

December 30, 2014

American Thinker posts on Sarah Palin's year of achievement. Beyond her success backing candidates in the 2014 election, there are her impressive foreign policy chops.

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John Fund and Hans Van Spakovsky write on the president and attorney general who inflame race relations.

Attorney General Eric Holder insisted to MSNBC earlier this month that "we are in a better place than we were before" in race relations since Barack Obama was elected president.

The president doubled down in an interview with NPR last week. Asked if race relations were worse since he took office, he said, "No, I actually think that it's probably in its day-to-day interactions less racially divided."

But that's not what the American people see. A Pew Research Center poll found that only 40% of Americans approve of the way Obama is handling race relations. Black approval is down to 57%, while approval among whites is down to 33%.

More young people under age 30, the age group who were most enthusiastic about electing the nation's first African-American president, now disapprove of his performance on racial issues than approve. And Eric Holder has one of the lowest approval ratings of any public official.

Law-enforcement officials are appalled at the way the Obama administration exploited tragedies in Ferguson, Mo., and New York City to appeal to its political base. David Clarke, a Democrat who is the African-American sheriff of Milwaukee, doesn't mince his words.

"The thing that disappoints me the most is some very powerful people in this country — the president of the United States, Attorney General Eric Holder and Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York — have created a pathway that contributes to an unjustifiable hatred of law enforcement officers

across the country,” he told WMAL radio in Washington, DC. “They trashed an entire profession with a broad brush because it was politically expedient for them to do so.” ...

Jonathan Tobin posts on the increased use of executive memoranda.

When conservatives protested President Obama’s attempt to go around the Constitution and rule by executive orders rather than with the consent of Congress, his defenders had a ready answer. While they insisted that Obama’s fiat granting amnesty to five million illegal immigrants did not exceed his authority, they also countered by saying that the president had actually issued far fewer such executive orders than that of President Bush. But, as USA Today noted last week, focusing only on executive orders while ignoring the far more numerous executive memoranda issued by this administration that have the same effect as law, the press and the public have vastly underestimated the extent of how far he has stretched the boundaries of executive power. If anything, this president’s effort to create a one-man government may have gone farther than we thought.

As of last week, Obama had issued 198 executive memoranda alongside 195 executive orders. That’s 33 percent more than Bush issued in his full eight years in office and 45 percent more than Bill Clinton. That blows a huge hole in the defense of Obama’s use of executive orders. Seen in this light, rather, as he and his media cheering section have contended, Obama has far exceeded the resort to unilateral measures of not only his immediate predecessor, but every one before that as well. ...

Jennifer Rubin says politicians who take sides against police will pay a price.

... Pols who dabble in anti-police invective and join the mantra that “the system is rigged against you” find themselves exacerbating frayed nerves, increasing polarization and losing control of their own message. It might be politically appealing to throw red-meat rhetoric to one’s base and play to the fawning liberal punditocracy, but it comes at a price. As William Galston put it, when de Blasio brought up his son, “If he had been a private citizen, his candor would have been beyond reproach. But the question is not only whether what Mr. de Blasio said is true, but also whether it was appropriate for him to say it. As mayor of the country’s largest and most complex city, he has a responsibility to weigh the impact of his words on all New Yorkers, not just those who agree with him.”

That admonition — to think first and figure out how to calm, not increase, tensions — would seem like fundamental common sense, but the desire to play to the crowd or advance an agenda that may or may not fit the facts is too tempting for many pols. And it is not just Democrats who have behaved badly. ...

And even the NY Times can't save Bill De Blasio says **Jonathan Tobin**.

It’s been an awful week for New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. The man who was elected in 2013 on a platform of cop bashing has faced the fury of the police and the public after the murder of two members of the force exposed the ugly face of the post-Ferguson/Eric Garner protests. Like most politicians backed into a corner, de Blasio has lashed out at the media while proving unable to either make peace with the cops or to control his leftist allies who continue to conduct anti-police

demonstrations. But de Blasio is not completely without friends. He still has the New York Times, which weighed in today with an embarrassing piece of flummery intended to reassure New Yorkers that everything was OK because the mayor was "calm." If that's the best they can do, de Blasio may be in even more trouble than his critics thought.

The conceit of the piece is that de Blasio's personal approach to the crisis that has threatened to tear the city apart while the rank and file of the NYPD are openly displaying their contempt and anger at the mayor is so deft that he is overcoming all obstacles. But even a casual reader can tell that the only people saying such things are close de Blasio allies whose comments are then slavishly taken down and published by the Times. ...

Now for the important stuff. According to Calaveras Enterprise, beer can improve your thinking ability.

There is newfound reason to indulge in a pint or two of your favorite beer, and it's not just to catch up and share a few laughs with friends. New research has shown that a chemical compound in beer may be able to improve cognitive function. The beverage once thought to obliterate brain cells when consumed in abundance may actually have the opposite effect and boost brain power.

No one should run out and start imbibing just yet, however. The study that ran in Behavioral Brain Research in October 2014 was preliminary and only conducted on lab mice. During the study, scientists discovered that xanthohumol, a type of flavonoid found in beer, seemed to improve brain function in the young mice given xanthohumol doses. The cognitive flexibility of the mice was tested with a specially designed maze, and younger mice showed signs of intellectual improvement. Older mice showed no improvements. Researchers believe xanthohumol and other flavonoids, such as those found in red wine, blueberries and dark chocolate, may play a role in helping a person form memories. ...

American Thinker

American Achiever of 2014: Sarah Palin

by M. Joseph Sheppard

It would be the height of churlishness for even the most inveterate leftist to deny the import of someone who made Time magazine's "100 Most Influential People" list, and then the Smithsonian Institution's "100 Most Significant Americans Of All Time" list. Both affirmations were earned by former Alaska governor and vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin.

To then accept Governor Palin as "American Achiever of the Year 2014" would be for most, if not all on the left (and to be fair, many in the GOP) no doubt a bridge too far. However, such partisanship should not stand in the way of a general acknowledgement of what was a remarkable year for Palin.

Palin achieved what such luminaries as President Obama did not: a place in the Smithsonian's prestigious "Most Significant" list. After being written off by many in the media, and especially the left, as "irrelevant" and predicted by MSNBC's Krystal Ball as "not going to have an effect on the [2014] midterms," Palin's record of success of her endorsed candidates was nothing short of phenomenal.

Governor Palin [endorsed 22 candidates](#) for various offices during the midterm finals, including senators, governors, lieutenant governors, congressmen, and attorneys general. Of those so endorsed, an incredible 20 were elected – contrasted with, for example, Hillary Clinton's record of 8 wins out 24 endorsed candidates.

Beyond the success of her endorsed candidates lies a much deeper reason for Palin being seen as "Achiever of the Year": those Palin endorsed in their respective primaries who then went on to win the general election battles. As in the past with, among others, senators Ted Cruz, Kelly Ayotte, and Deb Fischer, and Governor Nikki Haley, who owe their elections in their primary campaigns to Palin's endorsement at a critical juncture, so too could new senators Ben Sasse and Joni Ernst, and new Alaska governor Bill Walker (and, remarkably, his Democrat lieutenant governor Byron Mallott) be considered to owe all or a substantial part of their nominations to Palin's endorsement.

For all her detractors' cries of "irrelevance" and "she's just a reality show entertainer" (those two being among the nicer epithets), Palin goes on, election cycle after election cycle, populating Congress with her endorsed candidates in a cost-effective manner, and in such numbers that the likes of Karl Rove with his [1% success rate](#) can surely view only with hidden admiration, if not downright envy.

In what is perhaps the [most interesting aspect](#) of Palin's year of achievement, in instance after instance where Palin was ridiculed for a straightforward statement (e.g., "death panels" or the true history of [Paul Revere](#)), her most strident critics [have agreed](#), in whole or in part, with her views. But 2014 saw the most impressive of this historical revisionism.

After Russian president Putin invaded the Ukraine and annexed the Crimea, video surfaced of Governor Palin's 2008 speech where [she predicted](#) exactly that occurrence should then presidential candidate Barack Obama be elected. Palin sounded a deserved note of triumphalism in March:

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"Here's what this 'stupid' 'insipid woman' predicted back in 2008," Palin said. "After the Russian Army invaded the nation of Georgia, Senator Obama's reaction was one of indecision and moral equivalence, the kind of response that would only encourage Russia's Putin to invade Ukraine next."

Palin's post has been shared by more than 16,000 Facebook users and "liked" by more than 70,000.

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But that's not what the American people see. A Pew Research Center poll found that only 40% of Americans approve of the way Obama is handling race relations. Black approval is down to 57%, while approval among whites is down to 33%.

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Law-enforcement officials are appalled at the way the Obama administration exploited tragedies in Ferguson, Mo., and New York City to appeal to its political base. David Clarke, a Democrat who is the African-American sheriff of Milwaukee, doesn't mince his words.

"The thing that disappoints me the most is some very powerful people in this country — the president of the United States, Attorney General Eric Holder and Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York — have created a pathway that contributes to an unjustifiable hatred of law enforcement officers across the country," he told WMAL radio in Washington, DC. "They trashed an entire profession with a broad brush because it was politically expedient for them to do so."

Holder, who thinks we are "a nation of cowards" on race, has infused the Justice Department with the "racial justice" movement that falsely argues the police "subconsciously" discriminate through the use of "disproportionate" means such as traffic stops. It has forced 15 cities into consent decrees to end such practices, for which it has almost no evidence.

Take Seattle, where Justice claimed that "Biased policing is not primarily about the ill-intentioned officer but rather the officer who engages in discriminatory practices subconsciously," adding that even a well-meaning cop can violate the civil rights of black suspects by operating "on implicit biases that impact that officer's behavior or perceptions."

Even though DOJ admitted it couldn't verify the supposed bias, in 2012 it ordered Seattle to weaken its use-of-force rules while disciplining officers engaged in "implicit bias."

A lawsuit by Seattle police officers against Justice charges that the new policies have led to "hesitation and paralysis" in officers being able to carry out their duty to protect the public from criminals. The suit notes that crime rates have climbed in Seattle — with aggravated assaults up 14%, car theft up 44% and murders up 21%. It is those trends that should scare New Yorkers about the Obama-Holder approach to law enforcement.

Even honest liberals agree that Holder's Justice Department has been confrontational and polarizing. Juan Williams of [Fox News](#), the author of "Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years," laments that "the Justice Department has devolved into the heart of Washington darkness, the absolute pit of modern political polarization in my lifetime."

One reason for that is that, thanks to direct support from Holder and Obama, [Al Sharpton](#) has now become the nation's leading civil-rights leader. Far from becoming the "refined agitator" his apologists now claim him to be, Sharpton is the same racial charlatan and rabble-rouser of the past using slightly new tricks.

Sheriff Clarke says the Obama administration set a pattern early on that it would ignore bad behavior and bad actors if it suited their political purposes and their warped racial ideology.

In 2009, it dropped charges against the New Black Panther Party for intimidating voters at a Philadelphia polling place because the defendants were black. In 2013, the Inspector General of the Justice Department filed a report criticizing its Civil Rights Division for allowing the harassing and bullying of conservative employees. No disciplinary action was taken. And Holder has filled the ranks of the office at DOJ responsible for policing the police with radical lawyers hostile to law enforcement.

In 2013, a federal judge ordered a new trial for five New Orleans police officers convicted of a shooting during Hurricane Katrina because of "grotesque prosecutorial abuse." Judge Kurt Engelhard slammed the "skullduggery" and "perfidy" of Justice Department prosecutors in engaging in a PR campaign to inflame public opinion and sway the jury through anonymous postings on a newspaper website. The judge suggested that Holder "seriously consider appointment of an independent counsel" to investigate the scandal. Holder has ignored the judge's recommendation and instead recently moved to have the judge removed from the case.

For Sheriff Clarke, all of this fits into a pattern. "I think these two [President Obama and Attorney General Holder] have indicated their dislike of the police even if it's in coded language." He notes that in the wake of the [killing of two cops](#) last weekend in New York, Mayor de Blasio and others are now issuing "contrite statements about how they respect and admire our law enforcement officers. I think it's hollow. I don't accept it."

Since President Obama took office, "racial justice" ideology has been allowed to trump common sense. Saying we "are in a better place" when it comes to race relations may be true for the Al Sharptons of the world but not for ordinary Americans.

John Fund is the national affairs correspondent for National Review and Hans A. von Spakovsky is a former Justice Department official. They are co-authors of "Obama's Enforcer: Eric Holder's Justice Department" (HarperCollins/Broadside), out now.

Contentions

[Obama's Executive Memoranda Highlights Constitutional Crisis](#)

by Jonathan S. Tobin

When conservatives protested President Obama's attempt to go around the Constitution and rule by executive orders rather than with the consent of Congress, his defenders had a ready answer.

While they insisted that Obama's fiat granting amnesty to five million illegal immigrants did not exceed his authority, they also countered by saying that the president had actually issued far fewer such executive orders than that of President Bush. But, [as USA Today noted last week](#), focusing only on executive orders while ignoring the far more numerous executive memoranda issued by this administration that have the same effect as law, the press and the public have vastly underestimated the extent of how far he has stretched the boundaries of executive power. If anything, this president's effort to create a one-man government may have gone farther than we thought.

As of last week, Obama had issued 198 executive memoranda alongside 195 executive orders. That's 33 percent more than Bush issued in his full eight years in office and 45 percent more than Bill Clinton. That blows a huge hole in the defense of Obama's use of executive orders. Seen in this light, rather, as he and his media cheering section have contended, Obama has far exceeded the resort to unilateral measures of not only his immediate predecessor, but every one before that as well.

As *USA Today* explains, like the orders, memorandums have the force of law and don't require the consent of Congress. Obama's memoranda have run the gamut from the creation of new kinds of retirement savings plans, having the Labor Department require federal contractors to supply specific information to the government, forcing borrowers to cap student loan payments, three post-Sandy Hook shooting gun control measures as well as two memos that complimented his immigration amnesty orders.

That last point is crucial because the implementation of amnesty is largely being carried out by executive memorandums rather than orders. They also have the advantage of not being numbered in the *Federal Register*, as are executive orders. That makes it harder for Congress, the press and the public to keep track of them.

But lest you think it is a mistake to treat the memorandums as being as potent as the far more publicized orders, don't rely on the authority of USA Today or Commentary. Ask one of President Obama's appointees to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1999, Justice Elena Kagan, who served as Associate White House Counsel in the Clinton White House, wrote in the *Harvard Law Review* that legal scholars made a mistake in focusing too much on executive orders while ignoring the memoranda.

Kagan said Clinton considered memoranda "a central part of his governing strategy," using them to spur agencies to write regulations restricting tobacco advertising to children, allowing unemployment insurance for paid family leave and requiring agencies to collect racial profiling data.

"The memoranda became, ever increasingly over the course of eight years, Clinton's primary means, self-consciously undertaken, both of setting an administrative agenda that reflected and advanced his policy and political preferences and of ensuring the execution of this program," Kagan wrote.

When you consider how many more memoranda Obama has issued than Clinton, it makes Justice Kagan's insight into how they can be used as a governing strategy even more important.

In practice, the memos are clearly executive orders by another name with no real difference. Even before Barack Obama had become president, they constituted a legal loophole that helped make an already increasingly imperial presidency even more powerful. But under Obama that problem has grown far worse.

The immigration overreach rightly scandalized many Americans not only because of the scope of the orders that were issued but because they represented an end run around the checks and balances that were put into the Constitution by the founders specially to avoid one man rule. One didn't need to disagree with the president's actions to understand that the process he was using represented a dangerous departure from the rule of law. But what few seem to understand is that the orders are only the tip of the imperial iceberg when it comes to President Obama's effort to govern without having to wait for Congress to adopt the laws he wants them to pass. The outrage over the immigration orders is no tempest in a teapot. The president's increased use of executive memoranda as well as orders ought to highlight a problem that might properly be termed a constitutional crisis rather than a mere partisan spat.

Right Turn

[Pols who take sides against the police pay the price](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

Mayor Bill de Blasio is finding out that liberal New Yorkers don't appreciate him fanning the flames of anti-police anger. New York veteran reporter Maggie Haberman and Glenn Thrush [report](#):

Just over a year after sailing into office with 72 percent of the vote on a message of transformational change, de Blasio found his mayoralty subsumed by a torrent of anger, unleashed by the murder of two police officers in Brooklyn Saturday by a troubled gunman who said he was killing "pigs" to avenge the deaths of two men by cops in Staten Island and Ferguson, Missouri. By Monday, de Blasio was lashing out at the press corps that covers him, trying to paper over public divisions with his own police commissioner and coping with what friends described as the emotional blow of facing public rejection by many in the nation's biggest police force. "He's pretty badly shaken" by the murders, one told us.

This is not about de Blasio's "responsibility" for the killings of two police officers. The twisted criminal who killed them is solely to blame. (Note to liberal pundits: Now would be a good time to admit that blaming right-wing pols for shootings by [young men with schizophrenia](#) was dumb.) But in siding time and again with anti-police antagonists, de Blasio has gotten out of touch with large segments of the city:

He's often sided with the victims of police brutality, and he recently told an interviewer that he has told Dante, his teenage mixed-race son, not to reach for a cellphone around officers because it might put him in danger as a "a young man of color." He took the unusual step — unimaginable under the mayoralties of Giuliani or Michael Bloomberg — of inviting [the Rev. Al] Sharpton to City Hall, seating him opposite [NYPD Commissioner Bill] Bratton at a table where the activist proceeded to strongly denounce the police. ("If Dante wasn't your son, he'd be a candidate for a chokehold. And we got to deal with that reality," Sharpton said to de Blasio as Bratton looked on.) Last week, de Blasio privately met with organizers of the [Eric] Garner protests, another moment that antagonized police.

But the action that turned off cops most of all was his defense of City Hall staffer Rachel Noerdlinger, a longtime Sharpton aide whose son and boyfriend posted anti-police messages on their Facebook accounts. The boyfriend allegedly tried to drive a cop off the road in Edgewater, New Jersey, and later pleaded to a lesser offense, according to the New York Post. The mayor stood behind Noerdlinger for weeks until her son was arrested for trespassing — and even then he didn't fire her. When she left her job, City Hall officials said she was on leave.

Polis who dabble in anti-police invective and join the mantra that “the system is rigged against you” find themselves exacerbating frayed nerves, increasing polarization and losing control of their own message. It might be politically appealing to throw red-meat rhetoric to one’s base and play to the fawning liberal punditocracy, but it comes at a price. As [William Galston put it](#), when de Blasio brought up his son, “If he had been a private citizen, his candor would have been beyond reproach. But the question is not only whether what Mr. de Blasio said is true, but also whether it was appropriate for him to say it. As mayor of the country’s largest and most complex city, he has a responsibility to weigh the impact of his words on all New Yorkers, not just those who agree with him.”

That admonition — to think first and figure out how to calm, not increase, tensions — would seem like fundamental common sense, but the desire to play to the crowd or advance an agenda that may or may not fit the facts is too tempting for many polis. And it is not just Democrats who have behaved badly.

[Sen. Rand Paul \(R-Ky.\)](#) thought sitting down with Sharpton was a way of showing how sincere he was in promoting minority outreach. Really — this is a legitimate figure in his eyes and a figure he wants to elevate? I imagine the vast majority of Republicans disagree. Nor was his [knee-jerk reaction](#) criticizing police and the justice system at large, suggesting racial minorities legitimately believed they were being targeted and decrying “militarization” of police, appreciated by law-and-order Republicans. (“Given the racial disparities in our criminal justice system, it is impossible for African-Americans not to feel like their government is particularly targeting them.”)

[Lloyd Green](#) had it right when he observed, “Paul’s flirtation with Sharpton is not just a matter of ignoring the past. Paul’s minuet is also a matter of disregarding what Republican voters are thinking in the here and now, the here and now being December 2014. The latest NBC/Marist and Pew Polls show the Republican rank and file squarely behind the police, and rightly or wrongly embracing the proposition that police treat blacks and whites alike.” The meeting with Sharpton for some Republicans is inexcusable. (“Paul breaking bread with Sharpton may be too much for Republican primary voters to watch or stomach. Unlike Barack Obama or MSNBC, the GOP hasn’t forgotten that it was Sharpton who proclaimed that Tawana [Brawley] had told the truth, or that Sharpton owes more than \$4 million in back taxes.”) Nor will it help Paul with rock-ribbed Republicans that he endorsed the president’s normalization of relations with Cuba without even a message about the regime’s harboring a [New Jersey state trooper’s murderer](#).

In times when passions run high and the public is polarized, politicians need to rise above the fray, not join the scrum. And above all they are, whether they like it or not, part of the “establishment” and are expected to support law enforcement. They are also obligated to push for needed reform and to recognize the legitimate complaints of private citizens. If that seems too difficult, and if they lack the personal skills and vocabulary to be unifying, healing leaders, they should not be in positions of authority.

Contentions

[Even the NY Times Can’t Save de Blasio](#)

by Jonathan S. Tobin

It’s been an awful week for New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. The man who was elected in 2013 on a platform of cop bashing has faced the fury of the police and the public after the murder of two

members of the force exposed the ugly face of the post-Ferguson/Eric Garner protests. Like most politicians backed into a corner, de Blasio has lashed out at the media while proving unable to either make peace with the cops or to control his leftist allies who continue to conduct anti-police demonstrations. But de Blasio is not completely without friends. He still has the *New York Times*, which weighed in today with an embarrassing [piece of flummery](#) intended to reassure New Yorkers that everything was OK because the mayor was “calm.” If that’s the best they can do, de Blasio may be in even more trouble than his critics thought.

The conceit of the piece is that de Blasio’s personal approach to the crisis that has threatened to tear the city apart while the rank and file of the NYPD are openly displaying their contempt and anger at the mayor is so deft that he is overcoming all obstacles. But even a casual reader can tell that the only people saying such things are close de Blasio allies whose comments are then slavishly taken down and published by the *Times*.

It is only in such an article at a time in which de Blasio has seemed to be out of control and losing his ability to influence events that you can read some of the following things about the mayor:

He has acted like himself: a confident but mercurial leader whose singular political style has not wavered.

Mr. de Blasio, a political professional who promised a warmer, friendlier City Hall, is approaching the fallout from [the shooting deaths](#) of two police officers with an operative’s touch, and a healthy dose of the personal.

Or this piece of flummery:

“His response is measured; it’s being respectful of everyone,” said Bertha Lewis, a longtime friend and adviser to the mayor, who, like another ally interviewed for this article, volunteered the phrase “pitch perfect” to describe his approach.

Ms. Lewis said the call to suspend protests and tough talk would give all sides a chance to calm down. “Making that middle-of-the-road statement is a good idea as mayor,” she said.

Are they kidding? On Planet *New York Times*, the spectacle of an ultra-liberal mayor lashing out at the mainstream press for merely reporting the anti-cop death threats chanted at demonstrations he supports may be “pitch perfect,” but in the rest of the galaxy, that’s the sort of thing that is generally considered tone deaf.

To be fair to the paper, part of de Blasio’s problem is conveyed in the article. It notes that while a more able leader would be spending this week reaching out to allies as well as foes in order to try to unify the city, de Blasio isn’t bothering with such conventional tactics:

And where other politicians are quick to line up allies to reinforce their message, Mr. de Blasio has been relatively insular. The mayor who recently boasted “I never need rescuing” has conferred only with a small group of close advisers since the shooting.

Mr. de Blasio has not spoken with Senator Charles E. Schumer or Representative Hakeem Jeffries of Brooklyn, in whose district the shootings took place. Nor, apart from a brief exchange of texts, has he spoken with Eric L. Adams, the Brooklyn borough president.

Arrogance and insularity are not generally the sort of leadership traits that are associated with success. Even worse is the conviction that comes across from the mayor and his allies that the problem is merely a passing fancy that the public will soon forget about.

That's the sort of foolish, self-deceiving optimism that failed leaders always latch onto while sinking into permanent dysfunction. To the contrary, as the first major crisis of his administration, this is the moment when the public's impressions of his ability to lead inevitably become more a matter of evaluating performance than of promises or potential. And on that score, he is in big trouble. De Blasio didn't create this mess by himself. President Obama, Attorney General Eric Holder and racial hucksters like Al Sharpton deserve a major share of the blame too for weaving the Ferguson and Garner cases into a false narrative about police violence and racism. But de Blasio, who won election by highlighting his criticisms of the successful efforts of the Giuliani and Bloomberg administrations to lower crime, was already in a difficult relationship with the police when he joined in the gang tackle of law enforcement personnel after the Ferguson and the Garner cases. His unwillingness to back down and his instinct to attack those who point out what his allies are saying has exacerbated the situation. The notion, as the *Times* claims, that all this can "catalyze an ultimately productive conversation about race and the police" is sheer fantasy.

That's especially true when Sharpton, whose close White House ties ([as our Pete Wehner reminded us earlier today](#)) make him a more influential national player than the mayor, chose to defy the mayor's call for a temporary end to police protests. Put simply, a New York mayor who is simultaneously being brutally attacked by the head of the police union while being snubbed by the city's leading African-American race baiter is a man marooned on an island and I don't mean the island of Manhattan.

The *Times* can be an important ally for any New York mayor. But articles that attempt to put forward an image of the mayor as someone embodying "practiced calm" at such a moment is more likely to generate scorn rather than support. De Blasio may yet recover from this disaster but the insular, foolish man portrayed in this article needs more help than even his media cheering section can provide.

Calaveras Enterprise **[Can beer boost brain power?](#)**

There is newfound reason to indulge in a pint or two of your favorite beer, and it's not just to catch up and share a few laughs with friends. New research has shown that a chemical compound in beer may be able to improve cognitive function. The beverage once thought to obliterate brain cells when consumed in abundance may actually have the opposite effect and boost brain power.

No one should run out and start imbibing just yet, however. The study that ran in Behavioral Brain Research in October 2014 was preliminary and only conducted on lab mice. During the study, scientists discovered that xanthohumol, a type of flavonoid found in beer, seemed to improve brain function in the young mice given xanthohumol doses. The cognitive flexibility of the mice was tested with a specially designed maze, and younger mice showed signs of intellectual improvement. Older mice showed no improvements. Researchers believe xanthohumol and other flavonoids, such as those found in red wine, blueberries and dark chocolate, may play a role in helping a person form memories.

The mice were given very high doses of the flavonoid. A person would have to drink roughly 2,000 liters of beer a day to equal what the mice consumed to show improvement. However, should a supplement hit the market down the road, it may just be possible for men and women to consume a potentially beneficial amount of xanthohumol without belying up at the bar.

One of the goals of the xanthohumol study was to examine its potential efficacy at treating age-related deficits in memory. Xanthohumol also may benefit those with metabolic syndrome, a condition associated with obesity and high blood pressure, as it can speed metabolism and reduce fatty acids in the liver.

Flavonoids are plant compounds that often provide plants with their color. Scientists have attributed many health benefits to flavonoids in foods and plants and have even suggested flavonoids can help in the fight against cancer and heart disease. Xanthohumol is rare and is most often found in the hops commonly used to make beer.

While doctors and researchers do not suggest running out and consuming a few six packs right now in the goal of improving brain function and cramming for that next test, xanthohumol may one day be harvested from hops to slow down age-related memory deficits.



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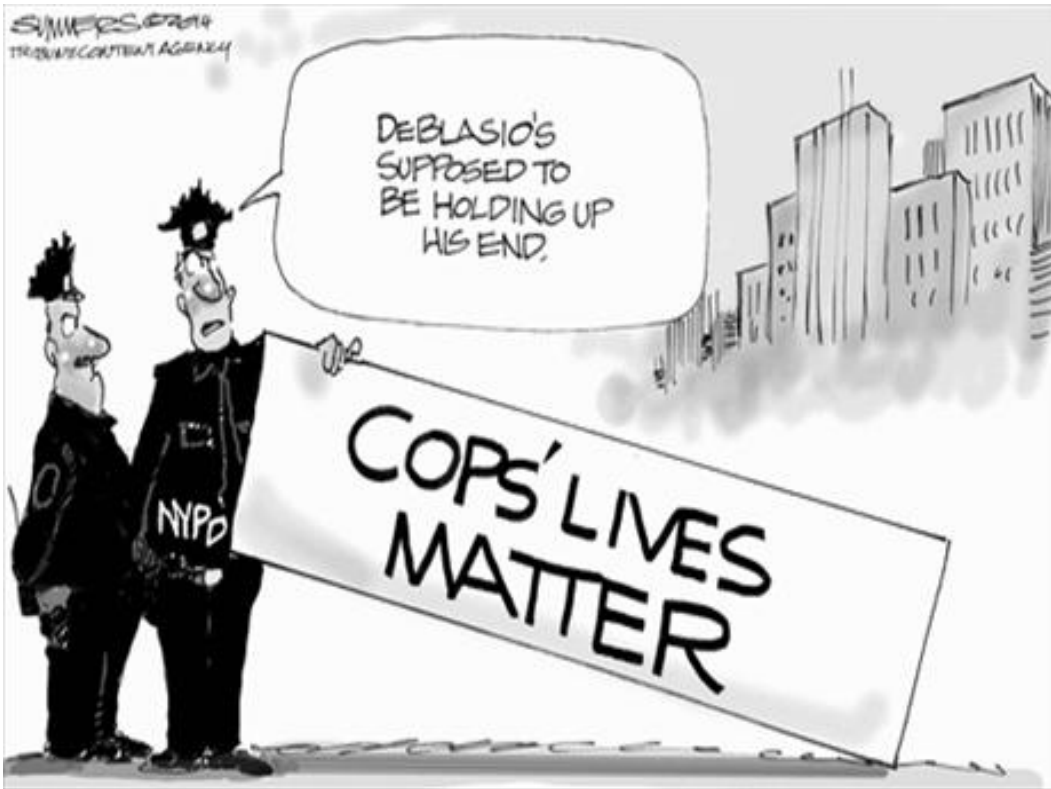


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**The
LOOKING
SPOON**





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