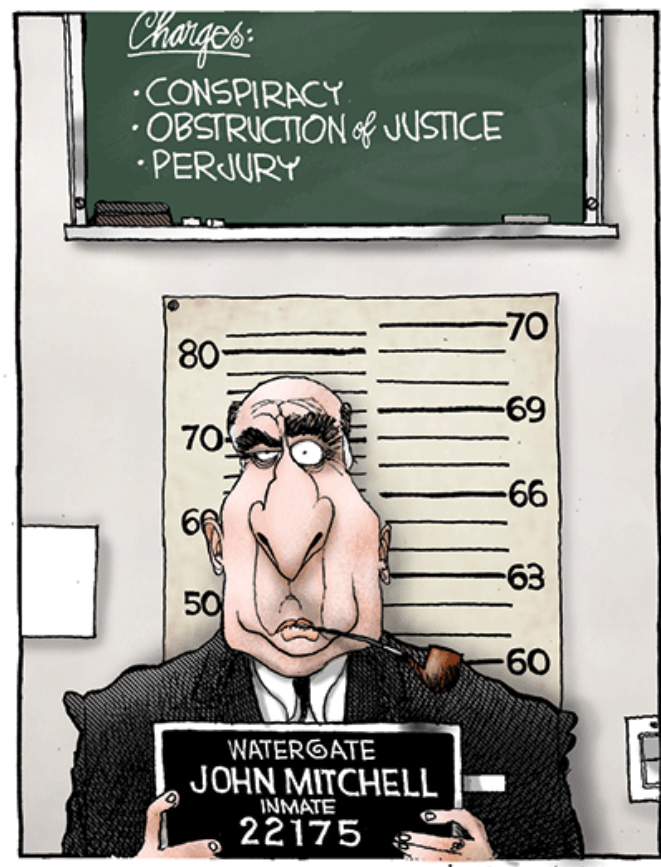


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