

September 28, 2014

Charles Krauthammer with an overview of our Middle East strategy.

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But success will not be what he's articulating publicly. The strategy will not destroy the Islamic State. It's more containment-plus: Expel the Islamic State from Iraq, contain it in Syria. Because you can't win from the air. In Iraq, we have potential ground allies. In Syria, we don't.

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Our key potential allies are the Sunni tribes. We will have to induce them to change allegiances a second time, joining us again, as they did during the 2007-2008 surge, against the jihadists.

Having abandoned them in 2011, we won't find this easy. ...

Peter Wehner wonders just how effective the bombing campaign will be.

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This news comes as we learned over the weekend that ISIS attacked an Iraqi army base, killing upwards of 300-500 Iraqi soldiers. "If the survivors' accounts are correct," the Washington Post reports, "it would make Sunday the most disastrous day for the Iraqi army since several divisions collapsed in the wake of the Islamic State's capture of the northern city of Mosul amid its cross-country sweep in June."

So while in Iraq we've been pounding ISIS from the air for a month and a half, we haven't begun to fundamentally alter the facts on the ground. ...

IBD Editors point out the president has gone to war with the weapons systems he has scrapped.

The president launches attacks on the Islamic State with two weapons systems that were targeted for elimination by the administration years before their usefulness ended or any replacements were ready.

With the decision to launch air and missile strikes against Islamic State targets in Syria, in addition to ongoing strikes in Iraq in what is said to be the start of a long and sustained campaign to "degrade and destroy" the terrorist group, President Obama has stumbled upon a revelation:

The military whose budgets he's slashed and weapons systems he opposed is suddenly quite useful.

As the Washington Post reported, the first strikes Monday night included a volley of 47 Tomahawk cruise missiles from two warships, the guided missile destroyer Arleigh Burke and the guided missile cruiser Philippine Sea. They are part of the George H.W. Bush carrier battle group led by the aircraft carrier of the same name.

The problem, as we reported back in March, is that the Tomahawk was slated by Obama to be phased out of the Navy's inventory, with no timely replacement ready. Under his budget proposals, the Navy, which as recently as last year had plans to buy 980 more Tomahawks, the primary cruise missile used throughout the fleet, would see purchases drop from 196 last year to just 100 in 2015. The number will then drop to zero in 2016.

Doing the math, we see that Obama has already consumed in one night of strikes 47% of next year's planned purchases. ...

We'll have more in other days, but **Paul Mirengoff** of Power Line gets first dibs on Eric The Red.

There have been worse members of presidential cabinets than Eric Holder. John B. Floyd and Howell Cobb, both of James Buchanan's cabinet, who apparently aided the South in the days before secession come to mind.

In my 40 plus years of observing presidencies, though, Holder has a strong claim on first place. His warped attempts to use the national law enforcement apparatus to remake America along leftist lines would have made his tenure an abomination even if it hadn't been further stained by racism. But racially stained Holder's tenure was, as Christian Adams reminds us:

[A]fter six years of Holder hugging Al Sharpton, stoking racial division in places like Florida and Ferguson, after suing police and fire departments to impose racial hiring requirements, after refusing to enforce election laws that protect white victims or require voter rolls to be cleaned, after launching harassing litigation against peaceful pro-life protesters, after incident after incident of dishonesty and contempt before Congress — after all this, it was clear to anyone with any intellectual honesty that this man had a vision of the law at odds with the nation's traditions. ...

Debra Saunders remarks on the missing peace protests.

... Partisans on both sides of the aisle like to think that if they were in charge, the world would be a safer place. For eight years, Democrats indulged in the seductive conceit that if they were in charge, the world couldn't be worse than it was with the bumbling Bush as commander in chief. As Secretary of State John Kerry scoffed as a senator in 2004, Bush ran "the most arrogant, inept, reckless and ideological foreign policy in the modern history of this country."

As the Democratic nominee in 2008, Obama promised a "tough, smart and principled national security strategy." His five goals: "ending the war in Iraq responsibly; finishing the fight against al-Qaida and the Taliban; securing all nuclear weapons and materials from terrorists and rogue states; achieving true energy security; and rebuilding our alliances to meet the challenges of the 21st century."

So what's the world like now with the edgy, cerebral and principled Obama in the Oval Office?

Obama did pull U.S. troops out of Iraq, only to create a dangerous power vacuum. Hence the need for military force in Iraq and Syria. No ground war? Please. America has adviser boots on the ground in Iraq. In Syria, U.S. forces targeted not only the Islamic State but also the al-Qaida-linked Khorasan Group. Emboldened by Obama's plan to pull all U.S. troops out of Afghanistan by 2016, the Taliban aren't going anywhere. Fracking has made America more energy-independent. And the Nobel Peace Prize-winning president has authorized U.S. airstrikes in seven countries -- Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya and Syria. ...

WSJ OpEd on the rash of unvaccinated children.

... Who is choosing not to vaccinate? The answer is surprising. The area with the most cases of whooping cough in California is Los Angeles County, and no group within that county has lower immunization rates than residents living between Malibu and Marina Del Rey, home to some of the wealthiest and most exclusive suburbs in the country. At the Kabbalah Children's Academy in Beverly Hills, 57% of children are unvaccinated. At the Waldorf Early Childhood Center in Santa Monica, it's 68%, according to the Hollywood Reporter's analysis of public-health data.

These are the kind of immunization rates that can be found in Chad or South Sudan. But parents in Beverly Hills and Santa Monica see vaccines as unnatural—something that conflicts with their healthy lifestyle. And they have no problem finding fringe pediatricians willing to cater to their irrational beliefs.

These parents are almost uniformly highly educated, but they are making an uneducated choice. It's also a dangerous choice: Children not vaccinated against whooping cough are 24 times more likely to catch the disease. Furthermore, about 500,000 people in the U.S. can't be vaccinated, either because they are receiving chemotherapy for cancer or immune-suppressive therapies for chronic diseases, or because they are too young. They depend on those around them to be vaccinated. Otherwise, they are often the first to suffer. And because no vaccine is 100% effective, everyone, even those who are vaccinated, is at some risk.

Parents might consider what has happened in other countries when large numbers of parents chose not to vaccinate their children. Japan, for example, which had virtually eliminated whooping cough by 1974, suffered an anti-vaccine activist movement that caused vaccine rates to fall to 10% in 1976 from 80% in 1974. In 1979, more than 13,000 cases of whooping cough and 41 deaths occurred as a result.

Another problem: We simply don't fear these diseases anymore. My parents' generation—children of the 1920s and 1930s—needed no convincing to vaccinate their children. They saw that whooping cough could kill as many as 8,000 babies a year. You didn't have to convince my generation—children of the 1950s and 1960s—to vaccinate our children. We had many of these diseases, like measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox. But young parents today don't see the effects of vaccine-preventable diseases and they didn't grow up with them. For them, vaccination has become an act of faith. ...

Jim Geraghty reminds us why we don't have David Brooks in these pages anymore. On Tuesday David Brooks, the lonely right-of-center columnist on the New York Times editorial page, offered us a fascinating portrait of how the world looks from 620 Eighth Avenue in Manhattan — or at least how the circles inhabited by a right-of-center columnist for the New York Times look.

[New York City] has never been better. . . . When I think about the 15 or 20 largest American cities, the same thought applies. Compared with all past periods, American cities and suburbs are sweeter and more interesting places.

Begin with the fact that Brooks bases his assessment of the state of the country on the condition of “15 or 20 largest American cities” (and perhaps suburbs). That leaves a lot of Americans not enjoying “sweeter and more interesting” places. ...

... Brooks gets closer in his diagnosis of the absence of a “responsible leadership class,” but he never quite connects that to his previous gripe about Americans’ distrusting, protesting, ignoring, and working around the existing leadership class. Nor does Brooks indicate that he has any awareness of his own role as a cheerleader for many individuals within that leadership class, such as President Obama:

“I remember distinctly an image of — we were sitting on his couches, and I was looking at his pant leg and his perfectly creased pant,” Brooks says, “and I’m thinking, a) he’s going to be president and b) he’ll be a very good president.”

A New York Times columnist evaluating an aspiring president based upon a perfectly creased pant leg is the ideal symbol of a “leadership class” evaluating each other based on irresponsibly shallow criteria. ...

Washington Post
[Our real Syria strategy — containment-plus](#)
by Charles Krauthammer

Late, hesitant and reluctant as he is, President Obama has begun effecting a workable strategy against the Islamic State. True, he’s been driven there by public opinion. Does anyone imagine that without the broadcast beheadings we’d be doing anything more than pinprick strikes within Iraq? If Obama can remain steady through future fluctuations in public opinion, his strategy might succeed.

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From the Shiites in Iraq we should expect little. U.S. advisers embedded with a few highly trained Iraqi special forces could make some progress. But we cannot count on the corrupt and demoralized regular Shiite-dominated military.

Our key potential allies are the Sunni tribes. We will have to induce them to change allegiances a second time, joining us again, as they did during the [2007-2008 surge](#), against the jihadists.

Having abandoned them in 2011, we won't find this easy. But it is necessary. One good sign is the creation of a [Sunni national guard](#), a descendant of the Sons of Iraq who, fighting with us, expelled al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) during the Anbar Awakening. Only they could push the Islamic State out of Iraq. And surely only they could hold the territory regained.

Syria is another matter. Under the current strategy, the cancer will remain. The air power there is unsupported by ground troops. Nor is anyone in Obama's "broad coalition" going to contribute any.

Perhaps Turkey will one day. But Islamist President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is not just refusing to join the air campaign. He has [denied us use](#) of his air bases.

As for what's left of the Free Syrian Army, Obama has finally come around to training and arming it. But very late and very little. [The administration admits](#) it won't be able to field any trained forces for a year. And even then only about 5,000. The Islamic State is already [approximately 30,000 strong and growing](#).

Not that air power is useless. It can degrade and disrupt. If applied systematically enough it can damage the entrenched, expanding, secure and self-financing Islamic State, turning it back to more of a fugitive guerrilla force constantly on the run.

What kind of strategy is that? A compressed and more aggressive form of the George Kennan strategy of Soviet containment. Stop them, squeeze them and ultimately they will be defeated by their own contradictions. As [historian David Motadel points out](#), jihadist regimes stretching back two centuries have been undone by their own primitivism, barbarism, brutality — and the intense hostility thus engendered among those they rule.

That's what just eight years ago created the Anbar Awakening that expelled AQI. Mahdi rule in Sudan in the 1880s and '90s was no more successful. As Motadel notes, half the population died of disease, starvation or violence — and that was before the British annihilation of the Mahdi forces at Omdurman.

Or to put it in a contemporary Middle East context, this kind of long-term combination of rollback and containment is what has carried the Israelis successfully through seven decades of terrorism arising at different times from different places proclaiming different ideologies. There is no one final stroke that ends it all. The Israelis engage, enjoy a respite, then re-engage.

With a bitter irony born of ceaseless attacks, the Israelis call it “mowing the lawn.” They know a finality may come, but alas not in their time. They accept it, and go on living.

[Obama was right and candid to say](#) this war he’s renewed will take years. This struggle is generational. This is not Sudan 1898. There is no Omdurman that defeats jihadism for much of a century.

Today jihadism is global, its religious and financial institutions ubiquitous and its roots deeply sunk in a world religion of more than a billion people. We are on a path — long, difficult, sober, undoubtedly painful — of long-term, low-intensity rollback/containment.

Containment-plus. It’s the best of our available strategies. Obama must now demonstrate the steel to carry it through.

Contentions

[A Haunting Feeling About Obama](#)

by Peter Wehner

For those who believe that the air strikes we’re conducting against Syria will achieve President Obama’s goal of defeating ISIS, consider [this story](#) in yesterday’s *New York Times*, which begins this way:

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This news comes as we learned over the weekend that ISIS attacked an Iraqi army base, killing upwards of 300-500 Iraqi soldiers. “If the survivors’ accounts are correct,” [the Washington Post reports](#), “it would make Sunday the most disastrous day for the Iraqi army since several divisions collapsed in the wake of the Islamic State’s capture of the northern city of Mosul amid its cross-country sweep in June.”

So while in Iraq we’ve been pounding ISIS from the air for a month and a half, we haven’t begun to fundamentally alter the facts on the ground.

Now keep this in mind: the situation in Iraq, while certainly challenging, is many times *less* complicated for us than the situation in Syria, which is (a) ruled by an enemy of America; (b) a client state of Iran; and (c) engaged in a ferocious, multi-sided civil war involving forces loyal to Bashar al-Assad, ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra, and the Free Syrian Army.

In addition, in Iraq there are Iraqi Security Forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga who are willing to fight ISIS, albeit imperfectly. (Both have suffered serious military reversal this past summer.) Success in Iraq depends on working with Iraq’s Sunni tribes, which happened during the counterinsurgency strategy in 2007-08.

In atomized, hellish Syria we have no such advantages. Which is why if President Obama persists in refusing to allow U.S. “boots on the ground”—if he doesn’t allow American troops to coordinate

on the front lines with forces opposing ISIS—we can't defeat ISIS. That doesn't mean we can't inflict damage on it, of course; but inflicting damage is one thing, defeating ISIS is quite another.

The president, in ordering air strikes in Syria, has dramatically escalated our involvement in this war. But one cannot shake the haunting feeling that he's simply going through the motions; that Mr. Obama is stunned to find himself in this predicament, that his heart and will are not in this war, and that he's not really committed to winning it.

ISIS, on the other hand, is.

Investor's Business Daily - Editorial **[Obama Goes To War With Weapons He Scrapped.](#)**

National Defense: The president launches attacks on the Islamic State with two weapons systems that were targeted for elimination by the administration years before their usefulness ended or any replacements were ready.

With the decision to launch air and missile strikes against Islamic State targets in Syria, in addition to ongoing strikes in Iraq in what is said to be the start of a long and sustained campaign to "degrade and destroy" the terrorist group, President Obama has stumbled upon a revelation:

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The problem, as we reported back in March, is that the Tomahawk was slated by Obama to be phased out of the Navy's inventory, with no timely replacement ready. Under his budget proposals, the Navy, which as recently as last year had plans to buy 980 more Tomahawks, the primary cruise missile used throughout the fleet, would see purchases drop from 196 last year to just 100 in 2015. The number will then drop to zero in 2016.

Doing the math, we see that Obama has already consumed in one night of strikes 47% of next year's planned purchases. The naval inventory will soon be depleted at this rate unless we crank up the arsenal of democracy and stop beating our swords into solar panels. As Thomas Lifson at the American Thinker calculates, the U.S. supply of roughly 4,000 Tomahawks would be exhausted in about 85 days at that rate of use.

How ironic is it that Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Obama also used the Tomahawk missile he seeks to scrap as his weapon of choice when on March 19, 2011, he launched Operation Odyssey Dawn. On that day, he fired 112 Tomahawks at Libyan targets to enforce a United Nations-backed no-fly zone in support of Libyan rebels fighting Moammar Gadhafi. Some 220 Tomahawks were fired in total at Libyan targets.

A Syrian campaign is going to be tougher than the effort in Libya, where there was no sophisticated air defense weaponry to worry about, which is why the Air Force chose to use the F-22 Raptor for the first time in combat. Its ability to evade radar detection plus its high-speed maneuverability make it ideal for high-risk environments.

Yet F-22 production was capped at 187 in the defense cuts that were part of the fiscal 2010 budget.

In 2009, Obama said expanding the F-22's procurement budget would be "an inexcusable waste of money" and Congress took away \$1.75 billion for additional planes in the 2010 budget. The last F-22 rolled off the production line in 2011.

Another "Cold War" weapon, as Obama calls it, that was slated for the scrap heap but which will be used against the Islamic State is the A-10 Warthog, which entered service in 1972 and was designed to destroy Soviet tanks on a European battlefield. According to Business Insider, the Pentagon is to deploy a dozen A-10s to the Middle East in October, the Indiana National Guard reports.

Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has warned that under Obama's budget cuts and sequestration our military will have "(t)he smallest ground forces since 1940," "a fleet of fewer than 230 ships, the smallest level since 1915," and the "smallest tactical fighter force in the history of the Air Force."

The issue is not just boots on the ground, but whether we have enough boots, or anything else, under Obama's unilateral disarmament.

Power Line

Holder to leave, but his stain will linger

by Paul Mirengoff

There have been worse members of presidential cabinets than Eric Holder. John B. Floyd and Howell Cobb, both of James Buchanan's cabinet, who apparently aided the South in the days before secession come to mind.

In my 40 plus years of observing presidencies, though, Holder has a strong claim on first place. His warped attempts to use the national law enforcement apparatus to remake America along leftist lines would have made his tenure an abomination even if it hadn't been further stained by racism. But racially stained Holder's tenure was, as [Christian Adams](#) reminds us:

[A]fter six years of Holder hugging Al Sharpton, stoking racial division in places like Florida and Ferguson, after suing police and fire departments to impose racial hiring requirements, after refusing to enforce election laws that protect white victims or require voter rolls to be cleaned, after launching harassing litigation against peaceful pro-life protesters, after incident after incident of dishonesty and contempt before Congress — after all this, it was clear to anyone with any intellectual honesty that this man had a vision of the law at odds with the nation's traditions.

Why would it surprise anyone he behaved as he did? As I made clear in my book [Injustice](#), he carried around a quote in his wallet for 40 years about race that, he explained to the Washington

Post, indicated that he had common cause with the black criminal. That's a fact. That's who he is. .

Eric Holder was a radical progressive who used the power of the federal government to impose his progressivism on the United States. He loved big interventionist government that took sides based on your politics and your race. He was a menace to the rule of law.

Bad cabinet members come and go, but Eric Holder leaves behind a legacy that I believe will haunt the nation for decades. What is that legacy? Again I turn to Adams:

Holder's tenure represents the beginnings of a post-Constitutional era, where the chief law enforcement officer of the United States serves to dismantle legal traditions. Holder is the first attorney general to whom law seemed to be an option, a suggestion on the way to a progressive future. Most folks, and most lawyers, who didn't devote daily attention to him might not have noticed the ground shifting during his tenure. But shift it did, and very deliberately.

Law, like liberty, is a tenuous thing. Failing to understand the sources of domestic tranquility, the sources of your relatively good life, usually also means failing to recognize the threats to that pleasant tranquility. Holder used his time at Justice to do things that corrode the rule of law. Law and liberty are precious things, and Holder did enormous damage to both.

Even John B. Floyd and Howell Cobb probably did less damage.

Real Clear Politcs **[Peace Protests, R.I.P.](#)**

by Debra Saunders

Where are the peaceniks? Why aren't they marching on Capitol Hill to protest President Barack Obama's use of military force in Syria and Iraq? The San Francisco Chronicle's Kevin Fagan interviewed peace activists who told him that their ranks are numb, in part because America has been at war for more than a decade. Some even wonder whether the Islamic State is so barbaric as to merit airstrikes.

"People are war-weary and have already been very disappointed in President Obama for some time," Peaceworkers Executive Director David Hartsough said. That's right; they're disappointed. After GOP President George W. Bush sent U.S. troops into Iraq with congressional authorization in 2002, activists took to the streets, but after a Democrat ordered airstrikes over Syria without explicit authorization, they've been subdued.

"It's early still, and for the moment, this is an air war and not a ground war," another progressive told Fagan.

I understand. Partisans on both sides of the aisle like to think that if they were in charge, the world would be a safer place. For eight years, Democrats indulged in the seductive conceit that if they were in charge, the world couldn't be worse than it was with the bumbling Bush as commander in chief. As Secretary of State John Kerry scoffed as a senator in 2004, Bush ran "the most arrogant, inept, reckless and ideological foreign policy in the modern history of this country."

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So what's the world like now with the edgy, cerebral and principled Obama in the Oval Office?

Obama did pull U.S. troops out of Iraq, only to create a dangerous power vacuum. Hence the need for military force in Iraq *and* Syria. No ground war? Please. America has adviser boots on the ground in Iraq. In Syria, U.S. forces targeted not only the Islamic State but also the al-Qaida-linked Khorasan Group. Emboldened by Obama's plan to pull all U.S. troops out of Afghanistan by 2016, the Taliban aren't going anywhere. Fracking has made America more energy-independent. And the Nobel Peace Prize-winning president has authorized U.S. airstrikes in seven countries -- Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya and Syria.

A year ago, when hawks wanted Washington to arm "moderate" Syrian rebels and Ukraine, Obama scoffed that they "haven't learned the lesson of the last decade." I don't know that there would be more peace if he had heeded critics, but I do know that U.S. forces are back in Iraq and that the region is more dangerous than it was after the Bush troop surge.

Seven countries. Where are all the peace activists? Maybe some of them are numb because they can't muster up as much indignation when a Democrat beats the drums of war. Or maybe they are numb because they've realized peace isn't that easy.

WSJ

The Anti-Vaccination Epidemic

Whooping cough, mumps and measles are making an alarming comeback, thanks to seriously misguided parents.

by Paul A. Offit

Almost 8,000 cases of pertussis, better known as whooping cough, have been reported to California's Public Health Department so far this year. More than 250 patients have been hospitalized, nearly all of them infants and young children, and 58 have required intensive care. Why is this preventable respiratory infection making a comeback? In no small part thanks to low vaccination rates, as a story earlier this month in the Hollywood Reporter pointed out.

The conversation about vaccination has changed. In the 1990s, when new vaccines were introduced, the news media were obsessed with the notion that vaccines might be doing more harm than good. The measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine might cause autism, we were told. Thimerosal, an ethyl-mercury containing preservative in some vaccines, might cause

developmental delays. Too many vaccines given too soon, the stories went, might overwhelm a child's immune system.

Then those stories disappeared. One reason was that study after study showed that these concerns were ill-founded. Another was that the famous 1998 report claiming to show a link between vaccinations and autism was retracted by *The Lancet*, the medical journal that had published it. The study was not only spectacularly wrong, as more than a dozen studies have shown, but also fraudulent. The author, British surgeon Andrew Wakefield, has since been stripped of his medical license.

But the damage was done. Countless parents became afraid of vaccines. As a consequence, many parents now choose to delay, withhold, separate or space out vaccines. Some don't vaccinate their children at all. A 2006 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that between 1991 and 2004, the percentage of children whose parents had chosen to opt out of vaccines increased by 6% a year, resulting in a more than twofold increase.

Today the media are covering the next part of this story, the inevitable outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, mostly among children who have not been vaccinated. Some of the parents who chose not to vaccinate were influenced by the original, inaccurate media coverage.

For example, between 2009 and 2010 more than 3,500 cases of mumps were reported in New York City and surrounding area. In 2010 California experienced an outbreak of whooping cough larger than any outbreak there since 1947. Ten children died.

In the first half of 2012, Washington suffered 2,520 cases of whooping cough, a 1,300% increase from the previous year and the largest outbreak in the state since 1942. As of Aug. 29, about 600 cases of measles have occurred in the U.S. in 2014: the largest outbreak in 20 years—in a country that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared measles-free in 2000.

Who is choosing not to vaccinate? The answer is surprising. The area with the most cases of whooping cough in California is Los Angeles County, and no group within that county has lower immunization rates than residents living between Malibu and Marina Del Rey, home to some of the wealthiest and most exclusive suburbs in the country. At the Kabbalah Children's Academy in Beverly Hills, 57% of children are unvaccinated. At the Waldorf Early Childhood Center in Santa Monica, it's 68%, according to the *Hollywood Reporter's* analysis of public-health data.

These are the kind of immunization rates that can be found in Chad or South Sudan. But parents in Beverly Hills and Santa Monica see vaccines as unnatural—something that conflicts with their healthy lifestyle. And they have no problem finding fringe pediatricians willing to cater to their irrational beliefs.

These parents are almost uniformly highly educated, but they are making an uneducated choice. It's also a dangerous choice: Children not vaccinated against whooping cough are 24 times more likely to catch the disease. Furthermore, about 500,000 people in the U.S. can't be vaccinated, either because they are receiving chemotherapy for cancer or immune-suppressive therapies for chronic diseases, or because they are too young. They depend on those around them to be vaccinated. Otherwise, they are often the first to suffer. And because no vaccine is 100% effective, everyone, even those who are vaccinated, is at some risk.

Parents might consider what has happened in other countries when large numbers of parents chose not to vaccinate their children. Japan, for example, which had virtually eliminated whooping cough by 1974, suffered an anti-vaccine activist movement that caused vaccine rates to fall to 10%

in 1976 from 80% in 1974. In 1979, more than 13,000 cases of whooping cough and 41 deaths occurred as a result.

Another problem: We simply don't fear these diseases anymore. My parents' generation—children of the 1920s and 1930s—needed no convincing to vaccinate their children. They saw that whooping cough could kill as many as 8,000 babies a year. You didn't have to convince my generation—children of the 1950s and 1960s—to vaccinate our children. We had many of these diseases, like measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox. But young parents today don't see the effects of vaccine-preventable diseases and they didn't grow up with them. For them, vaccination has become an act of faith.

Perhaps most upsetting was a recent study out of Seattle Children's Hospital and the University of Washington. Researchers wanted to see whether the whooping cough epidemic of 2012 had inspired more people to vaccinate their children. So they studied rates of whooping cough immunization before, during and after the epidemic. No difference. One can only conclude that the outbreak hadn't been large enough or frightening enough to change behavior—that not enough children had died.

Because we're unwilling to learn from history, we are starting to relive it. And children are the victims of our ignorance. An ignorance that, ironically, is cloaked in education, wealth and privilege.

Dr. Offit is a professor of pediatrics in the division of infectious diseases and director of the Vaccine Education Center at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

National Review

Snap Out of It Yourself!

Trying to diagnose disconnected elites, David Brooks accidentally exemplifies them.

by Jim Geraghty

On Tuesday David Brooks, the lonely right-of-center columnist on the *New York Times* editorial page, offered us a fascinating portrait of how the world looks from 620 Eighth Avenue in Manhattan — or at least how the circles inhabited by a right-of-center columnist for the *New York Times* look.

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Begin with the fact that Brooks bases his assessment of the state of the country on the condition of “15 or 20 largest American cities” (and perhaps suburbs). That leaves a lot of Americans not enjoying “sweeter and more interesting” places.

Using one measuring stick, the Census Bureau's most recent estimates for the 20 biggest cities in the United States, we get about 32.5 million Americans living in those cities (which doesn't count the suburbs). That's about one in ten Americans living within the city limits of Brooks's list.

The numbers shift when you throw in the suburbs. The Census Bureau overall calculates that about 81 percent of Americans live in urban areas. Of course, they have a strikingly broad definition: “To qualify as an urban area, the territory identified according to criteria must encompass

at least 2,500 people.” Perhaps what the Census Bureau calls “urban” is better thought of as “not rural.”



“Urban.”

Any way you slice it, Brooks bases his assessment of the condition of the United States on places where only a fraction of Americans live.

Brooks continues:

Widening the lens, we’re living in an era with the greatest reduction in global poverty ever — across Asia and Africa.

This is a heck of a way to gloss over the Great Recession, which denied millions and millions of Americans “sweeter and more interesting” lives. The cost of the recession, on a per-household basis, is simply breathtaking:

Oof: the Great Recession cost each household between \$50,000 and \$120,000, or the equivalent of 40 percent to 90 percent of one year’s economic output, according to a study released by the Dallas Fed. In total, that represents an output loss of \$6 trillion to \$14 trillion. That’s a combination of lost wealth (like the lost value of a house) and a drop in both current wage income and discounted future wage income from unemployment.

While the president deploys poll-tested, focus-grouped cries for an increase in the minimum wage, he glosses over the fact that most American workers with much higher salaries are still waiting for a raise:

Between 2009 when Obama took office and 2013, the latest for which numbers are available, median annual household incomes fell by more than \$2,100 in inflation-adjusted terms, Census Bureau data showed last week.

It’s great that “we’re living in an era with the greatest reduction in global poverty ever — across Asia and Africa.” Undoubtedly that stems in large part from the shift in manufacturing jobs to countries in Asia and Africa through globalization and free trade. Of course, that’s bad news for Americans who, a generation or two ago, could graduate from high school and head into an assembly-line manufacturing job.

Most people’s definition of “the American dream” includes some amount of prosperity, or at least economic security, and the path to that prosperity has rarely seemed foggier. We used to be able

to tell our kids, *Study hard, work hard, and you can live your dreams*. Now those exhortations have to be cushioned with . . . *well, probably*. Maybe your local public school can provide your child with a good education . . . maybe not. You probably can't afford four years at a private university. Your child can take out loans, but he'll be paying them back for years. A degree used to more or less guarantee a decent job after college, but those days are gone.

Of course, once a young American finds a job, there are still no guarantees. You can be good at your job and still get laid off. A lot of households have way too much credit-card debt. Then there's this ominous indicator:

One in 10 working Americans between the ages of 35 and 44 are getting their wages garnished. That means their pay is being docked — often over an old credit card debt, medical bill or student loan.

Elsewhere on the global scene, Brooks asserts, “We’re seeing a decline in civil wars and warfare generally.”

The “we’re in an era of fewer wars” argument relies heavily on a report that is only updated through 2012:

Digging deeper into the numbers of this year’s HSR, there are also some data points that should give “decline of war” optimists pause. (For one thing, 2013, which the report doesn’t cover, was a pretty rough year in Syria, Sudan, CAR, Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan . . .)

It’s also worth keeping in mind that while the total number of conflicts may have declined in 2012, one — the civil war in Syria — was almost enough to make up for it.

“The bad news is that the escalating carnage in Syria meant a dramatic increase in the number of worldwide battle deaths in 2012,” the authors write. “Indeed, the Syrian battle-death toll last year was the world’s highest since the World War I–style interstate war between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1999.”

This assessment doesn’t include Assad’s use of chemical weapons, and of course, our current year brought the rise of ISIS in Iraq, the Ukraine-Russia fighting, and tens of thousands added to the death toll in Syria.

Brooks shifts to an assessment of our leaders, and begins by pointing a finger at those who seem to think America doesn’t need any leaders at all:

First, we need to get over the childish notion that we don’t need a responsible leadership class, that power can be wielded directly by the people. America was governed best when it was governed by a porous, self-conscious and responsible elite — during the American revolution, for example, or during and after World War II. Karl Marx and Ted Cruz may believe that power can be wielded directly by the masses, but this has almost never happened historically.

What exactly is Brooks referring to when he writes “the childish notion that power can be wielded directly by the people”? Shifting funds, powers, and responsibilities to states? Local control? The government shutdown? He makes it sound like anarchy. And whatever his flaws, Ted Cruz is not an anarchist.

Brooks gets closer in his diagnosis of the absence of a “responsible leadership class,” but he never quite connects that to his previous gripe about Americans’ distrusting, protesting, ignoring, and

working around the existing leadership class. Nor does Brooks indicate that he has any awareness of his own role as a cheerleader for many individuals within that leadership class, such as President Obama:

“I remember distinctly an image of — we were sitting on his couches, and I was looking at his pant leg and his perfectly creased pant,” Brooks says, “and I’m thinking, a) he’s going to be president and b) he’ll be a very good president.”

A *New York Times* columnist evaluating an aspiring president based upon a perfectly creased pant leg is the ideal symbol of a “leadership class” evaluating each other based on irresponsibly shallow criteria.

Brooks continues:

Wealthy people have an obligation to try to follow a code of seamliness. No luxury cars for college-age kids. No private jet/ski weekends. Live a lifestyle that is more integrated into middle-class America than the one you can actually afford. Strike a blow for social cohesion.

True enough, but the problems of seamliness, propriety, and responsibility go well beyond wealth. One aspect of modern American life that conservatives don’t always articulate well enough is the sense that our national leaders are failing us in realms outside the political. The Catholic Church and the pedophilia scandals, the increasing number of reported sexual assaults in the U.S. military, a corporate America that includes Enron, Lehman Brothers, the defective cars of General Motors . . . and of course, a world of professional athletics where commissioners, owners, and, in too many cases, fans will overlook egregious behavior if the player can help the team win.

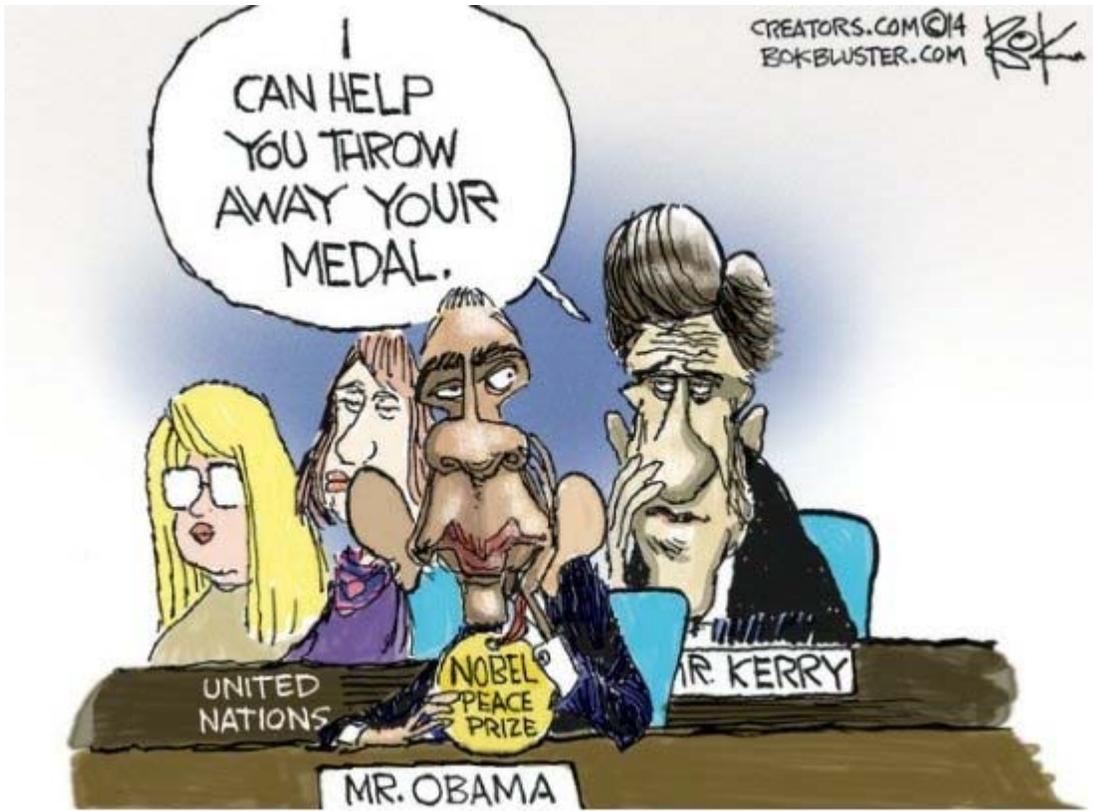
“Stewardship” is a label rarely applied to America’s leaders anymore. The root word, steward, implies service or dedication to others — to put someone else’s interest or well-being ahead of one’s own. Doesn’t that concept seem strange in an era of university presidents making more than \$1 million per year and nonprofit executives regularly raking in six figures? When retired politicians quickly jump to lobbying work, or leave their elected offices early to join investment banks, are they practicing good stewardship? Is a network news division serving the public trust when it hires a president’s daughter, at \$600,000 a year for three years, to churn out a handful of puff pieces? Is an aspiring president practicing “stewardship” when she charges a public university \$225,000 for a speech?

There are reasons for Americans to be optimistic: The birth rate is creeping up again; teen pregnancy, births, and abortions are down. According to the CDC, the numbers are going in the right direction for life expectancy, heart disease, and cancer death rate. We’ve made remarkable progress against cancer and AIDS. The scale of the U.S. energy boom is jaw-dropping.

The Pentagon is developing a hypersonic missile that can hit anywhere in the world in 30 minutes. They’re developing brain chips to treat PTSD. There’s some mysterious plane — allegedly a stealth transport — flying over Texas. University researchers may be on the verge of developing functional invisibility. And, as Kevin D. Williamson notes, brainwave-driven exoskeletons may help the paralyzed rise and walk.

The realms farthest from the reach of our political leviathan seem to be the ones enjoying the most innovation and breakthroughs.

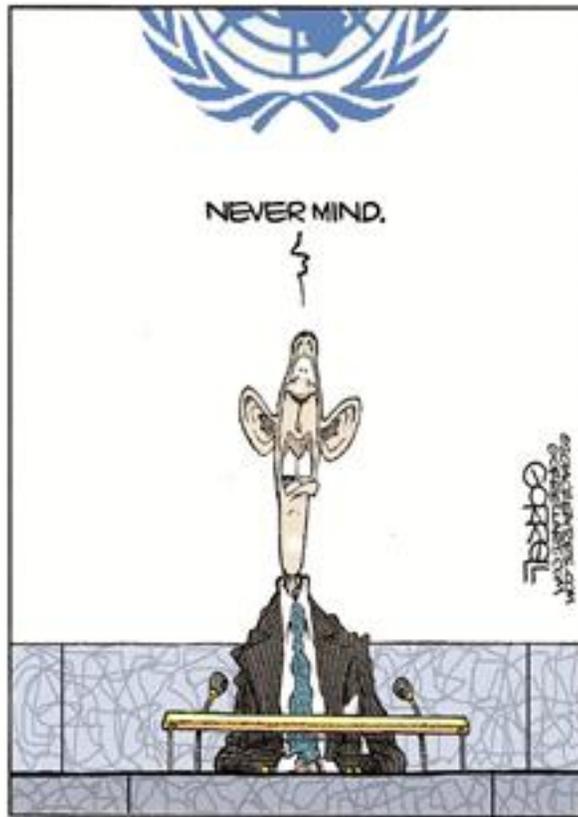
Maybe America’s “responsible leadership class” has been hiding all along in energy industry, medical-research labs, defense-contractor companies, and R&D labs around the country.



2013



2014



FAST AND FURIOUS?

NEVER HEARD OF IT.



THE IRS?

NOTHING THERE.



BENGHAZI?

NO SPECIAL PROSECUTOR.



WELL... MY WORK IS DONE!



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